

Decisions of the Environment Committee

13 January 2022

Members Present:-

Councillor Dean Cohen (Chairman)
Councillor Peter Zinkin (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Felix Byers	Councillor Alan Schneiderman
Councillor Geof Cooke	Councillor Elliot Simberg
Councillor Alison Cornelius	Councillor Laurie Williams
Councillor Laithe Jajeh	Councillor Claire Farrier

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Cllr Schneiderman reported that Cllr Laurie Williams' name was spelt incorrectly on page 3 of the minutes.

RESOLVED that the minutes were approved subject to the above amendment.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

None.

3. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None.

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)

The comments and questions were noted as published, as a supplement to the agenda.

6. MEMBERS' ITEMS

Cllr Alan Schneiderman – GETTING ACTION FROM WATER COMPANIES AND NETWORK RAIL

The Chairman invited Cllr Schneiderman to present his item.

Cllr Schneiderman reported that there has been sewage overflow onto pavements and parks at specific sites around the Borough over several years. His item requested that the Committee seek increased engagement with the relevant bodies to improve their input where needed, possibly inviting them to a meeting of the Committee.

The Chairman reported that there is already significant engagement with the water companies and Network Rail on this issue, and they have been tackling the areas that Cllr Schneiderman mentioned and other areas. The problem continued because work that had been carried out occasionally impacted on other problems, so the issues could be complex to resolve. The Chairman recommended that officers bring a Progress Report to the Committee, on the areas mentioned and on other locations where work is outstanding. He noted that a Charter had been agreed with the water companies and this had led to some improvements.

The Executive Director, Environment, Mr Geoff Mee offered to discuss the locations with Cllr Scheiderman, following which he would share progress with the Committee as well as providing a generic update on the Flood Risk Management Programme. He noted that he has requested a meeting with the Directors of Thames Water to try to resolve the problems with the sewage system, and the CEO of Thames Water had committed to work with Barnet Officers on this. Mr Mee added that Mr Ruchi Sayal, Senior Flood Risk Manager for Barnet had secured funding for flood risk management work.

Mr Mee noted that a report would be brought to the Committee on 8th March 2022.

Action: Mr Mee

The Chairman moved to a vote on the Member's Item, which was unanimously APPROVED.

RESOLVED that the Member's Item and action were noted.

Cllr Geof Cooke – IMPROVE BARNET'S LIGHTING IN STREETS AND PARKS

The Chairman invited Cllr Cooke to present his Member's Item.

Cllr Cooke reported that he had been hearing of concerns across Borough about lighting levels in some locations, residents reporting feeling unsafe due to inadequate lighting in some areas. Many of the LED lights appeared to have been turned down. Cllr Cooke requested a review of the issues in specific locations where officers had been notified of residents' concerns. Lambert Way, N12 and Victoria Recreation Ground in New Barnet are examples. Cllr Williams noted that there had been muggings reported in winter at Victoria Recreation Ground which has a public footpath running through it, which is regularly used as a short cut, so it would be preferable to increase the lighting levels at this location.

The Chairman reported that he had also been notified of concerns in some locations. However streets and parks should be looked at separately; many parks did not have lighting. Also problem areas are already investigated when reported by Ward Members, the police or members of the public, and if deemed inadequate then action is taken. The Chairman offered to follow up on the two locations mentioned.

Action: Chairman

Cllr Cooke asked whether there is a database of locations where adequacy of lighting has been questioned by the public and Members? Mr Mee reported that there is a database on every lamp column in the Borough but records are not retained of residents raising individual issues on lighting. Any reports of inadequate lighting are compared against the agreed standards Barnet has set for lighting. Mr Mee noted that he had not

been aware of the issue in Victoria Recreation Ground and would look into improving this and testing the location against the lighting standards.

Action: Mr Mee

Mr Mee reported that the system for reporting locations with inadequate lighting could be reviewed, if Members deem this to be required. He also requested that Cllr Cooke notify him of any other areas of concern.

