

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BUSINESS PANEL

Tuesday, 25 January 2022 at 7.05 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Paul Maslin, Octavia Holland, Peter Bernards, Mark Ingleby, Louise Krupski, Joan Millbank, John Muldoon and Luke Sorba

MEMBER(S) OF THE PANEL ALSO JOINING THE MEETING VIRTUALLY:
Councillor Luke Sorba.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Juliet Campbell and Councillor Susan Wise

MEMBER(S) UNDER STANDING ORDERS ALSO PRESENT AT THE MEETING:
Councillor Patrick Codd, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport

NB: The Councillor listed as joining virtually was not in attendance for the purpose of the meeting being quorate, any decisions taken, or to satisfy the requirements of s85 Local Government Act 1972.

OFFICER(S) ALSO JOINING THE MEETING VIRTUALLY: Director of Public Services, Director of Communities, Partnerships and Leisure, Assistant Chief Executive, Head of Strategic Transport, Head of Overview & Scrutiny, and Head of Committee Business.

Clerk: Senior Committee Manager (In person)

1. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the open meeting held on 16 November 2021 be confirmed as an accurate record.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Maslin declared an interest in respect of item 4. He said that the report details a scheme for the delivery of new and affordable homes at the Shaftesbury Christian Centre. The site is in his ward and he was a strong supporter of the scheme. He intended to leave the meeting physically for the duration of the consideration of this item.

3. Key Decision Plan

The Head of Committee Business introduced the Key Decision Plan report to the Panel, and it was

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

4. Open Session - Decision by Mayor and Cabinet on 12 January 2022

Councillor Paul Maslin, the Chair of the Panel, welcomed Members and Officers present at the meeting, including Councillor Patrick Codd, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport.

The Chair informed the meeting that he had made a request for the Panel to consider the decision taken by the Mayor and Cabinet on 12 January 2022 relating to “Lewisham and Lee Green Low Traffic Neighbourhoods: Consultation report and next steps”. The questions and requests made by the Panel in relation to this Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) topic are attached as an annex to these Minutes.

In response to questions from Councillor Octavia Holland, the Cabinet Member informed the Panel that at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, he was often approached by residents about the LTNs when on the streets, and at his doorsteps, and he responded to enquiries accordingly. It was stated that the Council also received and responded to approximately 150 emails and several telephone calls from residents during the experimental introduction of the LTNs. The Panel was advised that residents were provided with information about the practicalities of the LTNs, and their views were considered during the implementation, particularly from those living in the affected areas in Lewisham.

The Panel noted that only about 16 emails were received by the Council after the recent proposals were agreed by the Mayor and Cabinet at its meeting on 12 January 2022 and of those, 40% of residents informed that they were supportive, and the remainder 60% asked further questions about the implementation, with fewer notifications against. The Cabinet Member expressed a view that fewer people seemed to want to take about the LTNs nowadays, apart from residents living in the Lee Green Ward, where implementation remained a concern. Notwithstanding that, Council would be assessing and responding to recent emails and any other enquiries from residents in relation to the revised scheme.

The Cabinet Member also responded to questions from Councillor John Muldoon, advising that there should be no reason why scrutiny Members should not be privy to the same advice provided by officers to the executive. The Cabinet Member confirmed to the Panel that the information and advice given in relation to the LTNs had been considered in the published officers’ report in the form of options to inform the proposals upon which the Mayor and Cabinet’s decision on 12 January 2022 as based.

In response to a question from Councillor Luke Sorba, the Director of Public Realm (the Director) advised the Panel that responses to consultation about the LTNs were considerably low because the scheme was introduced very quickly. It was stated that a breakdown on ethnicity of residents in favour or against the scheme would be circulated to Members in due course. Notwithstanding that, the Panel should note that it was not an unusual experience for councils across London to receive lower rates of responses to consultations from the local Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community. The Panel was advised that the Council had acknowledged that more effort was required corporately, and liaisons with ‘Voices of Lewisham’ and other local advocacy groups had commenced, with a view to understand the drivers

needed to encourage Lewisham's residents to engage, particularly those from the BAME community.

The Director responded to another question by Councillor Sorba, advising the Panel that the consultation about the LTNs did not highlight a comparison about displacement against the evaporation of traffic levels because there was not sufficient time to design the scheme and engage on a set of measures.

Notwithstanding that, it should be noted that the aim of the LTNs was to affect behavioural change. The Panel was advised that implementation of the scheme was at the early stages, and the Mayor and Cabinet would be monitoring data about the impact and environmental improvements alongside incentive measures on a six-monthly basis. The Director stated that the monitoring assessment would take into consideration the fact that people's working patterns had been changing due to the lifting of some restrictions which were in place at the initial stages of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Head of Strategic Transport added that academic research relating to the impact of implementation of LTNs across London was underway, and Lewisham would be learning and applying best practice from that work.

