

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Meeting held 11 December 2013

PRESENT: Councillors Cate McDonald (Chair), Ian Auckland (Deputy Chair), Trevor Bagshaw, Alison Brelsford, Jayne Dunn, Terry Fox, Keith Hill, Ibrar Hussain, Steve Jones, George Lindars-Hammond, Alf Meade, Tim Rippon and Steve Wilson

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 No apologies for absence were received.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 4th October 2013

The minutes of the special meeting of the Committee held on 4th October 2013, were approved as a correct record and, arising therefrom, the Policy and Improvement Officer stated that he would circulate a paper to Members of the Committee providing an update on the present position regarding Cobnar Road Cottage.

4.2 9th October 2013

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9th October 2013, were approved as a correct record and, arising therefrom, the Policy and Improvement Officer stated that, as requested by the Committee, arrangements would be made for the Acting Head of Libraries, Archives and Information to attend a future meeting, most likely a special meeting, in January or February 2014, to provide an update on the consultation process regarding the review of the Library Service.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 There were no questions raised or petitions submitted by members of the public.

6. INQUIRY ON CYCLING IN SHEFFIELD - ORAL EVIDENCE

6.1 The Chair referred to the meeting of the Committee held on 11th September 2013, at which Members received a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer containing an update on, and proposals with regard to, the Inquiry on Cycling in Sheffield. She stated that, at that meeting, the Committee received a number of presentations from Council officers, including officers from the Place Public Health Team, on what action their respective Services had taken, and what their vision was, with regard to increasing the number of cyclists in Sheffield. The Committee agreed a draft Terms of Reference for the Inquiry, the questions for the Call for Evidence and an indicative List of Stakeholders. The Committee also delegated authority to the Chair to decide which individuals and organisations should be invited to today's meeting, to provide oral evidence as part of the Inquiry.

6.2 The Policy and Improvement Officer referred to the two papers which had been circulated to Members prior to this meeting, which included an update on the evidence received as part of the Call for Evidence and a list of things done, and currently being done, in terms of projects/actions, to increase cycling levels in Sheffield from 2008 to 2013.

6.3 Participants from various groups/organisations had been invited to address the Committee, under three categories, as follows:-

6.3.1 **Culture and Behaviour**

The participants were asked to consider the question 'How do we make people feel safer cycling on roads?'

(a) **Sustrans (David Hall, Regional Director)**

- Need to motivate the public and the people responsible for governing the City
- Need to look at what work had already been undertaken
- Bike It Scheme - operated by Sustrans, involving work with 50 schools in the City to encourage pupils to be more active, enabling children to travel actively and safely – the numbers of children now cycling to school since the introduction of the scheme had increased to 13%
- Consider the safety of cyclists – this was viewed as one of the main concerns of parents
- In order to encourage more children to cycle, both to school and in general, schemes such as Bike It needed the backing of both parents and teachers
- Requirement for considerable investment from the Government in terms of the provision of safe and high quality cycle routes
- Considerable investment required in the national cycling network

- Increasing the number of cyclists would dramatically reduce health costs

(b) *Institute of Advanced Motorists (Robert Baybutt)*

- Need for motorists to be more aware of cyclists on the roads
- Accepted that a number of motorists are anti-cyclist – need to educate such people
- Cyclists need to wear highly visible safety gear
- Need for better policing in terms of motorists driving in cycle lanes

(c) *Sheffield Cycling Perspective (Polly Blacka)*

- Women are under-represented in terms of cycling – with 43% having access to a bike and only 4% using them regularly
- Mothers are key to getting their children into cycling
- Need for a culture of cycling in the family to make it more likely for children who have received cycling training, to continue
- Safety on the road is paramount – need segregated and continuous cycle routes on the busiest roads
- Cyclists need to be aware of, and familiar with, the cycle routes
- Improvements needed in terms of the transport infrastructure
- Consideration needs to be given to the cost of purchasing a bike, as well as all the related equipment required

