

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13 October 2020 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors John Allen (Chair), David Van Day (Vice-Chair), Alex Anderson, Martin Kerin and David Potter

Apologies: Councillors Oliver Gerrish

In attendance: Andrew Millard, Director of Place
Leigh Nicholson, Interim Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection
Chris Anderson, Head of Communications at C2C
Mat Kiely, Transportation Services Strategic Lead
Kenna-Victoria Healey, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

14. Minutes

The minutes of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7 September 2020 was approved as a true and correct record

15. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

16. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

17. c2c Update

The Head of Communications at C2C started his update by advising the Committee that a lot had happened in the last seven months and continued by updating Members of the present and future situation, rather than looking back at the past.

Members heard that a full train service has been in operation since mid-May with a new timetable in place since the start of COVID-19. He continued to advise there was a minimum of eight carriages per train and this meant that unfortunately not all services could be run. Passenger numbers as expected were significantly lower, therefore they were running at 40% capacity, this had been higher until the government's announcement that those who could work from home should do so.

It was remarked the busiest trains were the ones arriving into central London before 8am, this was due to Key Workers making their way into the city with the trains after 8am being quieter due to less office staff travelling.

The Committee were advised C2C took passenger safety seriously and wanted passengers to be able to travel with confidence, ways in which this had been undertaken was maximising space on trains, increasing the level of cleaning at all stations as well as ensuring that hand sanitiser was really available at all stations. They were continuing to issue passengers with travel advice such as when was the best time to travel and this had been carried out with posters around stations, daily announcements and other signage. Passengers were being asked to follow the travel advice given by C2C which had come from government advice, such as washing hands before and after journeys, keeping apart from others went on the train, and if possible using contactless payments when purchasing tickets.

Mr Atkinson moved on to talk about face coverings and their importance. He advised Members, passengers had been asked to wear face coverings since mid-June and although they could not enforce this, they were encouraging passengers to wear a face mask or face covering when travelling, unless they had an exception and were unable to do so.

The Chair of the Committee thanked Mr Atkinson for his update and queried in terms of a decline in capacity what the percentage was since start of the pandemic. Mr Atkinson said the service had dropped to 40% however was currently back to running at 97%.

18. Sustainable Travel and Movement in Thurrock Transport Strategy Refresh Update

The Interim Assistant Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection introduced report and, in doing so informed Members that at the last meeting Officers had advised of the approach to the Local Plan and in order to ensure that the required infrastructure was provided, it was necessary to update the Council's existing Transport Strategy to identify current and future needs and opportunities for intervention to support sustainable growth.

The Transportation Services Strategic Lead addressed Members explaining that Thurrock had one of the most significant growth-led regeneration agendas in the country. He continued to highlight it was vital to ensure future growth was supported by the right transport infrastructure, providing sustainable travel options for local communities and businesses whilst reducing congestion and improving air quality.

Members heard how there were a number of steps in the process of preparing the updated Transport Strategy, including technical baseline assessments, strategic transport visioning and engagement with statutory consultees, partner agencies, businesses and community groups. There would also be a suite of supporting strategies and plans that accompanied the Transport Strategy, including Active Travel, Parking, Freight, Air Quality and Health.

It was outlined that the Transport Strategy should be developed in parallel with the Local Plan and in doing so should properly assess all the likely transport interventions required to deliver sustainable growth in the Borough and define and establish details of specific transport infrastructure.

The Chair of the Committee thanked Officers for their report and continued by querying the impact of the London Resort Development which would use the riverfront at Tilbury and whether there would be the use of a carpark. Officers explained it was important that new developments fed into the model of the new strategy and this would include any impact and mitigation which could take place.

Councillor Van Day enquired as to whether there had been any improvement to the roads around Aveley given that Heavy Goods Vehicles used the roads on a daily basis. Officers commented that Heavy Goods Vehicles in Aveley had been a long-standing issue, he advised that Aveley would be included on a list within the transport strategy to help identify and fund future projects. Councillor Van-Day also asked if the Thurrock Transport Strategy would consider a new Rail Station in Aveley. Officers suggested that this would be difficult to deliver as Network Rail had not identified this location and improved access to existing stations should be the focus.

It was discussed if there were any patterns of impact from Covid 19 on transport services and what these were. The Transportation Services Strategic Lead explained that modelling work was a requirement and Officers were seeking the same question and waiting to understand if an algorithm or calculation could be applied to the Covid19 impacts. He continued to explain that the transport network was not as busy as normal due to people working from home therefore the potential of people travelling which would impact the network was reducing.

Members thanked Officers for the report and asked if they could be kept up-to-date with regards to the impact from Covid 19 on the transport network. Offices confirmed that regular updates would be presented over the next 18 months once further data had been captured.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview & Scrutiny Committee noted the progress made in preparing an updated Thurrock Transport Strategy and endorse the approach set out within this report.**

19. Planning Transport Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2020/2021

The Chair presented the work programme to the Committee and asked for any comments or amendments. Members commented that the current meeting had only two items, however the December meeting had a number of big items and queried as to why this was.

At the request of the Chair the Senior Democratic Services Officer explained that some items could be presented to the Committee prior to the meeting in December as briefing notes, for example the build build build report which had been suggested by the Portfolio Holder, could be circulated to Members of the Committee for them to make a decision on whether they would like to see a full report or perhaps a report on items within that particular project.

It was further explained that some items on the work programme for the December meeting were to be presented to the Cabinet and therefore were being presented to the Committee beforehand.

The Chair requested that Officers work on the work programme to highlight which items could be presented as briefing notes and report back to the Chair for agreement before circulating them to the committee.

RESOLVED:

That Officers meet to develop the Work Programme and identify reports to be presented as briefing notes.

The meeting finished at 7.38 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk