

Decisions of the Environment Committee

8 March 2022

Members Present:-

Councillor Dean Cohen (Chair)

Councillor Felix Byers
Councillor Geof Cooke
Councillor Alison Cornelius
Councillor Laithe Jajeh

Councillor Alan Schneiderman
Councillor Claire Farrier
Councillor Nizza Fluss
(Substitute for Councillor Peter Zinkin)

Also in attendance

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Peter Zinkin

Councillor Laurie Williams

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Councillor Peter Zinkin who was substituted by Councillor Nizza Fluss.

3. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND N PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None.

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)

None.

6. MEMBERS' ITEMS

None.

7. CONTROLLED PARKING ZONE PERMITS POLICY POSITION

Mr Mee, Executive Director, Environment introduced the report. He noted that the decision on the parking policy statement would need to be approved at Full Council.

Mr Hoare, Head of Parking, reported that the one-off fee would be put in place for future developments to cover the cost of the administration of CPZ permits. This is due to some new developments not having sufficient capacity for parking, resulting in public highway parking being the only option for some dwellings, often because of a former private road within a development becoming part of the public highway.

Cllr Fluss expressed concern that this could result in increased parking in areas such as the Foster Estate where parking was already a problem. Mr Hoare responded that the new policy statement was unlikely to alter the amount of parking but would help to enable planning permission to be decided.

Mr Mee would ask the Housing and Growth team to contact Cllr Fluss on the number of parking spaces to be proposed.

Action: Mr Mee

Cllr Jajeh asked why the charge proposed is £25 per dwelling. The Chairman noted that it is the administration charge and not a charge to cover the works or the statutory consultation.

Cllr Cooke asked whether a parking officer would be providing advice at planning meetings. Mr Hoare noted that the number of parking spaces is defined in the Local Plan and is not affected by this report.

Cllr Schneiderman asked whether a planning committee would be able to impose a condition on any application to limit the number of permits due to this policy. Mr Hoare responded that the planning committee could do so, allowing between 0-2 CPZ permits to be allocated per dwelling, bearing in mind the capacity for parking in each road.

Cllr Fluss stated that developers should be encouraged to include parking facilities within developments. Mr Mee responded that space is not always available. Planning committees can decide based on what they consider appropriate for the location.

The Chairman moved to the vote on the officer's recommendations, which were unanimously APPROVED.

The Committee RESOLVED

- 1. to note the proposed position on parking permits as outlined within the paper.**
- 2. to recommend that Full Council approves the administration charge as part of the schedule of fees and charges and for this fee to be passed on to developers as outlined at paragraph 2.**

8. SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES

Mr Mee reported that public opinion remained divided on the A1000 Experimental Traffic Order (ETO) Scheme, which would expire at the end of March 2022.

Mr Mee noted that the Government had ruled that the A1000 Scheme could neither be permanently instated nor removed without a full public consultation. Therefore, design changes had been made

to make the Scheme more useful whilst a new ETO is being reissued. This would allow sufficient time for a formal consultation to be carried out, to take place shortly after the Local Election on 5th May 2022. The design changes would be implemented over the next few weeks.

The Chairman requested a verbal update on the amendments to the Scheme.

Mr Ataie, Interim Strategic Lead Commissioner, Highways, added that the seven areas to be amended, highlighted in Section 4 of the report, are low-cost changes and we aim to fund them by the £100k remaining in the original scheme budget. The changes would provide some on-street parking, better movement of buses at certain junctions, and the addition of a pedestrian phase at Somersville Road, which will be funded by the Area Committee as it has already been approved. His change at Somersville Road should also allow cyclists to travel through the junction safely. Additional loading bays for businesses on the side roads and parking spaces outside St Martin's School as requested by the school have already been provided.

Cllr Byers asked whether a speed survey had been carried out and whether traffic calming would be added if there was found to be speeding in the 20mph limit. Mr Ataie responded that surveys on the volume and speed of traffic continue to be carried out. It had been recommended that the 20mph limit be extended to the Borough boundary, where there are non-segregated cycle lanes, based on national guidelines. He noted that there is not yet sufficient data on pollution and speed levels. This data will continue to be collated and form part of the final report to be presented to this Committee to approve whether the scheme is amended, kept or removed.

Cllr Cooke asked about the 'shared space' area on the pavement of the High Road, between pedestrians and cyclists, noting that pedestrians would feel uncomfortable without a segregated space. Mr Ataie responded that the 'shared space' would be marked on the footway and the shared area would only be from Sandringham Gardens to Somers Lane, which is a wide tree-lined footway. This would support the flow of cyclists as well as allowing for introduction of limited on street parking. Cllr Cooke suggested the use of colour coding on the footway to highlight the segregation.

Cllr Jajeh highlighted that the examples of trial schemes provided by the Department of Transport (page 30) did not necessarily reflect the Barnet area or residents. There had been strong opposition to the Scheme expressed by many Barnet residents.

