



Cabinet
24 August 2015

Report from Scrutiny Committee

For Action

Wards affected:
ALL

Long term transport strategy

1.0 Summary

1.1 The Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 12 August 2015, considered the report now before Cabinet on the Council's future transport strategy. The Committee heard from Councillor Southwood and the Head of Transportation who explained that the strategy presented a long term framework and needed to be seen in conjunction with supporting strategies that provided more detail such as the cycling strategy. In future years a walking strategy and a freight strategy would be developed.

1.2 However, the Committee expressed concern that the strategy was too brief and lacked ambition. Members felt that it lacked evidence in places whilst making certain assertions and was rooted in the possibilities as they related to Transport for London (TfL) and the availability of funding rather than going beyond this into areas where the Council needed to send out strong messages and councillors needed to lobby to address some of the major transport concerns in the borough.

1.3 The Scrutiny Committee felt that a revised version of the strategy was needed.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 Scrutiny Committee recommends that Cabinet defer taking a decision on approving the Long Term Transport Strategy for Brent so that fuller consideration can be given to the points raised on it by the Committee;

2.2 Scrutiny Committee requests that Cabinet note the comments made by the Committee and agrees to the recommendations below being more fully addressed in the finally agreed strategy:

- i. The strategy needs to be more ambitious and incorporate reference to schemes on which the Council might need to lobby in order to see them progress.
- ii. The strategy should not be restricted to only those schemes and improvements that might be supported by TfL and included in LIP submissions, especially bearing in mind the forthcoming London Mayoral Election when a new Mayor will be elected who might have different priorities. There is a need for the serious public transport issues and road usage problems to be addressed.
- iii. Reference should be included of the Dudden Hill rail line and its potential.
- iv. The possibility of a conflict of approach with neighbouring boroughs and the need to develop shared visions with other boroughs on those transport issues at the borough boundary should be articulated.
- v. Greater focus should be given on equality of access from the different geographical areas of the borough (North/South – East/West).
- vi. A review of the document should be undertaken to remove some of the assertions made or support them with more evidence based statements and give a clearer focus to the strategy, bearing in mind that many of the ‘daughter’ strategy papers have yet to be written.
- vii. The strategy should include demographic evidence and have a greater focus on access to primary locations such as hospitals, schools, leisure centres etc.
- viii. Greater prominence should be given to the work being undertaken with schools to improve safety and congestion around schools.
- ix. A stronger message should be included on the health effects of diesel and the implications of this around the movement of freight.

3.0 **Detail**

3.1 The Scrutiny Committee heard from Councillor Choudhary and two members of the public: Mr Dilwyn Chambers and Mr David Kaye. The comments put forward included the view that there were gaps in the strategy because there was a lack of reference to the potential for developing rail links. The committee heard criticism that the strategy did not mention global warming or air quality; did not pick up on the uses that could be made of the canals; did not address the transport difficulties caused by Wembley Stadium event days. There was criticism of London TravelWatch which appeared to have achieved little in the way of improvements to transport in the borough. It was pointed

out that Kilburn High Road served one of only two town centres in the borough and yet was not mentioned in the strategy. This was also an example of where the Council had to work with a neighbouring borough and the issue of inter-borough conflict at the borough's boundaries was not picked up in the strategy.

3.2 Members of the Committee in considering the strategy raised the following points:

- i. The strategy appeared to have been overly influenced by the feedback to the consultation and restricted itself to those areas listed in paragraph 6.1 of the covering report.
- ii. There was a lack of information on the budgets available for improvements to transport.
- iii. Reference to the Council's Disabled Transport Fleet and working with other Council departments to improve accessibility was missing.
- iv. The strategy did not articulate or reflect the needs of the borough in order to support future Local Implementation Plan (LIP) annual spending submissions.
- v. Evidence, including demographic data was not included to show the effect car clubs had in different areas of the borough.
- vi. The objective to reduce the number of car journeys by changing behaviour to avoid unnecessary trips was not included, along with more information on the level of car ownership and trends in the borough.
- vii. Whilst recognising that the cycle strategy provided more information, it was felt that reference should be included on the barriers to cycling and the different types of traffic calming measures employed.
- viii. The target for agreeing travel plans with schools needed to be more ambitious than the stated 10% increase.
- ix. The strategy should address the implications of the introduction of the night time tube service.
- x. There was a lack of evidence of what the most effective ways to reduce car speeds were and there was concern about the level of enforcement within 20mph zones.
- xi. Given the continued uncertainty over the expansion of Heathrow, concern was expressed that aspects of the strategy were dependent on this and it was not clear what the Council's current position on Heathrow was.

- xii. The strategy should incorporate the major health provision reconfigurations within the borough and the implications this had for transport to hospitals, other health facilities and hospital parking.
 - xiii. It was felt that the strategy should address not just equality of access for those with disabilities but the disparity between different areas of the borough.
 - xiv. Whilst supporting the air quality targets, mention was made of the importance of monitoring and the need to address the health issues around the use of diesel fuel.
 - xv. In making many of the points referred to, the Committee felt the strategy needed to incorporate more of the cross cutting work being undertaken within the Council.
- 3.4 Given the extent of the comments made by members of the Committee, it was felt that the document was not ready to be submitted to Cabinet for approval.
- 3.3 Councillor Southwood and the Head of Transportation accepted that some of the targets contained in the strategy could be increased and that the overall level of ambition demonstrated in the document could be strengthened. However, it was pointed out that this was an overarching strategy with other sub-strategies supporting it and it was open to review every 5 years as the situation and challenges facing the borough changed.

Councillor Filson
Chair, Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer:
Peter Goss
Democratic Services Manager
peter.goss@brent.gov.uk
020 8937 1353