

ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH
TRANSPORT AND PLACE SCRUTINY PANEL
THURSDAY, 25 JULY 2024 AT 6.30 PM
MINUTES

Present:

Councillors Councillor Maisie Richards Cottell (Chair), David Gardner, Calum O'Bryne Mulligan, Denise Scott-McDonald and Matt Hartley

Under Standing Orders:

Councillor Averil Lekau (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member Climate Action, Sustainability and Transport)

Officers:

Deputy Corporate Governance Manager

Item

No.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sam Littlewood and Councillor Cathy Dowse.

2 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

3 Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED -

That the list of Councillors' memberships as Council appointed representatives on outside bodies, joint committees and school governing bodies is noted.

4 Cabinet Member Update - Climate Action, Sustainability and Transport

The Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport provided an update on some of the things she had done and her priorities from the next 24 months. The main highlights were:

Emission-based Charging

The Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport began with an update on recent initiatives, including the emission-based charges introduced in July of the previous year. This policy has effectively reduced the number of high-emission vehicles, with the trend expected to continue due to the influence of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ).

DLR and Rapid Bus Transit

The Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport reported that a business case for the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) and Rapid Bus Transit had been submitted to the central government. £23 million has been approved for the Rapid Bus Transit, but discussions regarding DLR funding are ongoing. Concerns about the financial burden on local authorities are being addressed through negotiations with the Mayor and government.

Parking Design and CPZ Implementation

Updates were provided on Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) and parking design projects. The Welling Way scheme has received approval and is set to be implemented with a Traffic Management Order (TMO) expected to go live by the end of July, with enforcement starting in early August. The Charlton CPZs, implemented in January, faced challenges due to simultaneous road marking by contractors, causing disruptions. Feedback from residents is being collected to inform future projects.

Sustainable Streets

The Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport provided updates on sustainable streets projects. Public engagement for the Woolwich area review is expected to start in August or September. Initiatives are planned for Plumstead and Thamesmead West, with public engagement to follow. Additional CPZs are planned for Charlton, Shooter Hill, and Kidbrooke, with consultations beginning in January 2025.

Cycle Network Development

Significant work is underway to develop the local cycle network. Collaborations with Transport for London (TfL) are in place to develop cycle routes in Greenwich Town Centre and other areas. An enhanced cycle route scheme in Plumstead and Abbey Wood is being developed based on stakeholder feedback. A procurement process for expanding cycle hangers is also underway, with substantial increases expected by Autumn.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging

An innovative licensing approach for EV charging infrastructure has been proposed, with providers expected to apply by July and awards anticipated in Autumn. This initiative aims to balance charging provision across the borough, including disadvantaged areas, with a target of adding 200 new charging points per year.

Street Lighting and Street Furniture

The Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport reported that the dimming of streetlights and upgrades to LED lighting have been completed. Additionally, a program to declutter streets by removing unnecessary street furniture is in progress.

Dockless Bikes

The Cabinet is adopting a London-wide approach to managing dockless bike services to address issues such as street clutter.

20mph Zones

The feasibility, design, and consultation for 20 mph zones in Horn Park, Prince Rupert Road, and Pier Tree Way are ongoing, aiming to complement Transport for London's changes.

Highways Contract

A new highways contractor has been appointed following a procurement process. Early results from the new contractor's work have been positive.

School Streets Program

The School Streets Program includes seven temporary and four permanent streets. All temporary streets will be made permanent with new enforcement measures, including 24 cameras. The program is expected to expand over the next few years.

Local Safety Schemes

Ten major and minor local safety schemes were delivered in 2022-23, with nine more programmed for 2023-24. The goal is to deliver an additional ten schemes in 2024-25.

Greenwich Town Centre and Plumstead Developments

The project to remove vehicles from Greenwich Town Centre to improve walking and cycling is ongoing. In Plumstead, funding from the Pettman Crescent development is being used for transformative projects expected to be completed by October.

Future Plans (2024-25)

Future plans include accelerating EV provider deployment to 2,000 charging points per year, delivering new cycleways in Eltham and Greenwich, making ten additional School Streets permanent with a plan to deliver another twenty over the next two years, implementing healthy sustainable streets including new CPZs, and developing a £1 million sustainable drainage project for flood alleviation.

Responding to a question about the transport prioritization programme, the Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport confirmed that the research had been completed and will be published imminently. However, it will not include specific timings or a strict list of prioritized interventions. Instead, it will outline the criteria used to determine priority areas. This approach aims to provide transparency about the factors influencing priority areas without creating unrealistic expectations.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport acknowledged the issues and assured that a cautious approach will be taken in publishing schedules to avoid unrealistic expectations. She stated that interventions for West Hallows will be addressed within the year 2024-25.

Responding to a question about the Silvertown Tunnel the Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport confirmed ongoing support for repurposing the tunnel but noted that the Development Consent Order (DCO) does not compel action from the mayor. The council is aligning with Newham and making representations regarding the lack of active travel crossings. Discussions with Newham and the Mayor of London are focusing on cross-river cycling plans and other alternatives.

Responding to a question about the progress on the Council's Carbon Neutral Plan and Transport Strategy, the Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport acknowledged slow progress, with only a 2% reduction in car kilometres" travelled from 2015 to 2023. She stated that the Council is working more cohesively to address this, particularly through the Strategic Leadership Group, with new programs expected to contribute to future progress. Monitoring will continue through the Carbon Neutral Action Plan.

