



**Resources and Public Realm
Scrutiny Committee
14 April 2021**

**Report from the Strategic Director
of Regeneration & Environment**

Brent Transport Strategies

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None
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1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report provides an update on the various Brent transport strategies, including:

- An explanation of the strategies in place;
- Delivery plans and related performance mechanisms;
- An explanation of the transport and highways contracts in place (and current performance) and;
- Consideration of the impact of the Covid19 pandemic on the transport strategies contained within the report.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 To note the progress with the implementation of the various Brent transport strategies and transport and highways contracts and the impact that the Covid19 pandemic has had on these.

3.0 Brent Transport Plans and Strategies – Overview and Progress

3.1 Details of the main Brent transport strategies currently in place and the progress of these is summarised below:

Brent Long-Term Transport Strategy 2015-2035:

3.2 The Long Term Transport Strategy (LTTS) provides the strategic direction for investment in transport in Brent, with the overarching aim of improving transport options for all and to reduce the negative impacts of travel on the borough. Among the key priorities are a commitment to reducing air pollution, improving road safety and the creation of a sustainable and inclusive transport network that can be accessed by everyone.

3.3 Since the publication of the Plan in 2016 some good progress has been made in key areas – particularly in relation to increasing levels of sustainable travel and reducing casualties on our road network. In addition, a range of schemes and initiatives have been implemented aimed at promoting walking and cycling, tackling vehicle emissions and reducing road casualties. Notable highlights include:

- An increase in the number of daily trips made by public transport – up from 202,000 in 2016 to 222,000 in 2020. The overall mode share for Walking, Cycling and Public Transport has also increased to 69% - one of the highest figures for an outer London borough.
- A corresponding reduction in car ownership, with the number of registered vehicles in the borough down from over 101,000 in 2016 to 97,000 in 2019. At the same time, Car Club membership in Brent has risen from around 4,000 in 2016 to over 10,000 in 2020 – a 150% increase.
- The number of people killed or seriously injured on the borough's roads continues to fall, with 119 such casualties in 2019 – down from 150 in 2016.
- Delivery of over 30 school streets – making the journey to school safer for pupils and significantly reducing people's exposure to harmful vehicle emissions. In addition resident parking permits are now carbon emissions based, with higher charges levied against petrol and diesel vehicles.
- Installation of over 150 on-street Electric vehicle charge points between 2018 and 2020, with around another 300 planned for installation in 2021. Recent data from ZapMap reveals that around 34% of on-street households in Brent are within 5 minutes' walk of a public charger.

3.4 Despite this good progress, it is clear that more needs to be done – particularly in respect of reducing the environmental and health impacts of traffic in the borough – levels of which remain high. There is also a clear need for more consistent data to monitor progress going forward. To reflect this and in light of changes to circumstances and new policies/priorities (e.g. Mayors Transport Strategy, Climate Change Emergency, Covid 19), a review of the LTTS is currently underway. A draft plan is scheduled to be taken to Cabinet in Summer 2021 for approval to undertake consultation in Autumn 2021, with the final, revised plan set to be published in early 2022.

Brent Cycling Strategy 2016-2021:

- 3.5 The Brent Cycling Strategy outlines the Council's priorities for securing improvements to the local cycling network and facilities available to cyclists, as a means of increasing the number of cycle trips taking place in the borough. The strategy - developed in consultation with residents, businesses and other stakeholders, contains a set of 5 objectives, a programme of interventions and a series of targets.
- 3.6 The Council is making steady progress towards achieving the objectives and targets set out in the Cycling Strategy. For example, in 2013, only 1% of all trips in Brent were made by bike. The current modal share for cycling is 3% - amongst the highest for all outer London boroughs. Key achievements since 2016 include:
- Implementation of new cycling infrastructure – including 6km of new cycle routes and 20 bike hangers;
 - Delivery of over 800 events and activities as part of the Bike It Plus programme, reaching around 23,000 pupils. This has led to a 117% increase in the number of pupils cycling to school every day;
 - Provision of cycle training for over 740 adults and 3,300 school pupils in 2017/18 – an increase of around 50% on the previous year;
 - Creation of weekly adult bike clubs at Carlton Vale Infant School and expansion of Dr Bike sessions at 9 schools;

Brent Walking Strategy 2017-2022:

- 3.7 The Brent Walking Strategy sets out what the Council aims to do to improve conditions for walking in the borough and to promote walking as a healthy and sustainable way to travel. It also sets out what is needed to improve the safety and security of pedestrians.
- 3.8 Since its publication in 2017, there has been steady progress made towards the various commitments and targets in the plan. For example, pedestrian mode share has increased from 27% (2013/14 - 2015/16 average) to 29% (2015/16 – 2017/18 average) – just shy of the target of 30% by 2021/22. In addition, the number of schools achieving gold status for their travel plans reached 40% in 2020 – far in excess of the target of 30% for the same period. However, it is recognised that more still needs to be done – particularly around reducing pedestrian casualties, the numbers of which remain stubbornly high.