(d) Members raised a number questions and the following responses were provided:-

- Everyone would like to see both motorists and cyclists driving and cycling responsibly on the roads as this would help to improve relations and reduce accidents. It was believed that those cyclists who ignored traffic signals did so in order to ensure their own safety rather than simply acting irresponsibly.
- It was hoped that Sheffield could learn from some of the excellent work undertaken to promote cycling in other cities, such as London, although there was little likelihood of the level of funding that London had received being available in Sheffield.
- Having properly segregated lanes in terms of cycles, buses and taxis on the busiest roads should result in a reduction in the number of cycle accidents.
- There was a need for better enforcement by the Police in connection with the issue of taxi drivers and other motorists entering the cycle zones at traffic lights prior to them being able to proceed.

- Having more continuous cycle lanes would definitely encourage more people to cycle as it would be safer and more convenient, and would result in cyclists not having to go on the pavement, which often caused friction with pedestrians.
- There were obvious health benefits to people cycling, both in terms of the individual cyclist's health and in terms of the likely reductions in CO₂ levels. Pedal Ready had undertaken a considerable amount of work in connection with promoting the health benefits of cycling and Sustrans had made reference to such benefits in its annual report.
- There was no legal requirement for cyclists to wear a helmet, although it was encouraged for health and safety reasons. A number of cyclists did not like wearing helmets for reasons of vanity.
- It was vital that there was a high profile leader in the City, who was both determined and committed, to champion the benefits of cycling.
- There was a need to improve the quality and visibility of signage in terms of cycle lanes.
- Buddying, where an experienced cyclist would accompany a cyclist with little or no experience, was very helpful in order to help people increase their confidence in terms of cycling around the City, particularly on busy roads. Schemes like the Bike Bus being operated in Nether Edge, where groups of cyclists were shown the best cycling routes across the City, should be encouraged.

6.3.2 **Integration**

The attendees were asked to consider the question 'Do we need to integrate cycling with public transport?'

(a) **Northern Rail Cycle Forum (Simon Geller)**

- There should be integration to enable cyclists to travel safely and sustainably
- Need for continuity in terms of cyclists' journeys

(b) **Stagecoach Yorkshire (Paul Lynch, Managing Director)**

- Rigid cycles were not allowed on Stagecoach buses or trams on the grounds that there was no suitable or safe areas for this to happen

- The only possible areas that could be used were those where wheelchairs were stored, and the company could not justify giving priority to cyclists over wheelchair users
- Trials had been held whereby cyclists put their bikes on bars on the outside of the bus, but problems had been identified, mainly relating the prolonging of boarding times
- Folding cycles were allowed on buses and trams, if stored safely in the luggage area
- It was accepted that it would be better for all road users if there were more cyclists

(c) Stagecoach Supertram (Tim Gillby, head of Finance and Commercial)

- As with the buses, rigid bikes were not allowed on Supertram due to lack of sufficient storage space and due to issues regarding boarding
- The issues regarding boarding were more pertinent to Supertram due to the speed at which the trams pulled in and out of the stations

(d) South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (Roy Mitchell, Principal Public Transport Manager)

- Efforts were being made to look at providing storage facilities, or improving existing storage facilities, for cycles at bus stops, bus and tram interchanges, bus and rail interchanges, and park and ride facilities
- Travellers on public transport had indicated that their priorities were more seats and improved signage, with cycle lock-ups being low down on the priority list
- Need to encourage more people to use fold-up cycles

(e) Members raised a number questions and the following responses were provided:-

- All but five of the rail stations managed by Northern Rail have cycle racks and at most of these stations, very few passengers used the facilities. It was accepted that security fears could deter cyclists from using them.
- It was not believed that rigid bikes were allowed on trains in any other cities in Britain, although a trial was to take place in Edinburgh. This situation, however, could be monitored and reviewed in the future.
- There would be difficulties in allowing cycles on buses and trams at off-peak times as there was always likely to be one-off events held during these times, where demand for public transport

would be high.

