



London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Community Safety, Environment and Residents Services Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes

Tuesday 9 June 2015

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Larry Culhane (Chair), Iain Cassidy, Charlie Dewhurst and Steve Hamilton

Other Councillors: Councillors Ben Coleman and Sue Fennimore

Officers: Graham Burrell, Slobodan Vuckovic, Ullash Karia, George Warren, and David Abbott

1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Sharon Holder.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

4. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**

RESOLVED

That Councillor Steve Hamilton be appointed Vice Chair of the Committee for the 2015/16 Municipal year.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chair, Councillor Culhane, invited members of the public present to make any comments in relation to issues on the agenda as part of that item.

6. BOROUGH-WIDE 20MPH SPEED LIMIT

Graham Burrell, Projects and Development Manager, presented the report that set out the draft programme for the feasibility study, public consultation, and potential delivery of a borough-wide speed limit of 20mph.

Officers informed the Committee that reducing road accidents and injuries was a key priority for the Council and a target had been set to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on roads in the borough to 65 or under by 2020. Research from the Transport Research Laboratory showed that 20mph zones reduced injuries and accidents by up to 60%.

Officers noted that historically the borough had operated a mixture of 20mph zones and 20mph limits on individual streets. In addition to these measures, traffic calming devices (road humps, cushions etc.) were introduced to enforce slower speeds. The majority of roads in the borough experienced average speeds of around 20-30mph.

The Council wanted to hear from as many residents as possible to get their views on the proposed changes. An online consultation was set up and consultation leaflets were posted to every resident and business in the borough. A key question for the consultation was whether the 20mph limit should include main roads or be limited to residential areas and accident hotspots.

The Chair, Councillor Culhane, opened the discussion to the floor and the following contributions were noted:

Tony Boys, Hammersmith Embankment Residents Association, addressed the Committee and the following points were noted:

- The Council should not unfairly prejudice drivers. Drivers were not always to blame for accidents, cyclists and pedestrians were also culpable.
- Road safety was a priority but traffic flow issues should not be ignored. What schemes would be put in place to improve traffic issues in the borough?
- Vehicle speed was not statistically the most common reason for accidental collisions, factors such as; drivers being distracted, failures to judge the speed of other vehicles, and failures to see obstacles ranked higher. The Council should address the most common reasons for accidents before lowering the speed limit across the whole borough.
- More was needed to discourage people from taking journeys by car unnecessarily, such as extending the congestion charge.

The Chair, Councillor Culhane, noted that the proposal was not intended to punish drivers but rather was a way to make the roads safer for everyone, including drivers.

Ruth Mayorcas, resident, addressed the Committee and the following points were noted:

- Other countries, such as Holland, had far lower serious accident rates than the UK and they continued to fall. The numbers of pedestrians and cyclists killed had actually increased in the UK in recent years.
- Countries with lower speed limits had lower rates of serious accident.
- Drivers were often inconsiderate, not slowing for pedestrians or taking proper consideration of cyclists.
- The infrastructure of the borough was not cyclist friendly in many areas, for example raised tables were needed on the corners of roads.
- There was a significant elderly population who could not drive but still needed to get to the shops, town centres and shopping areas should be pleasant areas to walk to/around.
- The UK had an obesity problem and serious problems with asthma in young people; more people need to be encouraged to walk, cycle, and use public transport to create a healthier population.

A representative from the Alliance of British Drivers addressed the Committee and the following points were noted:

- Islington had adopted a 20mph speed limit but it resulted in speeds increasing due to poor enforcement.
- The police had advised against a 20mph speed limit in the past and said they would not contribute towards enforcement.
- Other boroughs still successfully assessed speed limits on a road-by-road basis.
- The money spent on this project could be better spent on investment in better education on cycling and the highway code. Only a small number of accidents were due to excessive speed.

Officers responded that they had been working with the police on the current proposals and that the police supported a 20mph speed limit in boroughs where the average speed was 24mph.

Robert Ashford, resident, addressed the Committee and the following points were noted:

- It would be useful to see more detail in the report about the speeds in different parts of the borough and the frequency of accidents. It would also be useful to know what time of day the accidents took place, the types of casualty, and whether there were road works in the area.
- In areas with borough-wide 20mph speed limits traffic flow is reduced and commute times were increased. It also distracted drivers as they had to constantly look at their speedometer.
- A 20mph speed limit would have a negative impact on the environment, as driving in a lower gear produced more emissions.
- A 20mph speed limit would be appropriate in areas of heavy traffic but would not be beneficial across the whole borough.