Draft Brent Covid-19 Transport Recovery Plan (2020):

- 3.9 The Draft Brent COVID-19 Transport Recovery Plan outlines how the Council intends to support safe social distancing and safe travel during the current pandemic; and its ambitions for improving road safety, air quality and the health of the borough's residents in the longer-term. Consultation on the draft Plan was held in Summer 2020 and sought the views of Brent's residents and other key stakeholders on the overarching approach and range of proposals contained within the Plan. Feedback from the consultation indicated a high level of support for the plan objectives, priorities and package of interventions; and a willingness on the part of some residents to consider more active modes of travel in the future. A range of suggestions on how transport in Brent

could be improved to enable people to walk and cycle more and to reduce traffic and car use were also submitted.

3.10 Following the publication of the Draft Plan the Council has implemented the first phase of a range of Active Travel schemes/measures identified in the Plan at various locations across the borough. These included:

- The installation of temporary, lightly segregated cycle lanes along the A404 Harrow Road between Wembley Triangle and the North Circular;
- A range of footway widening and pedestrian improvement measures in key town centre locations, including Wembley, Harlesden and Kilburn;
- The creation of Brent Healthy Neighbourhoods;
- The implementation of School Streets across the borough;
- The implementation of bus priority measures along busy corridors to improve bus journey times.

3.11 The majority of these schemes/measures have been implemented under experimental traffic orders, with the public invited to provide comments within the first six months of them being put in place. Feedback received to date reveals a mixed reaction to schemes – with measures including cycle lanes and school streets being generally well received, whilst there has been a level of opposition to some of the Healthy Neighbourhoods schemes. More detailed feedback on these schemes/measures will be provided in a follow-up report to be produced at the end of the six month consultation period, after which the Plan will be reviewed and re-branded as the Brent Active Travel Implementation Plan.

Brent 3rd Local Implementation Plan (LIP3) (2019):

3.12 The LIP outlines the programmes and measures that form the basis for the delivery of improvements to the transport network in the borough to 2041. It also represents the Council's submission to TfL for funding for a range of transport projects for the three-year period 2019/20 - 2021/22 which will address local transport issues and implement the Mayor's Transport Strategy at the local level. Key LIP objectives include connecting people and places; promoting healthy, sustainable travel; improving safety and security; and creating better streets and places.

3.13 Whilst some good progress has been made in 2019/20 with the successful implementation of a range of cycling and walking schemes, road safety improvements, bus priority measures and behaviour change initiatives, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent impact on TfL's finances, led to all borough transport funding being withdrawn in April 2020. Whilst some limited funding was subsequently made available to Councils (see Table 6.1, below) no funding is confirmed beyond this period.

4.0 Brent Transport and Highways Contracts – Overview and Progress

4.1 There are three main areas of highways contracts;

- LoHAC contract which provides for general highway services including both planned and reactive works, gully cleansing and a highway engineering consultation / design.
- Injection patching contract - to carry out a borough wide programme for the repair of potholes and carriageway defects across Brent's highway network using a specialist contractor.
- Major Footway Investment Contracts – three contracts to implement a major investment to improve the condition of the borough's footways

4.2 **The LoHAC (London Highways Alliance) Contract**

The Contract

LoHAC is a call-off contract awarded to Conway AECOM with total value of around £7-8m per annum to deliver highways maintenance and related services on and around the London Borough of Brent Road Network from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2021. The contract was a call off from one of the London Highways Alliance Contract (LoHAC) framework agreements, the product of a collaborative procurement which was accessible to all London Boroughs and Transport for London (TfL). Pending the implementation of the Redefining Local Services initiative, which is considering the delivery of all environmental service contracted works, the contract has been extended for two years from 1st April 2021 and novated to FM Conway, who will deliver the contract with support from AECOM for the highway engineering consultation / design.

The Scope

Through the LoHAC framework for north-west London, Brent chose the following core services as part of each individual borough call off contract:

- Safety Inspections – later taken back in house as of Nov 2018
- Bridges and other Structures (including Inspection of)
- Design Services; Site Investigations and Surveys
- Road Pavements (including minor repairs and resurfacing)
- Kerbs, Footways and Paved Areas
- Street Furniture , Traffic Signs & Road Markings
- Road Restraint Systems and Fencing
- Gully cleansing & Drainage
- Earthworks
- Emergency Call-Out Service

Performance

Performance of the services is measured by a suite of 26 Key Performance Indicators , of which 20 were relevant to the services called off by Brent. The Performance Indicators covered broad aims such as Public and Workforce kept Safe; Reduced Disruption on the Network; Preventative Maintenance is effective; Scheme Delivery is Effective; and Contract Requirements fulfilled.