Action: Cllr Cooke

Cllr Cooke reported that the Friends of Stoneyfields Park had reported concerns over inadequate lighting in Stoneyfields Park, HA8. Mr Ian Edser, Performance and Improvement Lead, Highways responded that a meeting has been held about this and plans are in hand.

The Chairman moved to a vote on the Member's Item, which was unanimously APPROVED.

RESOLVED that the Member's Item and actions were noted.

7. HIGHWAYS OPERATING MODEL

The Chairman invited Mr Mee to present the report on the restructure of the Highways Service. This would be presented to Full Council on 25th January. Subject to Council's endorsement, Mr Mee noted that he would work with Mr Edser on the business transformation for bringing the Highways Service in-house by September 2023. A detailed proposal for this was set out in the paper.

Cllr Schneiderman enquired how better value money could be ensured. Mr Edser responded that Key Performance Indications (KPI) had been explored, and procurement regulations would be followed, to consider the quality aspects of the offer.

The Chairman moved to a vote on the officers' three recommendations as outlined in the report, which were unanimously APPROVED.

RESOLVED that the officer's recommendations were approved.

8. HIGHWAYS PLANNED MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

The Chairman invited Mr Edser to present the report on the Highway Network Recovery and Community Infrastructure Levy Programme 2022/23.

Mr Edser noted that the report contained the following errors in the tables provided at Appendix A: Proposed Carriageway and Footway Works by Wards for Year 8 of the Network Recovery Programme – 2022/23:

- Page 38 – Brent Street Section Length (m) 32 should read Queens Road Section Length 32
- Page 38 – Queens Road Section Length (m) 60 should read Barnet Road Section Length 60.

The Chairman enquired about the Brent Cross Year 8 Priority List – it was unclear whether this is highlighting the same area and funding as noted in the earlier section of the report: 'Queens Road' in West Hendon. Mr Edser would check this and respond following the meeting.

Action: Mr Edser

The Chairman reported that Blakeney Close, Totteridge (Page 42) had been discussed following a Ward Walk. As there is no house on one side of the road it was felt that the pathway was not essential on that side; also it had frequently needed repair due to lorries not having sufficient space to pass, and driving on the pavement. A discussion would take place on whether to widen the road instead.

The Chairman noted that discussions were underway on whether a smaller section of pavement could be left on one side of Coppice Walk than on the side with residential homes.

To cover the cost of this the scheme on Barnet Lane (page 45) would be reduced, leaving out some sections.

Cllr Cornelius requested that in future reports, details are listed in order of Ward alphabetically. Also the specific area is not clear in the report, eg near to which house numbers. The Chairman responded that this information can be provided individually to Ward members once formalised.

Cllr Cornelius asked about sealing materials as previous repairs had not always been successful. Mr Edser would ask the materials expert to provide the specifications on the materials for sealing.

Action: Mr Edser

Cllr Cooke also noted that the order of priorities was unclear. The Chairman noted that future reports would include lists in alphabetical Ward order. Mr Edser noted that all the maintenance work listed had been costed and would go ahead, although details on at which point during the year could not be provided due to the complexity of the programme management, which is developed in consultation with Tarmac Kier. He assured Cllr Cooke that none of the listed entries would be removed from the programme.

Action: Mr Edser

Cllr Schneiderman enquired about the rationale for whether a road is included in the Brent Cross section of the funding or not. For example, it was unclear why the footway in Cheviot Gate is included in the Brent Cross list as it is a small cul-de-sac whereas Claremont Road is included in the carriageway list.

Mr Edser responded that around £75k CIL funding had been allocated for the roads and footways near to Brent Cross (table 5.23). This had been cross-referenced with the relevant Ward. Discussions had taken place with Ward Members to ensure that bigger schemes had been aligned to NRP funding for specific Wards.