Councillor Dewhirst asked if more detailed information on accidents in the borough was available. Officers responded that they could provide a more detailed breakdown of accidents on the website.

ACTION: Slobodan Vuckovic

A resident addressed the Committee and the following points were noted:

- The police said they would not enforce the speed limit and unenforceable laws are bad laws. The scheme would only be enforceable at great cost to the Council.
- Accidents were often not due to excessive speed, human error from either cyclists or drivers was more a likely cause.
- A borough-wide speed limit was not necessary but targeted limits or measures in accident hotspots would be welcomed.

Lynn Seveke, resident, addressed the Committee and the following points were noted:

- Cycling in the borough can often feel intimidating due to the way drivers behave and the lack of dedicated cycling routes. Segregated cycling routes could encourage more people to cycle by making it a safer way to travel.
- Lowering the speed limit would improve people's driving and reduce the other factors for collisions mentioned by a previous speaker (i.e. failure to judge speed, failure to see obstacles etc.)
- In the UK there seemed to be a confrontational relationship between drivers and cyclists and that needed to be improved. Drivers should not feel like they are being penalised.

Ian Hill, resident, addressed the Committee and the following points were noted:

- Education about road safety was important for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians. Reckless behaviour is about the person, not the mode of transport they are using.
- Pedestrians were sometimes guilty of not paying attention to their environment, distracted by phones and headphones, which could have dangerous consequences.
- Speed was not always the key factor in collisions.
- Areas around schools should have more signage and speed calming – some areas have no indication that schools are nearby.

Gillian Slowcock, resident, addressed the Committee and the following points were noted:

- She regularly cycled in the borough, was diligent about signalling and following the highway code, and had never had an accident. Potholes were a bigger problems than drivers.
- Motorbikes seemed to regularly speed and dangerously weave in and out of traffic.
- A borough-wide speed limit was not necessary but more should be done to improve road manners, including those of pedestrians.

John Griffiths, Hfcycling (hfcyclists.org.uk), addressed the Committee and the following points were noted:

- Hfcycling was in favour of the borough-wide 20mph speed limit.
- Cars were used too often for journeys that were not necessary. If there were fewer cars on the roads then more people would feel able to cycle and it would benefit everyone, including drivers.
- Hammersmith needed a more comprehensive network of cycle routes, particularly around traffic heavy areas.
- Any scheme that reduced pollution, encouraged more people to cycle or walk, and made our population fitter and healthier should be encouraged.

Susie Greggs, resident, addressed the Committee and the following points were noted:

- There had been a significant increase in traffic in the borough over the past few decades.
- Cyclists and pedestrians would always be more vulnerable than those in vehicles.
- There was a need for more education about the highway code and manners on roads.

John Trotter, Sanford Brook Residents Association, addressed the Committee and the following points were noted:

- We have had speed limits on our residential roads for several years, however at peak times the roads are used as a 'rat run' by commuters. The police have not dealt with the issue. Speed bumps were the only effective measure as cushions allowed straddling by larger vehicles.
- We are in favour of a 20mph speed limit on residential roads, but the support of the police and associated speed calming road works were needed to make it effective.
- Restrictions should not be put in place if they are going to be ignored by the majority of drivers.

Vicky Barass, resident, addressed the Committee and the following points were noted:

- The speed limit, in this borough and others, was part of a wider cultural change (like seat belts and drink driving laws before it) towards slower, safer driving and ultimately fewer cars on our roads.

Jeremy Leach, 20's Plenty For Us (20splentyforus.org.uk), addressed the Committee and the following points were noted:

- We should be fair to drivers but we need to liberate people from the margins of our urban towns through increased cycling and walking.
- Driving at 20mph was safer and people were more likely to survive if they were hit at that speed.
- The environmental impact was also important and a City of London study showed that there was no negative impact from lowering the speed limit.
- Main roads should be included in the scheme as, in inner London, 80% of casualties happened on main roads.

Richard Evans, employed in the borough, addressed the Committee and the following points were noted:

- Transport for London had started to introduce speed limiters in their fleet, which would slow traffic. Insurers are also offering incentives to install speed limiters and black boxes in private vehicles. In the future speed limiters will be ubiquitous.
- A 20mph speed limit would civilise our streets and town centres and make them more attractive places to spend time.
- Across London the average vehicle speed was already below 20mph.
- 75% of all journeys in London were less than five miles long, if more people felt safe to cycle and walk, people would use cars far less often.

