

Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee
Chair: Denise Fox (2018-2020)

Transport strategy 2018-34

We heard about this long term strategy which took a view on what Sheffield would look like in the future, in terms of population, housing and employment, and set out a number of proposals in terms of both constraints and opportunities. It sets out how, for major developments in the City, we would liaise with SYPTE and bus operators in terms of looking at modifications to existing services, or the introduction of new services. The Strategy is explicit in terms of the need to move away from being a 'car first' city, and good public transport was key to creating a sustainable and vibrant city.

In particular we focused further on the role of cycling at a separate meeting. We discovered that it was estimated that it would cost approximately £28m, on infrastructure alone, for cycle lane provision across the city.

We have agreed to continue to monitor the implementation of this strategy and to look at individual projects as they are brought forward. report on the review of the winter maintenance service at the meeting in October 2015.

Bus Services

We received a report from the Sheffield City Region (SCR), which provided an overview of the South Yorkshire Bus Review. This included an update on the progress of the Review, together with information on the approach being taken, including evidence collation and key lines of enquiry, and an indicative timeline. We learned that the review was being undertaken in order to provide the SCR Mayor with an independent assessment. Clive Betts MP, Chair of the Review, would be ensuring that it independently considered all the evidence available to fulfil its purpose, and stood up to scrutiny.

We recommended the extension of the deadline for the call for evidence, to allow for the summer holidays and requested that Members make every effort to ensure that their constituents complete the questionnaire, as part of the consultation, and invite SCR to attend any of their specific meetings with community groups. We also kept an overview of the Sheffield Bus Partnership via a progress report.

Sheffield Inner Ring Road

We considered a call in on the decision of the Cabinet Member for Transport and Development, made on 11th January, 2019, approving the Sheffield Inner Ring Road Scheme. The purpose was to scrutinise the impacts of air pollution on the City's priorities and the public's health. We were reassured that the Scheme aligns with the Transport Strategy, outlining the critical importance of the Inner Ring Road as part of the transport structure.

Clean Air Zone

We received a total of 3 separate reports on the development of Sheffield's proposals to introduce a Class Charging Clean Air Zone in the City, as part of its approach to tackle harmful nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) from road traffic in the City. We were given the opportunity to contribute to the statutory consultation on the proposals, which ran from 1st July to 25th August 2019.

The consultation comprised three online surveys, that were tailored to key stakeholders – people that lived and worked in Sheffield, businesses and organisations and taxi drivers, and this was supported by a dedicated website. In addition, a series of engagement events were targeted at those groups that were most directly affected by the proposals – businesses and taxi drivers.

We heard about the range of supporting measures which, it was hoped, would be provided from the money received from the Government, towards upgrading vehicle fleets. The Council was reasonably confident that bus operators would take steps to either upgrade or replace their fleets, and a number of discussions had already been held with the main bus operators in the City in this regard. Whilst early indications had shown that taxi drivers were broadly in support of the proposals, it was expected that a large proportion of them would be seeking assistance in terms of the support measures with regard to either upgrading or replacing their vehicles.

We did make a recommendation to the Cabinet Member to extend the consultation deadline beyond the summer holidays but unfortunately this was not possible.

Building Better Parks

In reviewing the Council's strategy, we were pleased to clarify that this would not involve selling of any Council park land. Instead the Council would be either providing a licence, concession or leasing the land and facilities to businesses, groups or organisations.

We were keen to stress the importance of amenities, such as cafes and play equipment, operating in parks, to attract more visitors. There have been several examples where leasing land or facilities in the City's parks to external organisations had proved very successful.

In brief

The Committee also considered and commented on a range of other reports on the following topics:

- Heart of the City and City Centre
- Supertram
- Environmental Services Changes
- Call in of Parking Fees and Charges
- Streets Ahead Contract
- Energy Recovery Facility/Recycling
- Sheffield International Venues
- Flood Defences