

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT & SUSTAINABILITY URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE

11.00am 10 AUGUST 2021

HOVE TOWN HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBER

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Heley (Chair), Wilkinson (Opposition Spokesperson) and Nemeth (Group Spokesperson).

PART ONE

1 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

(a) Declarations of Substitutes

1.1 There were no declarations of substitutes.

(b) Declarations of Interests

1.2 There were no declarations of interests in the items appearing on the agenda.

(c) Exclusion of Press and Public

1.3 The Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of any of the items listed on the agenda.

1.4 **RESOLVED:** That the press and public not be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items contained in the agenda.

2 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

2.1 The Chair gave the following communications:

As you know the previous ETS Committee was called to consider the results of the wide-ranging consultation on active travel schemes across the city. This included the Old Shoreham Road, which was put in by the previous Labour administration. However, the consultation also covered a number of other schemes, on the A259, A23 and Western Road. We are pleased that these long overdue improvements are going ahead to ensure safe, accessible travel across our city.

However, we know that one of the key routes of 'contention' was the Old Shoreham

Road and that the opposition parties have focused persistently on this for the past few year, even after the Labour administration moved to install it.

While the scope of the city-wide consultation we conducted followed Government guidelines, i.e. that councils are not expected to hold a referendum on whether to keep or scrap a lane, but to identify ways to improve cycling options, the Labour and Conservative groups at this committee shamefully asked that the Old Shoreham Road be scrapped from future active travel schemes.

As this was not in the scope of the consultation, nor was this the focus of the previous report, the implications of this decision were not brought before committee members. Officers did not recommend removing any of the schemes currently in place as part of the report on the consultation. This aligns clearly with Department for Transport direction that lanes they funded are kept in place with removal looked upon incredibly poorly by the DfT.

So, we meet today to consider the implications of removal of this particular route. As you'll see from the report, officers have considered removing this route , reported on these considerations, and found that this is not in the best interest of the city in so many ways, on grounds of our public health commitments, our equalities commitments, or our climate targets.

Crucially, we have new information about the financial implications this will have for the city's budget. Since the public announcements from the other two parties that they seek to remove one of our safe cycling routes, we have seen the Conservative Prime Minister's own special adviser, Andrew Gilligan, state publicly that Brighton & Hove is now to have key funding withdrawn pending the decision today. This has been confirmed on the Department for Transport website, and similar withdrawal of funding issued to West Sussex - in that case for example WSCC will now face difficult bidding for other money - not just on active travel.

This funding is to the tune of a quarter of a million pounds.

I put it to members that therefore this is about much more than one cycle lane. This is about how we view the funding of the public services we are here to deliver to the benefit of our residents. This decision now has the implication of stripping a council already suffering from years of budget cuts from access to funding that residents not only deserve but desperately need - they need well-funded public services.

I do not want to see this committee vote to put investment in our city and in our residents at risk, and I would urge others to consider the weight of this.

Finally we also have another stark warning only yesterday. We have been given yet another reminder of the threat posed by climate change. While we were previously told we have until 2030 scientists have warned we lose the fight to keep global temperatures under 1.5 degrees in 5 years at our current rate of emissions.

Just yesterday the UN released a report saying that human activity is changing the climate in 'unprecedented and sometimes irreversible ways' a report described as a 'code red for humanity'.

It is vital we do everything in our power to combat climate change for both our short-term health and wellbeing and the long-term future of the planet. Active travel is just one part of this, but it is a crucial, fundamental, and essential part. We want to see safe alternative routes for people who have the option not to drive no matter where you live in the city - that's our positive vision, and clearer roads for those who do need to drive.

This is a global problem that we can tackle at a local level. We have to do more to support active and sustainable travel, to improve air quality and better the physical and mental health of the people who live, work and visit our city. Please consider my generation and the younger generations that will suffer the most if action is not taken.

We have the ability to change. The pandemic has shown us we can do it quickly and dramatically if we have the will to do so. Only bold and brave decisions will bring about the change needed to avoid a climate catastrophe, to improve our public health, and access for our residents.

I am proud of the work we are doing to progress active travel in the city and will continue to make positive improvements our residents deserve in the face of huge challenges like our public health and climate crisis, through continuing our bold work for our city's environment. However, it is in my view a great shame and an embarrassment to the city that councillors of other parties have decided that investment in our city should rest on the insistence that a new safe travel route - the Old Shoreham Road - needs to go, when they know so much more - including council funding is at stake. In light of this new information, I would urge you all to consider the bigger picture, and as we urged at the last committee, to do the right thing. If the labour and conservatives vote to remove the cycle lane today, it is clear they are incapable of dealing with the climate emergency.