A resident addressed the Committee and the following points were noted:

- The consultation pages on the website were not clear about which roads would be affected. Arterial roads should not be considered residential – roads with bus routes should not be limited
- While they would not support a borough-wide speed limit, they were not opposed limiting speeds on some roads where there was heavy traffic or a high number of accidents.
- A borough-wide limit would unnecessarily slow drivers down at times where the roads were relatively clear.

A resident addressed the Committee and the following points were noted:

- Cycling in the borough was intimidating, cars regularly exceeded the speed limit of the A4 between Hammersmith and Kensington.
- The accident rates involving buses were very high and accidents were often not reported. Reducing the number of cars on the roads would make bus transport safer.

Councillor Hamilton suggested that the money spent on the consultation could have been used to better effect for targeting key accident hotspots with measures to increase safety. The Chair, Councillor Culhane, responded that the consultation was being paid for by Transport for London.

Councillor Cassidy also believed the 20mph limit was part of a cultural shift towards more people choosing to cycling or walk. Roads in the borough needed to be made more appealing to potential cyclists. The Council could not change all of the reasons for accidents but it could affect the speed limits. The 20mph limit was a pragmatic way to reduce accidents and make roads safer and more welcoming to cyclists and pedestrians.

Councillor Harcourt, Cabinet Member for Transport, informed the Committee that the Council would listen carefully to feedback from residents and the scheme would be amended accordingly.

The Chair, Councillor Culhane, thanked all those who attended and contributed to the meeting. He also noted that, while there was a diverse set of views on the issue, it was clear that everyone wanted to see accidents and injuries on our roads reduced.

The consultation was available online at the following address:

www.lbhf.gov.uk/20mph

RESOLVED

1. That the committee review and comment on the implementation programme set out in the report.
2. That the committee review and comment on the options for delivery as set out in the report.

7. PROVISION OF SPORT AND LEISURE FACILITIES

Ullash Karia, Acting Director and Head of Leisure & Parks, presented the report that set out the context for the encouragement of greater physical activity in the borough, with particular focus on young people. Officers noted that the current community sports and physical activity strategy was a 'live' strategy that would be modified to reflect changes to partner funding arrangements (e.g. Public Health).

The Chair, Councillor Culhane, noted that he would be interested to have a special meeting of the Committee on sports provision in the borough and invite schools and other key stakeholders. Officers noted that the existing Community Sports and Physical Activity Network (CSPAN) meetings already cover this area and agreed to circulate the dates of the meetings to the Committee.

ACTION: Ullash Karia

Councillor Dewhirst asked officers what the key issues facing the service were. Officers responded that funding cuts from Section 106 and Public Health were the key issues affecting the service although they were working with partners to mitigate reductions where possible.

Councillor Fennimore noted that they were exploring opportunities to work closer with Public Health on issues such as childhood obesity.

Councillor Dewhirst asked officers for an update on the Fulham Pools contract. Officers responded that it was a 50 year contract but they hoped to receive a better service through closer monitoring of the contract.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

8. UPDATE ON SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS (SUDS) SCHEMES

George Warren, Flood Risk Manager, presented the report that provided an overview of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) projects being undertaken in the borough. Officers noted that they had worked closely with the community on the schemes and in a number of cases they were incorporating their ideas into the projects.

It was now mandatory for major developments (i.e. ten or more residential homes, or 10,000 square feet or more of commercial space) to consider the inclusion of SuDS within their design and the Lead Local Flood Authority, LBHF, are now a statutory consultee for all major planning applications on surface water issues.

The Chair, Councillor Culhane, asked officers if there had been any resistance from developers. Officers responded that, while in the past SuDS had been considered an add on, through better education developers had seen the benefits of early adoption, such as; lower overall costs, a reduced need for irrigation, and a reduced need for storage tanks on site.

Councillor Hamilton noted that it was good to see progress in this area and asked about the Thames Water projects being implemented on alternate streets. Officers responded that Thames Water wanted to see the impact of SuDS so they identified a number of streets and were due to begin works imminently. Thames Water would be paying for the construction and the maintenance costs for two years. They were also funding an engineering graduate to be involved with the project.

Officers invited Councillors to view the SuDS works projects in person. Councillors should contact George Warren to register their interest.

ACTION: Cllrs / George Warren

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked officers for their pioneering work in this area.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

9. WORK PROGRAMMING

RESOLVED

That the work programme for 2015/16 be noted.

10. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Future meeting dates of this Committee for the 2015/16 Municipal Year are scheduled for:

- 16 September 2015
- 18 November 2015
- 18 January 2016
- 02 March 2016
- 12 April 2016

Meeting started: 7.02 pm
Meeting ended: 9.00 pm

Chairman

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