



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE Held on Monday 27 March 2017 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Southwood (Chair), Butt and Hirani

1. **Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Patel and Farah.

2. **Declarations of Interests**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests, or other interests, declared by Members.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 January 2017 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting, subject to the following amendments:

- (i) In the fifth paragraph of the 'Medway Gardens Petition' agenda item, the minutes make clear that concerns had initially been raised on one of the 10 completed roads, rather than there being no concerns, and that the Council had been working to address these; and
- (ii) Resolution (iii) of the 'Medway Gardens Petition' agenda item, be made clearer in that the Committee was recommending that the *Council* continue to review and update its communications policy for consultation with residents on road maintenance issues, and that the Highways Committee did not have the power to change this policy itself.

4. **Matters Arising (If Any)**

There were no matters arising.

5. **Deputations (If Any)**

The Chair noted that a formal deputation from Mr Robert Dunwell (on behalf of Qara Group of Associations) had been received in respect of Agenda Item No.7, Motorcycles in Bus Lanes. The Committee **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) In accordance with Standing Order 69, the deputation be heard in relation to the agenda item Mr Dunwell wished to speak on; and

- (ii) The agenda be re-arranged to hear the Motorcycles in Bus Lanes item before the Petition for Road Safety Improvements near Wykeham Primary School.

6. Motorcycles in Bus Lanes

The Chair invited Mr Robert Dunwell (representative of Qara Group of Associations) to address the Committee. Mr Dunwell outlined that he had spoken to a number of motorcycle and scooter dealerships and had been in contact with hundreds of motorcyclists to conduct a 'straw poll' and gather feedback on the proposals being put forward by the Council. He also noted that on a personal basis he was a car driver, motorcyclist and pedal cyclist and would use all three modes of transport to get around the borough on a regular basis. Mr Dunwell stated that, on the whole, the proposals for a trial of motorcycles in bus lanes had been welcomed by these stakeholders with a high level of support. The Committee heard that it was felt that advantages (specified in paragraph 3.15 of the report) were agreeable and outweighed the disadvantages. He highlighted, in particular, the positives of improving road safety and the potential for reducing motorcycle casualties. Mr Dunwell concluded that it was appreciated that the Council was taking these steps to introduce this trial.

The Chair then invited Tony Kennedy (the Council's Head of Highways and Infrastructure) to give the Committee a further overview of the proposals. Mr Kennedy outlined that the report provided information on a proposed 24 month trial for allowing motorcycles to use bus lanes on the A404 corridor. The Committee heard that the data captured from this would inform a future policy decision on allowing motorcycles to use bus lanes borough-wide. He noted that the Council planned to publicise the trial widely and that Officers would continue to liaise with Transport for London (TfL) on initiatives which ensured motorcyclists adhered to the speed limits within bus lanes, and also reduced traffic speeds at accident hot spots. Mr Kennedy continued that there were currently 31 bus lanes in Brent and that if the trial provided successful outcomes the plan would ultimately be to roll out this policy to every bus lane in the borough. He highlighted that TfL supported the trial and that two neighbouring Councils (Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and City of Westminster) had recently trialled this proposal with positive results. He concluded that the trial would be monitored and evaluated against a host of different criteria and that a more detailed report which assessed the trial would be provided at a future meeting of the Highways Committee.

Questions arose on whether it was necessary to have a 24 month trial, considering the large, positive evidence base there was already on allowing motorcycles in bus lanes, and also whether the trial could be expanded to include more roads with bus lanes rather than just the A404. Tony Kennedy stated that the Council did consider proposals for a borough-wide trial, but this would have been more expensive at this stage and would have required further budget considerations. He also stated that a longer time period allowed more time for perception surveys with motorcycle groups and TfL alongside analysis of the data captured against the key evaluation criteria. He did however state that the trial period could be shortened to a degree under experimental powers, which was welcomed by the Committee.

Members raised questions about how this scheme could be linked to a road safety campaign to educate both drivers and motorcyclists on the dangers of speeding

and the increased risk of accidents that this caused. It was felt that this would be particularly important for motorcyclists who had just obtained a licence. Tony Kennedy said the Council wanted to work with both young and old drivers and motorcyclists on the importance of adhering to speed limits. He emphasised that part of the scheme included speed surveys, and that the Council also frequently liaised with the Police on their highways initiatives on speeding. Linked to this, the Committee also questioned what the Council could do to educate drivers of larger vehicles, such as freight vehicles, of the need for increased motorcycle awareness. Tony Kennedy said that the Council provided awareness training to both drivers of large vehicles and motorcyclists and it was important that this continued to be publicised. He also noted that the Council also led further awareness training initiatives in schools to highlight this problem early to younger drivers and motorcyclists.