Responding to a question about whether the Council's submission to TfL's consultation on vehicle charges for the Blackwall and Silvertown Tunnel will focus on reducing overall traffic through both tunnels, the Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport affirmed that it would form part of the submission, though exact emphasis is still under discussion. The Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport emphasised the importance of making a strong submission.

Responding to a question about the steps being taken to improve Greenwich's ranking on the 2024 Healthy Streets Scorecard, the Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport acknowledged that Greenwich had fallen in the rankings, particularly due to low scores on Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) and school streets. She stated that the Council was taking steps to improve, including making 10 school streets permanent and planning 20 more. She added that there are ongoing discussions with boroughs like Lewisham, to learn from their successes.

Responding to a question about the traffic management interventions and when information will be published, the Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport clarified that the publication would include criteria for prioritization and immediate areas to be worked on, which are already funded. She added that as work progresses, the list will be updated with new priorities. She stated that ward councillors will be involved in shaping these priorities through feedback.

Responding to a question about finding balance between supporting local businesses and reducing vehicle traffic due to the Silvertown Tunnel, the Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport stated that discussions were ongoing to address the issues. She stated that local exemptions were being considered, but the broader implications of reducing

traffic need to be evaluated. She stated that improving north-south transport links and evaluating the bus network are also priorities.

Responding to a question about the strategy for improving bus services and Public Transport Accessibility Levels (PTAL) ratings, the Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport outlined efforts to collaborate with the regeneration and planning departments to address transport network needs. She stated that there is a need for a comprehensive assessment of bus routes and connectivity, which has been delayed due to recent elections.

Responding to a question about expanding Electric Vehicle(EV) charging infrastructure, including home charging solutions and the use of street lighting for charging points, the Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport confirmed that exploring home charging options was ongoing but acknowledged practical and logistical challenges. She revealed that progress had been slower than hoped, but there is a commitment to finding viable solutions. She stated that concerns about the safety and practicality of current charging practices, such as loose cables across pavements, will be addressed with clearer guidelines and better oversight.

Responding to a question about mechanisms for monitoring air quality related to the Silvertown Tunnel, the Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport acknowledged the need for robust monitoring and assessment. She stated that she is committed to providing updates on air quality measures and baseline readings before and after the tunnel's opening.

Responding to a question about whether there is a contingency plan if post-intervention air pollution levels exceed pre-intervention levels, the Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport stated that while improved public transport advocacy remains a priority, a detailed contingency plan will be developed if actual pollution levels deviate from predictions.

Responding to a question about the Cabinet Member's reflections on communication strategies for transport decisions, focusing on what had worked well and what had not, the Cabinet Member highlighted the implementation of the Charlton Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) as an example there had been a challenge with communication. She stated that despite the intention to manage parking effectively, the implementation led to confusion and dissatisfaction. She stated that the Charlton CPZ, while initially controversial, ultimately received positive feedback from residents who now support its extension. On the other hand, the improvements at the gyratory at

Plumstead and collaborations with developers and Transport for London (TfL) on the rapid bus transit system were cited as successful communication examples.

The Panel discussed potential use of Section 106 funding to enhance public transport, particularly in areas where TfL has not fulfilled its commitments. The Panel questioned the feasibility of using this funding to support specific projects, such as the XI 61 express bus route, to improve connectivity from the southern part of the borough to the Elizabeth line. The Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport acknowledged that while Section 106 funding is not unlimited, it could serve as leverage to negotiate with TfL. The Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability, and Transport emphasised that while the primary goal is to ensure TfL fulfils its responsibilities, using Section 106 funds may be a practical approach if necessary. The specific routes or projects would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Resolved –

That the Cabinet Member update be noted.

5 Work Programme Schedule 2024-2025

The Panel noted the 2024/25 work programme items and agreed the scope for the following items:

- Transport Work Programme Update,
- Income from Developments
- Flood Risk/Water Management Update
- Planning

The Panel agreed that the Transport Work Programme update should cover

- An action/delivery plan on when things will happen/and how we will meet our targets in terms of Traffic reduction and the Healthy Streets Scorecard.
- The Supporting Action Plans: Kerbside Management Action Plan; Road Safety Action Plan; Active Travel Action Plan; Electric Vehicles Strategy / Action Plan; Streetscape Guidance & Asset Action Plan. What are their current statuses and how will they be developed/furthered during 2024-25?
- Transport Prioritization Programme. How transport interventions are being prioritised?

- Bus times – what are we doing to improve bus times from a local council perspective?

The Panel agreed that the Income from Development update should also cover how the money is being spent and how strategic the decisions are.

The Chair informed the Panel that the Flood Risk/Water Management update will be coming to the October meeting of the Panel and the possibility of inviting The Environment Agency, Thames Water and/or Port of London Authority.

The Panel agreed that the Planning update will cover

- Performance
- Capacity
- Enforcement effectiveness
- The Local Plan

Resolved -

That the Work Programme Schedule 2024-2025 be noted.

6 Commissioning of Future Reports

The Panel noted the work items that were scheduled to be presented to the meeting of the Transport and Place Scrutiny Panel taking place on 5th September 2024.

The meeting closed at 8:20pm

Chair