

# **Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

## **Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 9 January 2024**

### **Present:**

Councillor Johns – in the Chair  
Councillors Benham, Hussain, Iqbal, Northwood, Richards, I Robinson, Shilton  
Godwin and Taylor

### **Also present:**

Councillor Rawlins, Executive Member for Environment and Transport  
Councillor Reid, Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

### **ERSC/24/01 Minutes**

#### **Decision**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2023 be approved as a correct record.

### **ERSC/24/02 Road Safety**

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which set out the Council's approach to Road Safety.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Examples of previous Road Safety Projects;
- City Wide Speed Limit Reductions;
- School Streets Schemes;
- Controlled Pedestrian Crossings;
- Cycle Training (Schools);
- Vision Zero;
- School Crossings and Park Entrances Audit;
- Enforcement of Moving Traffic Offences;
- Disabled access improvements;
- Enforcement activities undertaken around schools including GMP (Greater Manchester Police);
- Road Safety Strategy document;
- Speed Cameras / Red Light Cameras;
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan;
- Road Safety Week; and
- Road Safety Tool Kits for schools.

The Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee addressed the Committee in relation to schools and active travel. She reported that, due to increases in pupil numbers, children were having to travel further to school, crossing main roads. She reported that driving had got worse since the pandemic and expressed concern about issues on the main arterial routes into the city and cuts to

traffic policing. She referred to previous national campaigns to make drivers aware of the dangers of speeding.

The Head of Network Management acknowledged the points raised. He reported that, while investment was needed to make improvements on the roads network to improve safety, policing was also needed and the Council and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) were working with Greater Manchester Police (GMP) in relation to enforcement and greater visibility, which would act as a deterrent. He highlighted the importance of education, training and enforcement. He recognised that road safety campaigns and messaging had not been as prominent in recent years as they had been previously and advised that this was something that the Council would pursue, including lobbying the Department for Transport regarding a national campaign. He informed Members about the role of car manufacturers and the use of technology such as black boxes to reduce accidents. He informed Members that the Council was developing a Road Safety Strategy to identify improvements that the Council could make and monitor progress against targets.

The Director of Highways reported that an assessment of all school and park entrances had been carried out in the previous six months and that, on the basis of this, and subject to funding, improvement work would be planned to improve safety. He highlighted the additional powers that the Council had been granted to enforce moving traffic offences (MTOs) which would be important for tackling some of the poor driving behaviour referred to. He reported that speed camera enforcement would be part of the Road Safety Programme which was being rolled out.

The Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee expressed concern about drug-driving and advised that more speed cameras were needed on main arterial roads. She reported that Manchester did not currently have its fair share of school buses, compared to other Greater Manchester authorities, and informed the Committee about work she was involved in to address this.

Key points and queries that arose from the Committee's discussions included:

- The importance of this issue and its connection to other key priorities such as being an Age Friendly City and a Child Friendly City and that this should be more strongly reflected in the report;
- Concern that the percentage of collisions which resulted in death or serious injury had increased since 2011;
- That in order to encourage parents to allow their children to travel to school independently there needed to be a focus on the whole journey from home to school, not just road safety in the immediate vicinity of the school;
- The importance of the perception of safety;
- Behaviour change and enforcement near schools, including in relation to dangerous and obstructive parking;
- Questioning whether "accidents" was an appropriate term to use when collisions were often caused by the behaviour of the driver;
- The use of evidence from citizens, such as cyclists' cameras;
- Sites selected for the enforcement of MTOs;
- Improvements for pedestrians, including disabled people and parents with prams;

- To request that future reports include more geographical context, for example hotspots and challenges in particular areas;
- To request that the Road Safety Strategy be considered by the Committee once it was available;
- Managing road safety in relation to temporary building works, when footpaths for closed;
- Concern that the data did not fully reflect what was happening in some parts of the city; and
- Whether, as part of the GM Camera Partnership, more innovative options could be considered, for example, portable cameras and cameras which showed a driver's speed on a screen.

The Director of Highways advised that, as school entrances were a very busy area at peak times, this had been identified as a particular risk but he recognised Members' points about the whole journey to school. He referenced work through schools to educate parents about road safety around drop-off and pick-up times and the role of enforcement. He reported that the Council would consider what more could be done in relation to enforcement arounds schools as part of the Road Safety Strategy, while advising that consideration would need to be given to whether this would displace the problem onto neighbouring streets. The Head of Network Management reported that a multi-faceted approach was needed, including ongoing work with schools, physical changes to the environment around schools and School Streets schemes.

