

**ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held at 1.00 pm on 8 June 2020

Present:

Councillor Will Harmer (Chairman)
Councillor Kieran Terry (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Ian Dunn, Samaris Huntington-Thresher,
Melanie Stevens, Harry Stranger and Michael Tickner

Also Present:

Councillor Mary Cooke
Councillor William Huntington-Thresher

**55 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF
SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies were received from Councillor Colin Hitchins

56 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

**57 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF REPORTS TO THE
ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO
HOLDER**

**a FUNDING SUBMISSION FOR HIGHWAY MEASURES TO
SUPPORT SOCIAL DISTANCING DURING RECOVERY FROM
LOCKDOWN**

Report Number ES20029:

An urgent meeting had been convened to discuss the above referenced report which looked at the issue of funding submissions for highway measures to support social distancing during recovery from lockdown. The meeting had been convened as an 'urgent' meeting due to the need to submit applications at the earliest opportunity. The meeting had been convened as a virtual meeting.

The Assistant Director for Traffic and Parking provided an overview of the report and its recommendations.

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The Government had made funds available to London boroughs via TfL, DfT and MHCLG (Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government) mostly through a bidding process, with a smaller part via a fixed allocation. As the bidding process had already commenced, there was a high degree of urgency for the Council to submit potential schemes.

The Assistant Director for Traffic and Parking explained that £45M of 'bailout' funds were now available to boroughs to bid for on a 'first-come, first-served' basis--to implement quick measures assisting people to travel safely as an alternative to public transport. If all boroughs submit timely and suitable bids, then in theory this £45M would be split evenly between all of the London boroughs, which means that each borough would receive an allocation from this pot of funding of approximately £1.1M to £1.3M per borough.

Funding from the Department for Transport, (*Emergency Active Travel Funding Indicative Allocations. Block of Funding 3*) had also become available. Bromley had been invited to bid for a provisional allocation of £100k between now and September, with more to follow based on Bromley's achievements. This funding had to be used for schemes that were able to be implemented swiftly to enable people to travel safely. Submissions for this were due by June 5th. Resultantly, after discussions with the Portfolio Holder and Members, bids had been submitted which matched the sort of schemes outlined in the report, and which were in line with current LBB policy. It was explained that the £100k was an indicative value, and that LBB could get slightly more or less than this amount. The £100k was an initial tranche of funding to be allocated; more funding would be available to boroughs later, depending on how successful they had been in utilising the initial allocation to develop projects.

The Assistant Director for Traffic and Parking informed the Committee that a third block of funding was available from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. This was the 'Reopening High Streets Safely Fund'. The total fund value was £50m. This was a nationwide fund and funding was allocated on a per capita basis—so the larger the borough the more funding would be apportioned. The allocation for Bromley was £295k. As LBB had received this funding allocation, work had already begun on purchasing signs and putting in appropriate markings in various parts of the borough.

A Member referred to recommendation 2.5 (*The AD Traffic and Parking will maintain a list of proposed schemes in preparation for future opportunities should they arise in FY20/21*) and suggested that Members and Housing Associations be consulted so that they could provide feedback to update the list. He also suggested that this should be made public so that everyone could be aware of the proposed schemes. The Member pointed out that LBB (as noted in the provisional final accounts) had an earmarked reserve of £167m, and he suggested that if it was necessary, some of this funding could be used to fund good schemes rather than such schemes being abandoned. The Member further suggested that proposals should include the implementation of 20 mph speed restrictions, as this would create a safer environment for

both pedestrians and cyclists. He expressed the view that the implementation of 20 mph speed limits was now more widely accepted. He further directed the Committee's attention to the submissions that had been drafted by the West Beckenham and Copers Cope Residents' Association in this regard.

The Assistant Director for Traffic and Parking (responding to the issue of making schemes on the list public) said that much detail regarding the schemes had already been outlined in the report which was in itself a public document. It was also the case that officers did their best to keep ward members up to speed with proposed developments in their wards. He explained that for the schemes that received funding, the plans would have to be developed quickly and they could also be subject to change which meant that it may be difficult to keep everyone fully informed without causing a delay in the implementation process; but officers would endeavour to keep Members as fully informed as possible.

The Chairman commented that ward councillors were in a good position to help officers in this regard, based on their local knowledge and by the comments that they noted from local residents either via social media or directly via emails. He suggested that Members feedback to officers comments received that would be of most use in relation to the proposed schemes.

The Portfolio Holder made the distinction between two types of lists; one would be a list for internal discussion between Members and officers, and the other list would most likely consist of schemes that funding had been agreed for, and so could subsequently be implemented. The Portfolio Holder pointed out that the matter of the speed limit had been discussed previously and various factors relating to this should be borne in mind, not least the cost. There was also the matter that the current speed limit was often not adhered to, and so on this basis it was logical to assume that any new speed limit (if introduced) may also not be adhered to. He felt that a more successful approach had been where engineering works had changed the attitude to the area. The Portfolio Holder stated that the main focus should be on the implementation of those schemes that were most likely to succeed, and to do this quickly. If there was to be consultation with ward councillors, then it was imperative that a quick response be received.

A Member commented that the proposals had been well received by the residents of Chislehurst. He highlighted the Bike Maintenance Scheme and the Cycle Confidence Training Courses as being crucial for getting cyclists back on the road. He was pleased to note the move towards a 'transport shift' and felt that the work of the School Travel Planners was crucial for this. He asked if there was anything that ward councillors could do to help make the bids successful. The Assistant Director for Traffic and Parking responded that the work around cycle confidence schemes had been undertaken by LBB on a low level for some time; there was no provision in the current TfL plans for funding for this. He hoped that funding would be provided for the School Travel Planning Team. As far as ward members helping to progress schemes,

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he stated that at this stage there was probably not much that Members could do. Going forward they may be able to deal with any knock backs from TfL by engaging community support and feedback.