The meeting also noted questions raised by Councillor Peter Bernards. In response, the Cabinet Member echoed statement by the Director that the scheme was introduced quickly. Notwithstanding that, lower paid workers, carers, and drivers of delivery vans and taxis should be able to travel easily within the LTNs. The Cabinet Member confirmed that problems with signage that were identified at the initial implementation of the LTNs were corrected. It was stated that the Council's website had been updated to highlight directions of restrictions on Lewisham's roads. The Panel was also advised by the Cabinet Member businesses in Lewisham had welcomed the review, and some had switched their travelling modes to bicycles and motorbikes. The Cabinet Member was of a view that because of the number of LTNs connections across London, residents who would otherwise take short journeys in cars would find it convenient to do so by some other environmentally friendly ways overtime, and that longer journeys by vehicles would be easier.

Continuing with his response to Councillor Bernards, the Cabinet Member stated that in the future, cameras would be installing cameras to all physical barriers on Lewisham roads, with a view to provide clear access for hospital ambulances and other emergency vehicles. The Head of Strategic Planning added that the Council had been liaising with officials from the emergency services, and they had expressed a preference for cameras to be installed to physical barriers, particularly roads impacted by the LTNs.

The Cabinet Member also responded to a question by Councillor Mark Ingleby, advising the Panel that although could not provide a timeline, he was certain that the Council would be applying complementary measures such as additional school street places, reductions to width of roads, the planning of trees, and the widening of pavements in designated areas to further enhance implementation of LTNs.

Following on from the Cabinet Member's response in the latter paragraph, the Director informed the Panel that the LTNs complementary measures would also include the erection of electric charging points and the planting of trees. Thus, Highways officers would have to coordinate implementation with their colleagues in

the relevant work disciplines and prioritise resources for approval by the Mayor and Cabinet. Therefore, it would be unrealistic to apportion timescales to deliver the workstreams. Notwithstanding that, delivery would be scheduled within reasonable a timeline.

The Director also responded to an enquiry by the Chair, Councillor Maslin. , advising the Panel that corporate learning from work undertaken to implement the LTNs included the speedily implementation of the LTN scheme.

The Panel was advised that the Government wanted the LTNs to be introduced very quickly at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, and at a time when Council officers were learning new ways of remote working. Thus, to design and implement a scheme of such significance, which included a widescale consultation was challenging. Thus, there was not sufficient details to support implementation, in particular that a set of data could not be collated in time, therefore was unable to consider incentive measures to encourage behavioural change. It was stated that future scheme of such significance would be implemented without identified funding and plans in place for robust collection of data before and time, and plan to understand the model the effects of such a scheme and the effect on the wider community. Furthermore, steps would be taken to gauge public interests, and colleagues I the Freedom of Information Team and those in central Communication Team would be aware of the activities to allow them time to organise resources to deal with consultation and responses in a timely fashion.

Commenting on the response from the Director, the Chair stated that he was also interested in the Council's mitigation and contingency armoury of the application of the LTNs but acknowledged that it would be a speculation because time was needed to monitor and assess the impact of implementation.

The Cabinet Member closed by stating that notwithstanding the uncertainty regarding to timeframe, officers would aim to progress quickly with the implementation of complementary measures to operate alongside the LTNs

The Chair echoed a recommendation made by Councillor Krupski, which requested that the Mayor and Cabinet should consider supporting local and national charities who were assisting Lewisham's residents to cycle, particularly those working with the BAME group, and the local refugees' community.

The meeting also noted that an officer's advised about the potential of a legal challenge because of the implementation of the LTNs in Lewisham would be circulated to Members in due course.

On behalf the Panel, the Chair thanked Councillor Codd and officers for attending and responding to questions at the meeting.

In closing, the Chair remarked that advance notification of topics to be considered would ensure that scrutiny was open, transparent and honest.

The Panel

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Questions/requests/recommendation by Members of the Panel in relation to decision made by the Mayor & Cabinet on 12 January 2022 relating to:

“Lewisham and Lee Green Low Traffic Neighbourhood: Consultation report and next steps”

From Councillor Paul Maslin (Chair)

1. What has been the experience of the implementation of the Local Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN)? What are the lessons learned, particularly how to improve policy formation and policy implementation in the future?
2. Whether the change in the portfolio holder’s responsibility for transport and legal LTN has had any detrimental impact on the policy formation and implementation?
3. Why was there a decision to delay the publication of the LTN consultation results?
4. Considering the results of the consultation, how do you feel about an issue which had stirred up very little support but a lot of opposition?
5. Requested that officers state corporate learning through this experience.
6. How vulnerable is the Council to legal challenge over the actions we have taken regarding the Lee Green Local Transport Network, as had happened elsewhere?
7. What would be the Council’s mitigation and contingency armoury in regards to the implementation of the LTN?