The Director of Highways reported that police forces were encouraging the public to submit dashcam footage to support the prosecution of offences and that the Council would support GMP in obtaining footage from the public. In response to a Member's question, he stated that he did not think that this type of information was being used as evidence in relation to civil offences but that he would check this with the relevant team and look into whether this could be changed.

The Head of Network Management reported that he would circulate a website link to Members through which footage could be submitted and that they could share this link with residents. In response to a Member's question, he reported that an evaluation had taken place of the 20 miles per hour speed limits now in place on most residential streets, to ascertain how effective this had been in reducing collisions and their severity; however, he recognised that enforcement of the 20 miles per hour zones was an issue. He provided an update on the sites selected for the enforcement of MTOs and offered to share initial data from the first site, on Stockport Road, where enforcement was already taking place. He outlined how the initial seven sites had been selected, using information from the public, Ward Councillors and GMP, as well as camera analysis surveys. He advised that criteria was being developed for the selection of further sites and that Members would be invited to submit for consideration any further sites which they believed should be included. He reported that there were many issues affecting the accessibility of pavements for disabled people, including pavement condition, drop crossings and street furniture, commenting that trials were currently taking place in the city centre to remove or re-position street furniture to make a clearer route for pedestrians. He reported that the Council was continuing to lobby the Government on funding for highways maintenance. He reported that the Council had a lot of data on accident analysis and he could provide ward-based data for any Members who were

interested. He informed Members that higher-level data was also available through the TfGM website. He advised that, as part of the Road Safety Strategy, detailed monitoring and reporting would be put in place. He acknowledged a Member's point about the importance of benchmarking with comparator cities. He assured Members that road safety and traffic management were fully considered in relation to temporary building works and outlined the process for this.

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport reported that she and officers would review the terminology used, including in relation to "accidents" or "collisions". She advised that it was important for the Council to use the levers available to it, for example, in relation to Social Value, to educate people on road safety and that this was already being done to improve signage around schools. She reported that education on Road Safety was key and that the work that took place in Road Safety Week in November should be repeated throughout the year, advising that, while more resources were needed, she would be working with officers, Members, schools and other partners to improve education on this important issue. She stated that she and officers would revisit the evaluation of the reduction in speed limits to 20 miles per hour on most residential roads in order to have the evidence base to roll this work out further. She reported that she would circulate information to Members on undertaking more community speed watch trials.

In response to a Member's question, the Director of Highways clarified that the Network Management Duty on the expeditious movement of traffic included pedestrians and cyclists. In response to a question about planning applications and Section 106 funds, he confirmed that this was routinely considered as part of the planning process. He reported that, as part of the Road Safety Strategy, additional sources of data would be sought, for example, on incidents which had resulted in damage to street furniture but had not required police involvement. In response to a question about utility companies and the positioning of street furniture such as broadband cabinets, he reported that his service worked to try to ensure that they were put in the most suitable locations but that the utility companies had statutory rights in relation to this which restricted what the Council could do. He confirmed that the Council would look into different options for speed cameras and portable Variable Message Signs. He acknowledged a Member's point about engineering the environment to improve safety, using traffic calming measures.

#### **Decisions:**

1. To note the Road Safety work being planned.
2. To request that the Committee scrutinise the Road Safety Strategy at a future meeting and that this be updated to reflect the points raised in the meeting, in particular the centrality of Road Safety to wider Council priorities, such as being a liveable, Age Friendly and Child Friendly City.
3. To request that the Director of Highways check with the relevant team whether dashcam footage could be used for civil offences in future.
4. To request that the Head of Network Management circulate the website link through which footage from members of the public can be submitted.

5. To note that the Executive Member for Environment and Transport will circulate information to Members on undertaking more community speed watch trials.

### **ERSC/24/03 Highways Condition of the City Annual Report 2022/23**

The Committee received a report of the Head of Network Management which highlighted the performance, key outcomes and successes achieved in 2022/23 along with some of the challenges going forward.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Investment in the city;
- Social Value;
- Street works;
- Winter services;
- Major projects;
- Road safety and pedestrian crossings;
- Network congestion;
- Service performance and delivery;
- Public satisfaction;
- Key highway assets;
- Cycleways;
- Drainage, including Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS);
- Bridges and structures; and
- Street lighting.