The contractor has performed well in delivering the Emergency Call Outs and the cyclic gully cleansing (the latter after a shaky start). However the percentage of highways reactive maintenance defects repaired on time has often been far below the 98% required, with backlogs of unrepaired defects building up in the past. Latest performance (Feb 2021) indicated that 80% of repairs due in February were completed

4.3 **Injection Patching Contract**

The Contract

This contract has operated over 2019-20 and 2020-21 To carry out a borough wide programme for the repair of potholes and carriageway defects across Brent's highway network using a specialist injection patching contractor.

Scope

The contract delivered a large number of repairs across the borough, approximately 60 per day, over a sustained period of 10 months each year or until the £450,000 budget p.a was exhausted. The programme was subject to weather and accessibility. The aims were to reduce the number of visible defects (potholes / cracks) on our network and improve the overall feel of the local environment; to reduce the volume of customer reports and complaints received by the Highways & Infrastructure Service regarding the condition of the carriageway; and to improve satisfaction levels amongst our residents and businesses.

Performance

By the end of the first year's programme on 29th September 2019, the contractor Velocity had visited 438 roads in 21 Wards and completed 26,087 repairs an average of 60 repairs a day. With a relatively mild winter in between, and consequently minor road surface deterioration, the second year's operations were not quite as fruitful, but still achieved the repair of nearly 9000 defects. Contractual performance was measured by means of a KPI scorecard covering "soft" measurement of Communication & Reporting; Health, Safety & Environment; Customer Care; Site Standards & Quality Management and Performance & Project Delivery. The contractor achieved good/excellent ("Green") scores across the board.

4.4 **Major Footway Investment Contracts**

The Contracts

The £20m Footway Improvement Programme commenced in summer 2019 and due to be completed by summer 2021. Major investment in the footways is aimed to address the following; achieving greater equality in condition between footways and carriageways; accommodating members' requests for regenerating High Streets, local shopping areas and other places of interest by giving them greater priority, so improving their look and feel; and replacing slabs with asphalt when doing full footway renewals. For the major investment in footways the objectives are;

- To reduce the amount of expensive reactive maintenance and increase the more cost effective programmed maintenance;
- To achieve greater equality in condition between footways and roads.
- To deliver our statutory duty to manage and maintain our footways so they are fit for purpose and safe to use.

Scope

The whole work package was split the programme amongst three contractors on a geographical basis. The works include

1. **Major Footway Resurfacing** – As per normal highway capital maintenance programme. This and the above scheme type would prioritise footways in the vicinity of schools, places of worship, medical centres etc.

2. **Refurbishment of Local Shopping Parades** – a “light touch” design, to solve obvious problems such as damage due to overrunning vehicles, and to take the opportunity to declutter, to minimise future demands on maintenance.
3. **Major Town Centre Refurbishments** –only one or two in number; using standard materials wherever possible to create, cost effectively, an enhanced environment but one which can be effectively maintained in the future.

Performance

The original footway improvements work programme started on site in November 2019, and in spite of the delays due to COVID 19, progress by all three contractors on the original programme of improvement works has been good, with the majority of works (over 90%) either complete or in now progress. Design work on the six shopping areas is progressing and we anticipate work starting on site in the summer of 2021. The £1m budget originally set aside for a Kilburn High Road scheme in conjunction with LB Camden is still ring-fenced and available; it did not form part of the original South Area contract given the continuing uncertainty around this scheme.

In drawing up the original footway improvements work programme (“Phase 1”) , a suitable contingency was included in the estimates for any unforeseen costs arising. All three contracts have gone very smoothly and mainly (so far) the only contingencies realised have been variations in cost when final site measurements have been carried out on completed schemes, a normal part of the process. This, together with funding freed up by locations where concerns about the use of asphalt meant only reactive maintenance has been carried out, means there is unallocated funding for a Phase 2 of the programme, which is now in progress.

Contractual performance is being measured by means of a KPI scorecard covering “soft” measurement of Communication & Reporting; Health, Safety & Environment; Customer Care; Site Standards & Quality Management and Performance & Project Delivery. The contractors are getting achieved good/excellent (“Green”) scores across the board.