Cllr Jajeh reported that he had received feedback about potential difficulties with emergency vehicle access in the section by the retail park if the proposed design changes go ahead. Mr Ataie noted that as part of the statutory consultation there is a requirement to request comments from the emergency services, and necessary adjustments would be made to ensure access.

Cllr Schneiderman asked what the consultation questions would be. Mr Mee responded that the consultation had not yet been drafted; he would share the questions as they emerge and would be happy to take account of suggestions to ensure that the questions elicit useful feedback.

Cllr Schneiderman reported that the Committee had previously been provided with research on usage of the cycle lane, traffic speeds and air quality. He asked whether there would be more data provided alongside the consultation. Mr Mee responded that it would, and that the council is constantly monitoring usage of the network, although he was concerned that due to the changes since the pandemic it was more difficult to interpret, with currently greater car use and more working from home, so the only baseline data available are from the pre-pandemic period.

Cllr Farrier requested that Ward Councillors as well as Environment Committee members be consulted on the questions. She added that changes are needed as the Scheme had been brought in too quickly. For example, as noted in a public comment that had been published with the agenda, many cyclists were unlikely to divert from the road onto the pavement. The Chairman noted that improvements had been made based on the comments received. Mr Ataie responded that many commuter cyclists prefer to use the main road whilst others feel more comfortable being segregated and may be travelling a short distance.

Cllr Fluss noted that there had been no consultation before implementation of the Scheme, so residents should be asked whether they prefer each aspect of the Scheme to stay or go. She had received many complaints about traffic chaos and pollution caused by the Scheme. The Chairman responded that the proposed changes were being brought in to reduce congestion and improve air quality.

On a separate but related subject, the Chairman reported that the response to the recent consultation regarding Booth Road and Greenaway on Neighbourhood Measures showed that residents, users, and stakeholders are opposed to it and therefore this won't proceed in its current form. Discussions would be held with Ward Members on the next steps. This update was not included in the written report due to the agenda publication being prior to the consultation results.

The Chairman moved to the vote on the officer's recommendations, which were unanimously APPROVED.

It was RESOLVED:

1. **that the Committee noted that the Executive Director, Environment will make arrangements for an engagement and consultation exercise, to commence by June 2022; and that the results would be brought back to Environment Committee in autumn 2022 for a final decision on whether to retain, modify or remove the Cycle Scheme.**
2. **That the Committee noted the introduction of new Experimental Traffic Management Orders reflecting feedback so far received in respect of the Scheme.**

9. HIGHWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY INSPECTION MANUAL

Mr Edser, Director of Highways and Transportation reported that the Barnet Highways Infrastructure Safety Inspection Manual is a key guide for Barnet staff and the new contractor. It outlines intervention levels and is the main guide that highways inspectors operate to. The manual had last been reviewed in 2013 and changes had been made to the risk and asset management framework as part of the Network Recovery Plan since that time, so it was felt it would be timely to review this.

Mr Ataie noted that currently the Barnet policy on intervention is 25mm on footways and 40mm on carriageways and the manual outlines the criteria for monitor or repair. The new manual maintains the same intervention levels.

Cllr Cornelius reported that some zebra crossings and junctions were barely noticeable due to faded markings. Mr Mee reported that a lot of these would be repaired by the new contractor, and a portion of the 2022-23 budget had been set aside for this. The optimal time to carry this out is May-September. Cllr Cornelius noted that she had attended site visits with Dane McKnight, Member Liaison Officer to point out specific problem areas. Mr Edser would contact Mr McKnight to pick these up.

Action: Mr Edser

Cllr Cooke requested assurance that the cost of damage caused by developers would be picked up by them. The Chairman responded that a report was due to be presented at Environment Committee on this and would be added to the Forward Plan.

Action: Governance Officer

Cllr Jajeh enquired what would happen if the work isn't completed within budget. Mr Mee noted that the work is covered under the NRP budget and that using the asset management approach there should be stability, as planned maintenance reduces the amount of reactive work needed.

Cllr Jajeh asked how Tarmac Kier would continue to be incentivised to meet targets. Mr Edser responded that currently the contractor is meeting the criteria in the KPIs and there are mechanisms to incentivise the contractor to perform. He would bring a report back to the Committee on their

performance, and a report would also go to the next Financial Performance and Contracts Committee.

Action: Mr Edser

Cllr Jajeh requested that future reports show data more clearly, for example in the colour-coded section in the Operational Hierarchy Review document on page 198 the colours are not clear.

Action: Mr Edser, Mr Ataie

Mr Mee reported that the Chairman had recently signed a Charter for utility companies to work together with the council, the first time this had been done in a London Borough. Utility companies had been enthusiastic about signing up.

Cllr Schneiderman asked why so few potholes are being picked up despite ongoing review, and why residents and Members were asked to report them. Mr Mee responded that potholes could appear overnight so it was helpful to have additional reporting from residents so that they could be dealt with quickly. Inspectors would also pick them up but had fewer opportunities to discover them immediately. He stressed that residents must take care to remain safe and must never enter the carriageway to try to measure potholes.