Key points and queries that arose from the Committee's discussions included:

- Had an assessment taken place into whether the investment in highways was good value for money;
- Succession planning and addressing staffing gaps;
- Communication with residents on the work of the Highways Service as well as communication with residents who had reported problems and obtaining feedback from residents;
- How would the condition of footpaths be improved, given the budget constraints;
- Service performance targets and how Manchester compared to other Core Cities;
- The quality and durability of thermal repairs;
- Concerns about roads and pavements which were being dug up by broadband companies and reinstatement work being carried out in a timely manner and to a good standard;
- Loose flagstones;
- Noting that some information had been excluded from the report to keep it at a manageable size, suggesting that in future additional information could be included as an appendix;

- That it was important to think about culture change, rather than behaviour change of individuals;
- How non-responses were considered in consultations, given that those who felt most strongly on either side were the only ones likely to respond and concern that this could result in some schemes not going ahead on the basis of a vocal minority;
- Learning from the Chorlton Cycleway consultation and other large projects; and
- How success was defined in reports, requesting that in future it should be clear whether this referred to outputs or intended outcomes.

The Director of Highways reported that a workforce plan was being developed for the Highways Service in addition to a proposed restructure to provide better succession planning; however, he advised that there was a national shortage of civil engineers and that local authorities across the country were struggling to recruit to some technical posts. He informed Members about plans to build a graduate and apprenticeship programme and create career pathways to retain staff. In response to a Member's comments about the quality of street works carried out by broadband companies, he advised that part of the challenge was recruiting to roles to carry out inspections.

The Head of Network Management drew Members' attention to the information in the report on the Annual National Highways and Transport (NHT) Survey, stating that the data, including public satisfaction, was benchmarked against other Greater Manchester authorities and Core Cities. He stated that value for money was assessed by central Government and that Manchester's Highways Service performed well on this. He reported that information on value for money was originally going to have been included in the report but was excluded due to the large amount of information already in the report. He informed Members about the role of preventative maintenance of roads, which provided value for money by extending its life. He informed Members that Manchester did more resident engagement and consultation on highways than most local authorities, although he acknowledged that still more could be done, and he offered to provide Members with further information on this work. He recognised Members' concerns about footpath condition and the need for more funding. He advised the Committee that the Council had worked hard to identify funding to protect and improve the condition of the city's highways, which included more funding for footway maintenance, however, more funding was needed from central Government. In response to a Member's question, he offered to check with colleagues on targets for public behaviour change. He reported that his service undertook a lot of evaluation of the performance of different types of repairs and that thermal repairs generally performed well. He informed Members that his service worked with the Communications Team to inform residents about the work they were doing, including Highways Takeover Days or Weeks. He reported that, when the new CRM system was introduced, Highways would be one of the first services to use it, advising that this would provide improved customer updates. In response to a Member's comments, he stated that work by broadband companies involving digging up roads and pavements had been causing a lot of issues for his team. He stated that there had been a lot of poor-quality reinstatements by the broadband contractors, a lot of which would need to be redone. He reported that utility companies had a statutory right to dig up the roads and had six months to put in

place a permanent repair. He stated that Highways Inspectors carried out checks around the city but that Members could contact him directly if they had concerns that a permanent repair had not been carried out within this timeframe. He informed Members about challenges with pothole repairs, particularly on failed roads, where the repair might only last a few months, and advised that in these cases it was important for the road to be fully resurfaced.

In response to a Member's question about when the new CRM system would be in place for the Highways Service, the Director of Highways stated that he would check with ICT colleagues and respond to the Member.

The Director of Highways confirmed that work would take place to identify lessons that could be learnt from the Chorlton Cycleway consultation, including on engagement with businesses, and that, on the basis of lessons learnt from a range of major projects, the Consultation and Engagement Guide would be reviewed, including consideration of how non-responses were interpreted.

In response to a Member's questions, the Head of Network Management reported that his service had a Development Control Team which worked closely with Planning and that his service was a statutory consultee on planning applications, identifying improvements that could be made to the road network through planning conditions or Section 106 funding, advising that the latter now had to be clearly linked to the impact of the development. He reported that flagstones were now being laid on concrete or mortar rather than sand beds to address the problem of loose flagstones. In response to a question from the Chair about gullies, he reported that the Council had invested significantly in highways drainage, although there was more work to be done. He outlined how gullies were cleaned and tested and, if necessary, further investigations were carried out to identify the cause of the problem and the best solution. In response to a question from the Chair, he outlined how his service worked with TfGM to better understand road congestion and good network management and advised that further information could be provided in a future report.