A Member expressed an alternative view with regard to the 20mph speed limit. He stated that there was no evidence that the lower limit reduced road traffic accidents and that it was difficult to enforce. He was of the opinion that the reduced speed limit caused increased air pollution. He favoured the Portfolio Holder's view of controlling traffic flow and speed by engineering works.

A Member informed the Committee that the proposals had been well received in Chelsfield and Pratts Bottom. She requested that some support be provided in the form of a crossing to make it easier for parents crossing Rashmore Hill when taking their children to school. She also highlighted problems with the main footpath in Chelsfield Village which needed cleaning and cutting back. Reference was also made to the verges on the A224 so that the public could walk on both sides and to improving signage in the area for cyclists, especially with regard to less experienced cyclists.

In response to the issues raised regarding Chelsfield and Pratts Bottom, the Assistant Director for Traffic and Parking stated that officers were working on a solution to the problems highlighted regarding Rashmore Road. He suggested having a conversation outside of the meeting with the ward councillor to discuss issues that she had raised regarding Chelsfield Village. He expressed the view that the funding being provided did not cover cutting the verges on the A224. He explained that cycle route audits had been undertaken to look at the signage on cycle routes and some work was planned for this in the near future.

A discussion took place concerning schools and school travel plans. The Committee heard that discussion with schools had taken place between schools and the Council's School Travel Planning Team, and that good dialogue was ongoing.

A discussion took place regarding 'Vision Zero' which was the vision throughout London to reduce casualties from road traffic accidents. This was an important vision, but was not part of the funding allocation for the Covid related projects and schemes outlined in the report. Care had to be taken that any new measures implemented from the new funding allocations did not cause risk or mitigate against the aims of reducing road casualties.

The Chairman asked how the success of the new proposed schemes could be measured and if there were metrics that could be tracked. The Assistant Director for Traffic and Parking responded that as much as possible would be measured. Some elements (like the use of new cycle routes) would be easier to measure than others. Monitoring would also take place via feedback from officers, Members and the public. The Chairman commented that LBB should not be afraid to implement new schemes, but at the same time should also not

be afraid to withdraw them swiftly if it was felt that the schemes were doing more harm than good.

A Member enquired if there was funding available to maintain any new schemes that were implemented. The Assistant Director for Traffic and Parking responded that there would be a portion of funding available via the current bids for their maintenance. It may be the case that some money for maintenance could be provided from a later funding round. If it was found in the future that funding for the maintenance of certain projects was not forthcoming, then it may be the case that those projects would have to be discontinued.

The potential pedestrianisation of Orpington High Street was discussed, and whether or not a full or partial pedestrianisation was preferred. The Member who raised the matter asked if she could be involved in any such future discussions. The Assistant Director for Traffic and Parking responded that the more likely solution was one that would allow through traffic and support pedestrian access with wider footways.

The Portfolio Holder briefed Members concerning possible future sources of Government funding that were due to become available on a nationwide basis and expressed the view that the 'shared space' concept for high streets was now more common and widely accepted. Indeed he was of the opinion that there had been a revival in those high streets where the shared space concept had been adopted.

A Member asked to what extent LBB could progress schemes to prevent buses bunching up at bus stops and the issue of timings on pedestrian crossings was also discussed. The Assistant Director for Traffic and Parking responded that there was no additional funding being provided currently to bring forward bus schemes. The new guidance stated that local authorities had to ensure that any new schemes being put in place did not hinder the movement of buses. No new funding was available at the moment for the installation of electric charging points.

A Member raised the issue of 'Play Streets' whereby roads/streets could be closed to traffic for a defined period of time to allow children outside to play in those specific roads/streets. He asked if it would be possible for the Council to facilitate such schemes in his ward, with local support. The Assistant Director for Traffic and Parking answered that no funding had been made available to support such schemes at present. It was noted that the Council already had a protocol in place whereby residents could apply to close streets for street events. The other issue was that of social distancing--should the Council be encouraging public/social events in the current climate, when social distancing was still mandatory? The Portfolio Holder commented that these events were currently not a priority and that residents could use parks and green spaces. There were also other events that residents could get involved in such as 'The Big Lunch' and 'VJ Day'.

A Member raised the matter of traffic recommendations that would affect the area around Station Road by Shortlands Train Station. It was clarified that the current proposal for Station Road was that two way traffic would continue, but that the Council would be seeking to install a significant crossing point that would better assist the flow of pedestrians.

The Committee agreed the recommendations of the report.

RESOLVED that:

1) The recommendation that bids should be submitted to TfL and the DfT to secure funding for measures to support residents with a safe return to work, shops and schools, by helping them use alternatives to public transport and maintain social distancing whilst travelling, visiting town centres and schools is agreed.

2) Authority should be delegated to the Director of Environment and Public Protection to implement successful bids, in line with any feedback received from Ward Members and in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

3) The recommendation that the Leader should delegate authority to the Director of Environment and Public Protection to implement and prioritise certain measures to support social distancing and hygiene in town centres, (taking into consideration feedback from Ward Members) is approved.

4) The fee pricing strategy for Bromley Market as set out on Page 30 (in appendix 5) of the report for the period June to end August only, is endorsed by the Portfolio Holder.

5) The recommendation that the Assistant Director--Traffic and Parking should maintain a list of proposed schemes in preparation for future opportunities should they arise in FY20/21 is agreed.

The meeting ended at 2.00 pm

Chairman