Cllr Jajeh enquired about the contractor's capacity to undertake the work. Mr Edser responded that officers had been overseeing the programme from the start together with Tarmac Kier. Tarmac Kier is ready to commence when the work programme is approved.

The Chairman moved to a vote on the officer's five recommendations as outlined in the report, which were unanimously APPROVED.

RESOLVED that the officer's recommendations were approved.

9. SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES

The Chairman invited Mr Mee to present the officer's report.

Mr Mee stated that the A1000 cycle scheme had attracted polarised views, and due to the pandemic it was difficult to gauge true usage of the scheme and present facts to the Committee.

Mr Mee added that the Council has been advised by the Department of Transport (DoT) that if it wishes to retain or remove the scheme, a full consultation with residents is required. In addition the Temporary Traffic Order (TTO) currently in place concludes in March 2022. This did not allow sufficient time for a full consultation so the preferred option is to extend the TTO if possible, followed by further information gathering on the scheme, followed by a consultation. However the Secretary of State (SoS) may not be able to allow an extension to the TTO.

Mr Mee reported that he would bring a report to the Committee on 8th March further to legal opinion and a review of the options. In the meantime discussions had been held on possible improvements for the scheme.

Cllr Cooke noted that the delay is having an impact on consideration of a crossing for pedestrians at the junction of High Road/Granville Road/Summers Lane N12. The Chairman responded that the A1000 cycle lane review is not delaying a decision on the junction, which was proceeding as it should be. Mr Mee noted that the junction is in part dependent on the rest of the road network but Barnet is in discussion with Transport for London (TfL) on this. TfL will need to endorse any decision.

Cllr Farrier stated that improvements to the crossing would be welcomed but air quality monitoring does not include traffic queuing at the crossover with the North Circular going south. Mr Mee noted that it is hoped that the two-lane system will be reinstated, reducing the queuing which increases idling.

Mr Mee reported that a proposal was being considered to remove the cycle lane at the section south of Fortis Green, to improve parking. There is no evidence that the cycle lane has increased journey times, but it appears to be causing bottle necks in some areas. Officers want to improve traffic flow and air quality and would keep the Committee informed on progress.

Cllr Farrier enquired how removal of the bus cage into Fortis Green would work for buses turning right at this junction. Mr Mee responded that this had been raised by two residents and he would speak to Mr Aarons about this and then respond on this point at a future meeting.

Action: Mr Mee

Cllr Schneiderman enquired about the timescale for the proposed improvements. The Chairman responded that the Martin's School improvements are already being implemented. Changes to the flyover would require further discussions with TfL and surveys. He would report back to the Committee in March when further counts and usage had been collated.

Action: Mr Mee

Cllr Schneiderman asked what decision the Committee would be asked to make at the next meeting. Mr Mee responded that retaining the cycle lane, with some remedial action, may be proposed if officers have a reasonable degree of security about this. This is subject to the SoS's decision on an extension of the TTO and a further consultation but by March it should be possible to report on how far potential improvements have been developed and a timescale for consultation and what questions it will contain as well as how it will be conducted.

Cllr Schneiderman enquired about the segregation at Sandringham Lane and Summers Lane. The Chairman responded that this would be discussed with Ward Members prior to a decision being made.

Cllr Farrier asked whether cycle lane markings will be included in the consultation. Mr Mee noted that the type of markings would need to be consulted on.

The Chairman moved to a vote on the officer's four recommendations as outlined in the report, which were unanimously APPROVED.

RESOLVED that the officer's recommendations were approved.

10. REVIEW OF TENNIS COURTS IN PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

The Chairman proposed that the report be deferred until the next meeting, on 8th March. Resident groups had emailed Members about the impact the proposals would have on them, so time for discussions with residents is needed.

11. VEHICLE HIRE

The Chairman noted that this item would not be considered by Environment Committee and was added in error.

12. COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED that the Forward Work Programme was agreed.

13. ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

None.

The meeting finished at 8.55 pm