### **Decisions:**

1. To request that the information on value for money that had been excluded from the report be circulated to Committee Members.
2. To receive a report at a future meeting on lessons learnt from major projects.

### **ERSC/24/04 Pavement Parking**

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which provided an overview of issues relating to pavement parking.

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Managing pavement parking, including physical prevention, accommodation and enforcement;

- Consequential effects of preventing pavement parking; and
- Pavement parking in Manchester.

Key points and queries that arose from the Committee's discussions included:

- The problems that pavement parking caused in Members' wards for pedestrians, particularly wheelchair users and those with pushchairs, and local residents and that the extent of the problem was not captured in the report;
- That wards neighbouring the city centre were particularly badly affected due to commuters parking on their streets;
- Concern about people driving on the pavement and that enforcement action should be taken;
- Damage to pavements from vehicles, particularly Heavy Goods Vehicles;
- To support action to address pavement parking, while recognising the challenges involved in this;
- Concern that there was insufficient guidance from the Government on addressing this;
- Questions about trials schemes and the need to communicate the changes to drivers;
- That some drivers were not deterred by fines because it was not a lot of money to them;
- To request a further report following a response from the Government or when data was available from the trial schemes; and
- Noting that in some areas banning pavement parking would make a road effectively a one-lane road, due to the width of the roads; and
- That the language in the report should demonstrate that other road users were being prioritised over car users.

In response to Members' questions about the trial project to prevent pavement parking, the Executive Member for Environment and Transport reported that there was no blueprint for this as yet due to the complexities involved. She reported that they were looking across the whole city for trial areas, that consideration needed to be given to where the cars would go if they were not parked on the pavement and that part of the work was about behaviour change and reducing the number of cars in the city. She advised that it was important not to just displace the problem into different areas. In response to a Member's comments about Operation Park Safe in Sheffield, she reported that GMP were looking to other areas for good practice which could be adopted in Manchester. She informed Members that she was also engaging with local MPs to make progress on this issue.

In response to a Member's question, the Director of Highways reported that GMP was looking into using photographic evidence provided by members of the public to support enforcement but that clarification was needed on the definition of obstruction in relation to pavement parking offences. He agreed with a point from the Chair about a minimum width of clear footpath being a useful measure, stating that this would be useful for defining obstruction and for prioritising areas for intervention. In response to a further question, he confirmed that grass verges were included under the pavement parking powers in place in London. He informed Members that, if



similar powers were extended to Manchester, consultation and engagement with drivers and residents would take place before it was introduced. In response to a question from the Chair, he stated that, if a vehicle caused damage, for example, to a bollard, the Council would try to recover the costs from the driver but that cumulative damage to pavements due to vehicles driving over them was difficult to attribute to an individual driver. He advised that there would be a challenge in balancing the interests of pedestrians against the loss of on-street parking for residents.

The Chair requested that a representative from GMP be invited to attend next time this item was considered.

### **Decisions:**

1. To note:
  - The legislative position with regard to managing and enforcing parking on the pavement, with particular reference to the current issues relating to the definition of “obstruction” in law;
  - The challenges with respect to the consequences of displaced parking when implementing measures to prevent or enforce against pavement parking;
  - The ongoing work to identify suitable locations for the introduction of a trial project in Manchester to prevent pavement parking, in order to evaluate the consequential impacts of displaced parking and;
  - That the Executive Member for Transport and Environment will write to the Secretary of State for Transport to request clarity on the offence of “obstruction” in these circumstances, and to seek confirmation of a timeframe for the devolution of civil enforcement powers for obstruction offences/contraventions and the powers to introduce a ban on pavement parking to Local Authorities outside London
2. To request a further report at an appropriate time, following a response from the Government or when data is available from the trials, and to invite a representative from GMP to attend this meeting.

### **ERSC/24/05 Overview Report**

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted. The overview report contained key decisions within the Committee’s remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee’s work programme, which the Committee was asked to approve.

The Chair informed Members that the report on the Cultural Strategy had been deferred to the next municipal year.

### **Decision:**

That the Committee note the report and agree the work programme.