Cllr Schneiderman asked for an explanation of Recommendation 2 in the report and whether policy changes would be delegated to officers. Mr Ataie responded that this does not include policy changes and is intended to allow flexibility to make minor changes to the network hierarchy.

The Chairman moved to the vote on the officer's recommendations, which were unanimously APPROVED.

It was RESOLVED:

- 1. that the Committee approved the 2022 LBB Highway Infrastructure Safety Inspection Manual (HISIM) as part of the Authority's overall Highway Infrastructure Asset Management system.**
- 2. that the Committee delegated authority to the Executive Director for Environment to review the Operational Network Hierarchy as required, in consultation with the Chairman of the Environment Committee, to ensure a risk-based approach to highway safety inspection is maintained.**

10. FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT

Mr Mee introduced the report. He stated that part of the problem with foul water and flooding had been due to water companies' sewers overcharging. One of his statutory duties is as Lead Local Flood Risk Authority, being responsible for coordinating work with the Environment Agency, Thames Water, and other utilities. Mr Mee added that Ms Rushi Sayal, Senior Flood Risk Engineer, and Mr Ali had secured funding of £6million in a joint bid with the London Borough of Harrow, to mitigate some of the issues. In a few months' time a detailed flood management strategy would be presented to the Committee, which included changing some of the Borough's watercourses.

The Chairman noted that the table in Appendix 3 was provided in response to Cllr Schneiderman's comments at the last meeting, and detailed current issues and how they were being dealt with.

Cllr Cooke requested that the Committee be updated by email on ongoing issues, as these can be serious incidents that Ward Members need to get involved with.

Cllr Cooke requested greater detail in future reports, to include the specific location of incidents, such as a postcode or description of the section of road affected.

Mr Edser would provide an update after the meeting on the items at Section 4.1 and flood risk management plan measures to be put in place.

Action: Mr Edser

The Chairman moved to the vote on the officer's recommendations, which were unanimously APPROVED.

It was RESOLVED:

- 1. that the Committee noted the background regarding flooding and drainage issues within the Borough and the action plan being delivered in line with the Councils Flood Risk Management Plan Measures (2021-27).**

11. HIGHWAY MATERIAL PALETTE

Mr Edser reported that Tarmac Kier, Barnet's partner, is one of largest providers of highway materials in the country. The new contract presented an opportunity to review how the council assesses the materials used on the highways and improve sustainability, including the supply chain and its carbon footprint. He noted that Barnet has a duty as an authority to drive down its carbon footprint, without reducing the quality of operations.

Mr Edser reported that he chairs a Joint Working Group with the contractors. Every role in the programme is 'buddied' so that the council and other operators are providing true joint delivery.

Mr Edser noted that the programme and material palette would be rolled out from 1st April 2022.

The Chairman moved to the vote on the officer's recommendations, which were unanimously APPROVED.

It was RESOLVED:

- 1. that the Committee considered and agreed to the introduction of a Highway Material Palette as defined in the report for use in the delivery of the Council's Reactive and Planned Maintenance activities including the NRP and CIL programme from 1 April 2022.**

12. HIGHWAYS FUTURE SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGY

Mr Mee reported that the Highways service would be provided in-house by September 2023, which is the time the Capita contract will end. The exclusivity clause has been taken out of the contract with Tarmac Kier, allowing more flexibility to cover high or low demand, and to provide a more agile set up to enable the use of specialist contractors and call-off contracts.

Cllr Jajeh commended officers for learning from previous contracts.

Cllr Cooke agreed with the principle but asked what percentage of the work would be carried out by the primary provider. Mr Mee responded that the bulk of the NRP would be undertaken by Tarmac Kier, with some requirement for design and specialist work outside this. Mr Mee estimated that around 75% of the work would be carried out by the primary contractor.

The Chairman moved to the vote on the officer's recommendations, which were unanimously APPROVED.

It was RESOLVED:

1. that the Committee noted the analysis undertaken in the development of the proposed service delivery strategy options.
2. that the Committee delegated authority to the Executive Director, Environment to progress with the implementation of the “Mixed Economy” service delivery model as set out in Section 2.6 of this report.
3. that the Committee agreed to receive future reports on progress with the implementation of the glide path workstream programme as set out in Section 4.1 of this report.

13. COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Forward Plan was noted. The Chairman noted that the following items would be added:

- Construction damage to highways – progress report
- Update on flood risk management.

The Forward Plan was approved.

14. ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

The Chairman reported that the meeting was Mr Mee’s last prior to retirement. He thanked Mr Mee for his work for the Committee and the environment portfolio and wished him an enjoyable retirement.

Cllr Cornelius spoke in the absence of the Vice Chairman to thank the Chairman for his excellent chairmanship over the past year.

Cllr Schneiderman thanked all the officers and all Members for informative debates over the past year.

The meeting finished at 9.35 pm