Further questions arose on the level of signage for the proposed trial and whether details would be prominent and clear for road users upon imposition. Tony Kennedy stated that the physical size of signs were guided by traffic regulations but would be as prominent as possible. He expanded further on an earlier point about the Council planning to publicise the scheme widely which would include: developing a full communications plan for advertising the scheme in local magazines, newspapers, online and with posters planned to be sent to motorcycle traders and outlets in the borough.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The contents of the report and information on the experiences of other Local Authorities in terms in a national and regional context be noted;
- (ii) The Council's Head of Highways and Infrastructure be instructed to undertake the necessary statutory procedure to pilot the scheme under experimental powers for a maximum period of 18 months. This being shorter than the recommended 24 months and that during the experimental period of the Order the Head of Highways and Infrastructure consider all representations;
- (iii) The Council's Head of Highways and Infrastructure report back to the next meeting of the Highways Committee (provisionally set as June 2017) on the initial data from the first few months of the trial. This report would look to discuss the viability of shortening the trial period further, subject to positive feedback and bring a recommendation for borough-wide implementation forward or for the trial to be expanded to include additional suitable roads with bus lanes;
- (iv) The Council's Head of Highways and Infrastructure to report back to a future meeting of the Highways Committee (provisionally January 2018) with more detailed data from the trial and make recommendations on a decision to allow motorcyclists to use all bus lanes across the borough; and
- (v) The Council's Head of Highways and Infrastructure ensure the pilot was publicised widely using local motorcycle traders and dealers to promote the scheme.

7. **Petition for Road Safety Improvements Near Wykeham Primary School**

Tony Kennedy introduced the report which informed the Committee of a petition from parents at Wykeham Primary School and which requested that the Council improve road safety around the school. The deadline for signatures in support of the petition closed in December 2016 and was ultimately signed by 160 people, validated by the Council's Governance Team. The report outlined the signatories' specific concerns about the safety of the children at the school including the risk of children being knocked down by cars on the pavement or whilst they crossed the road and also the damage being caused to the pavements by cars parking on them. Mr Kennedy highlighted that the report included that there had been two accidents within the last three years (paragraph 3.12) around the school, but neither of these were school related or had involved children at the school. The Committee heard that the Council had met with the lead petitioner to discuss concerns and had identified improvements in this area which included: enforcing 'school – keep clear' markings using CCTV equipped vehicles; additional guard railing to ensure pedestrians or children could only cross at crossing points; plus new bollards and trees on Annesley Close and Ardley Close to address the issue of cars parking on the pavements. Mr Kennedy concluded that the petitioners had appeared to be satisfied with the outcome after meeting with Council Officers.

Members noted the importance of the School's Bronze Accredited Travel Plan and what could be done to encourage further improvement and whether this could be linked to encouraging different methods of getting to school. Tony Kennedy stated that the Council encouraged all schools in the borough to create and implement a travel plan. He noted that the Council provided assistance to schools on creating these and actively wanted schools to work with them to improve their plans to achieve a higher accreditation. He explained to the Committee that the accreditation was provided by TfL and was valid over a two-year period.

Questions also arose on the issue of parking and the problem it was causing in *"making families squeeze against the fences"*, Members questioned how this could be specifically addressed. Tony Kennedy stated that the Council could potentially further assess the parking on the affected roads and consider proposals such as having parking only being allowed on one side of the road or having footway parking only after 6pm but he highlighted that this would need a necessary consultation period with residents.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The contents of the petition from concerned parents and the issues that were raised regarding road safety improvements near Wykeham Primary School be noted;
- (ii) The outcome of officer's investigations be noted;
- (iii) The Council's Head of Highways and Infrastructure be instructed to implement the actions identified within this report;
- (iv) The Council's Head of Highways and Infrastructure be instructed to undertake any necessary statutory and non-statutory consultation for engineering improvement measures, and implement the scheme where there

were no objections or representations or where he considered these to be groundless;

- (v) The School be strongly encouraged by the Committee to update its travel plan, working with the Council's Safety and Travel Planning Team where necessary, to reflect the proposed changes in the report and to ensure that Local Implementation Plan (LIP) funding could be accessed to implement these; and
- (vi) The Council's Head of Highways and Infrastructure be instructed to review the existing arrangements for footway parking in Annesley Close, Aboyne Road and Ardley Close, particularly during school drop off and collections times with a view to improving pedestrian accessibility and safety.

8. Any Other Urgent Business

There was no urgent business to be transacted.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The Chair said that the next meeting of the Highways Committee would be known upon publication of the Council's annual programme of meetings for 2017/18.

The meeting was declared closed at 7.38 pm

COUNCILLOR ELEANOR SOUTHWOOD
Chair