- Rigid cycles were allowed on buses in some tourist areas, where the buses ran less frequently. The bikes were secured externally, on a rack at the rear of the bus, and the driver had to ensure it was secure. This was deemed as less of an issue in the light of the boarding times.
- One of Stagecoach's sister companies was due to carry out a trial where cyclists could be made aware of an approaching bus by way of a radio signal. Part of the training for new bus drivers included cycle awareness, although the number of bus/cycle accidents was not high enough for this to be deemed a particular issue in Sheffield. The training did not involve new drivers cycling to see what it was like from a cyclist's point of view.
- Stagecoach Supertram monitored all tram/cycle collisions, but it was difficult to monitor accidents caused by cyclists getting their wheels stuck in the tram tracks, as not all such incidents were reported. Stagecoach monitored all bus/cycle collisions and analysed its data regularly.
- It was not the case that rigid bikes would never be allowed on the light rail system, as assessments could be made in the future, on a route by route basis.
- Whilst it was accepted that there may be facilities for cyclists in other European cities to take rigid bikes on public transport, this was due mainly to the different cultures in these cities, and that some cities had been operating such systems for a long period of time.

6.3.3 **Broadening Participation**

The attendees were asked to consider the question 'How do we get more people to cycle in Sheffield?'

(a) **Young Peoples' Perspective (Bryony Akroyd, Councillor in the Youth Cabinet)**

- Make bikes cheaper
- Improve cycling training in schools
- Promote cycling as a healthy activity
- Provide more cycle routes/lanes to make it safer for cyclists
- Introduce incentive reward schemes
- Have indicators on bikes
- Make bikes more visible so they are easier to see by motorists
- Have cycle highways and more safer places to cycle as in other

countries

- Have safety demonstrations for cyclists on dealing with dangerous junctions
- Identify more role models for the sport such as those identified after the Olympics and Tour de France

(b) Heeley Development Trust (Andy Jackson, Manager)

- The Trust operated a scheme known as Recycle, which comprised a bike workshop where volunteers undertook commercial repairs and took in and refurbished bikes donated from members of the public. The people undertaking the work included disengaged young people, who had been referred to the Trust from various organisations, and who also received training on cycling safety
- The Trust had recently been offered a contract to carry out a scheme to encourage more people to cycle to work in the north of Sheffield
- Cycling should be an enjoyable activity
- Sheffield is a great place to cycle
- There was a need for a number of cycle champions to promote not only the transport issues, but also the health benefits
- A number of studies into the health benefits of cycling had been undertaken
- Need for improvement to the transport infrastructure to provide shared spaces on the roads for motorists and cyclists
- Need to increase the number of cycle journeys to make it safer
- All motorists should have a responsibility in terms of sharing the road with cyclists
- Bike loans should be available to make it easier for young people and people on low incomes as an incentive to purchase bikes
- Businesses should look at providing electric bikes for employees so that they could cycle to work

(c) Members raised a number questions and the following responses were provided:-

- A number of young people were deterred from cycling to school due to safety concerns of their own and their parents.
- If schools had Cycle Plans, this would encourage more children to cycle to school.
- It was the belief of the Heeley Development Trust that all children should receive Bikeability Level 2 training.

- Young people had different incentives for wanting to cycle, which included economic and exercise/health reasons.
- More work was required to ensure that all young children in Sheffield were aware of the various cycling training programmes. Consideration should be given to including some element of cycling training as part of schools' PE curriculum, as in some other countries.

6.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the papers now submitted, the evidence provided by all attendees at the meeting, and the responses provided to the questions raised; and
- (b) thanks all the participants for attending the meeting and providing evidence as part of the Inquiry on Cycling in Sheffield.

7. WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14

7.1 RESOLVED: That the Committee agreed the Work Programme 2013/14 as set out in the report of the Policy and Improvement Officer now submitted.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

8.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday, 12th February 2014, at 4.30 pm, in the Town Hall.