From Councillor Octavia Holland (Vice Chair)

1. Requested an update about the sense of public feelings and reactions to the LTN decision.
2. What kinds of correspondence by email or other means had the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport received since the LTN decision was made? How does that compare to the types of correspondence that were received when the first iteration of the LTN was implemented?
3. Based on the types of questions received, what is the Cabinet Member of Environment and Transport’s sense of how the public had received the LTN decision?

From Councillor John Muldoon

1. What advice was provided to the executive when the LTN was set up? Does scrutiny Members have the same right to such advice?

From Councillor Luke Sorba

1. Requested breakdown by ethnicity (and socio-economic profiles if possible) regarding respondents to the LTN consultation regarding those in favour and those against the revised scheme.
2. Requested data that are particular to Lewisham’s LTN about the impact of displacement of traffic versus evaporation of traffic

From Councillor Peter Bernards

1. Was type of Equality Impact Assessment undertaken prior to the proposals being developed?
2. The scheme was developed during the lockdown when most people were working from home. What arrangements would be in place to remedy a situation after implementation, if monitoring data shows that the scheme was impacting negatively in the community?
3. Would the monitoring data contain information as to how the scheme was impacting local community, in particularly those from Black and Ethnic Minority groups, as they often work front-line jobs as carers, taxi-drivers, and delivery drivers?

Commenting on officers' response to points 2 & 3 questions by Councillor Bernards, Councillor Maslin stated that he also would like to know the Council's mitigation and contingency armoury in regards to the scheme, but acknowledged that it would be speculation,

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4. Had there been an impact on emergency services as a result of implementing the LTNs in regard to response time?

From Councillor Mark Ingleby

1. As part of the Council's Place-Based Strategy, would there be complementary measures that would include working with neighbouring communities of the LTNs, and roll out best practice across Lewisham to reduce speed and plant trees, with a view to reduce carbon emissions and create healthy neighbourhoods?

From Councillor Louise Krupski

Recommendation to the Mayor and Cabinet to consider supporting local and national charities that are assisting Lewisham residents to cycle, particularly those from the BAME Group and the local refugee community.

5. Open Session - Decision Taken by Executive Director of Community Services

6. Scrutiny Update Report

The Panel received an update report presented by the Head of Overview and Scrutiny as follows:

Select Committees

The Panel noted the penultimate round meetings were underway. Those Committees with budget proposals to consider had considered them, or were in the process to do so. It was stated that the Public Accounts Select Committee would be meeting on Thursday, 27 January 2022 to consider the budget in the round, and make a collective scrutiny referral to Mayor and Cabinet.

The Panel was further advised that the Committees had been appointing Climate Change champions to ensure that work programmes take into account climate emergency considerations

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Panel noted that the next meeting would take place on 22 February, and the focus would be on the Future Lewisham priority “An Economically Sound Future”. Also noted was that the Chief Executive of the New Economics Foundation would address Members on the sustainable local economic growth. It was stated that the Committee would also receive information from officers on the local context and activity relating to supporting residents into work, and attracting and supporting businesses.

Task and Finish Groups

The Panel was pleased to note that the work of all the groups were progressing well. It was noted that the groups would meet in February to agree their final reports and recommendations. The full Overview and Scrutiny Committee would consider the Mayor and Cabinet response to any recommendations made by those groups.

In response to a question from Councillor Joan Millbank, the Head of Overview and Scrutiny advised the Panel that once the current Task and Finish Groups had concluded, steps would be taken to learn from the exercise about what had gone well and what did not, with a view to improve scrutiny work practice in the next municipal year. The Chair commented that there would be a separate political discussion amongst Members as well.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

7. Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime Drug Diversion Scheme Pilot - Verbal Briefing

The Director of Communities, Partnerships and Leisure gave a verbal report to the Panel, highlighting the work undertaken by the Council in research about the impact of the criminal justice system relating to low level drugs offences in Lewisham.

The Panel noted the report. It was recognised that the Mayor of London's Office for Policing and Crime was undertaking a similar piece of work. Thus, there was a possible of partnership working with the Council on the issue.

In response to question from Councillor Muldoon, the Director informed the Panel that given the street nature of the activities undertaken by cannabis users and sellers, the responsibility for undertaking diversion work rested with the Metropolitan Police. The Director also quoted an extract from the National Drug Strategy to highlight to the Panel that local discussions were consistent with the national approach:

“Sanctions will be proportionate and relevant to the circumstances. For example, those who are caught in possession of drugs for the first time may be required to attend drugs awareness courses, so they have the opportunity to understand the harms of drugs and change their behaviour. In some cases, an individual may need more than one opportunity to make this change in their lifestyle and police forces will have discretion to support this. Those who do not engage will continue to offend. The police will be able to impose further requirements including living a fine or requiring them to do

work in their community or agree to undertake drug treatment for this pattern of drug use. Ultimately, they could receive a caution or face prosecution”.

The Panel noted details about the value of diversionary activities that was keeping young people outside of the criminal justice system in regards cannabis usage.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.