5.0 Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic

- 5.1 The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed how the transport system is being used across Brent and London as a whole. Since March 2020, there has been a significant reduction in trips being made on the transport network and the way in which people choose to travel has also changed – initially with more people walking and cycling, but increasingly more journeys by private car. Table 5.1, below provides an overview of some of the main impacts of the pandemic on transport and highlights some of the future issues/opportunities.

Table 5.1: Covid-19 Pandemic – Impacts on Transport/Future Issues and Opportunities

Cycling/Walking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in cycling/walking following initial lock-down due to low levels of traffic and limited public transport options. • Seen as a key form of transport/exercise during pandemic and an important means of allowing people to maintain social distancing whilst travelling. • In the longer term, increased use of these modes seen as critical in helping address problems of congestion, overcrowding on public transport, air pollution and to mitigate climate change.
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dramatic reduction in number/capacity of public transport services during initial lock-down. • Post lockdown, the need to maintain social distancing means capacity still significantly reduced on most services. Use of public transport still an unattractive/impractical proposition for many. • Increased homeworking/the use of video conference technology has significantly reduced the need for commuting/face-to-face meetings. Viability of some public transport services questionable if passenger numbers/income from fares remains low. • If trends continue, potential that future investment in new public transport infrastructure will be diverted elsewhere to address other priorities.
Private Vehicles/Freight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road traffic at historically low levels during initial lock-down. • Traffic levels have increased as lockdown conditions have eased and people return to work. • Future traffic levels will depend on whether people decide to commute less/work from home more, whether public transport services remain viable and whether additional provision is made for cycling/walking. • Freight traffic (home deliveries) has also increased with people unable/unwilling to travel to shops, supermarkets, restaurants etc.

5.2 The single biggest challenge to the progression of the various transport strategies and contracts has been the lack of available funding. Local Implementation Plan (LIP) funding, the Council’s primary source of funding for delivering transport improvements in the borough, was withdrawn in April 2020 and funding for other TfL funded programmes, such as large-scale cycle improvements, Liveable Neighbourhoods, etc. are likely to be unavailable for the foreseeable future. As a result, many schemes/projects have either had to be paused or stopped altogether. Further details on the financial implications are set out in Section 6, below.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 The primary source of funding for schemes and initiatives to improve transport infrastructure and travel choices in Brent is Local Implementation Plan (LIP) funding, allocated through Transport for London (TfL).

- 6.2 Following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent impact on TfL's finances, all borough transport funding was withdrawn in April 2020. Some limited funding was subsequently made available to Councils, to be spent by March 2021, but no funding is currently available beyond this period. Table 6.1, below, provides a summary of the funding position for 2020/21.

Table 6.1: 2020/21 Changing Funding Position/Timeline

Original LIP funding allocation (Dec 2019)	£2.347m (comprising £2.247m core Corridors, Neighbourhoods and Supporting Measures and £0.1m discretionary Local Transport Measures funding).
LIP Funding withdrawn (March 2020)	£0.454m sunk costs awarded until end of October 2020.
Emergency Transport Funding (TfL Streetspace; DfT Active Travel funding) (July & Nov 2020)	Streetspace Funding: £0.664m awarded July 2020; £0.216m awarded Nov 2020. Active Travel Funding: £0.1m
LIP funding partially reinstated (Nov 2020)	£0.837m (comprising £0.787m core Corridors, Neighbourhoods and Supporting Measures and £0.05m discretionary Local Transport Measures funding).
Bus Priority funding allocation (Dec 2020)	£0.942m (including £0.5m for Kensal Corridor scheme).
Tranche 2 Active Travel Funding (Jan 2021)	£0.521m (including £0.05m for cycle scheme design and £0.471m for LTN/School Streets).

7.0 Legal Implications

- 7.1 None relevant to this report.

8.0 Equality Implications

- 8.1 The public sector duty set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its public functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share that protected characteristic. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 8.2 The various transport strategies and delivery programmes are assessed by way of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). During their development and the communication and consultation process, due consideration is given to all protected characteristics including people with learning disabilities, deaf and blind (as well as deaf blind) residents, people with dementia and their carers, young children, young people and older people.

9.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

9.1 Consultation and partnership working have been central to the development of our transport strategies and programmes and ongoing engagement will continue to inform the planning and implementation of our transport schemes and initiatives, with a strong emphasis on ensuring that decisions and delivery more closely reflect the needs of residents and businesses. The Brent Active Travel Forum and Brent Public Transport Forum in particular provide a platform for Ward Members, community and transport campaign/user groups and a range of other local stakeholders to shape the future of transport provision in the borough.

10.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

10.1 None.

Report sign off:

Alan Lunt
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and Environment