3 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

- 3.1 The Chair welcomed Mr Glaskin to the meeting and invited him to present the deputation.
- 3.2 Mr. Glaskin thanked the Chair and stated that he was presenting the deputation on behalf of Brighton Active Travel, a non-party political umbrella organisation for groups and individuals who want Brighton & Hove to be better for everybody who walks, uses wheelchairs and rides bicycles.

This small sub-committee has to make a decision that could impact everyone in the city for decades. Before it does, we would like answers to three questions.

First, if the Council removes the Old Shoreham Road temporary cycle lanes it will be more dangerous for anyone who would like to ride a bicycle in the north west of the city. There is no direct, safe alternative route nearby that can serve the schools with their six thousand pupils.

How would making the road more dangerous get more people walking and cycling?

If the Council removes the Old Shoreham Road temporary cycle lane it will lose millions of pounds in funding. The Government says so. Already it's withholding more than a

quarter of a million pounds that would otherwise help hard-working families, disabled people, women and children. Next, we'll lose access to millions for making the seafront, London Road, Lewes Road and Western Road safer. The Government could even install commissioners to take transport out of the hands of all elected councillors.

How would Councillors plug the funding gap triggered by removing the Old Shoreham Road cycle lanes when the Government stops its money?

Finally, it's time to stop spreading myths. Journey times have not got worse. There is not evidence that pollution has got worse. The electorate has not voted to remove the cycle lanes. Only 11% of the people who responded to the consultation were under 35, that's just one in every nine of the city's population. But they account for a whopping 50%, that's one in every two people in the city. Their views were massively under-represented. What's more these are the people more likely to want safe and direct routes to ride bicycles because they are younger, fitter and have less access to private cars.

So, will Councillors help everyone in this city, including the half whose voices have barely been heard, to have a wider choice of safe, easy, attractive and direct ways to travel by retaining the Old Shoreham Road temporary cycle lanes?

3.3 The Chair thanked Mr. Glaskin for attending the meeting and noted that there were no questions or comments and in view of the report on the agenda, therefore proposed that the deputation be noted.

3.4 **RESOLVED:** That the deputation be noted.

4 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

4.1 The Chair noted that no items had been submitted by Members for the meeting.

4.2 **RESOLVED:** That it be noted there were no items submitted for today's meeting by Members.

5 ACTIVE TRAVEL FUND - OLD SHOREHAM ROAD

5.1 The Assistant Director, City Transport introduced the report which had resulted from a decision of the Special Environment, Transport & Sustainability (ET&S) Committee held on the 21st July 2021 and concerned the potential closure of the cycle lane on the Old Shoreham Road. He noted that the report covered the sustainability, equalities, legal and financial considerations associated with the removal of the cycle lane and also referenced recent government guidance issued to local authorities. One aspect being that the £278k funding allocated by the government could be withdrawn should the decision be taken to remove the cycle lane. He also noted additional information had been circulated with the addendum papers which detailed further correspondence from the government and its position in relation to the removal of cycle lanes installed as part of the Active Travel response to the pandemic. He stated that having taken into account the various considerations it was proposed that the cycle lane should be retained, and further monitoring undertaken with the results reported back to a future meeting of the ET&S committee.

- 5.2 The Chair then asked the Monitoring Officer to clarify the legal position and duty of the sub-committee in reaching a decision on the matter.
- 5.3 The Monitoring Officer reminded the Members of the Sub-Committee that they had three choices before them, to retain the cycle lane, to remove the cycle lane or to remove part of the cycle lane. In making their decision, Members needed to be mindful of all of the relevant considerations that had been outlined in the report and previous reports as well as the Council's policies on climate change, reduction of carbon emissions and its own Active Travel programme. There were too many to list, but Members needed to be satisfied that they had all the information and had taken this into account when reaching their decision.
- 5.4 The Chair noted that there were two amendments which were detailed in the addendum papers and invited Councillor Wilkinson to move the Labour amendment.
- 5.5 Councillor Wilkinson moved an amendment on behalf of the Labour Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Nemeth.
- 5.6 Councillor Nemeth moved an amendment on behalf of the Conservative Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Wilkinson.
- 5.7 The Chair then called a short adjournment at 11.27am.
- 5.8 The Chair reconvened the meeting at 11.30am.
- 5.9 Councillor Wilkinson thanked officers for the report and noted that a great deal of work had gone into producing it for the urgency sub-committee. He then outlined the reasons why the Labour Group believed in the need for the cycle lane to be removed and for the Council to take on board the views of residents albeit that they were in contradiction to those of the government. He felt that the Council was best placed to acknowledge where a temporary measure had not been successful and to respond to local views and to work with communities to improve their environment. It was therefore the right course of action to take in removing the cycle lane.
- 5.10 The Chair noted that there were no other comments and asked the Head of Democratic Services to undertake a vote on the amendments.
- 5.11 The Head of Democratic Services put the Conservative Group's amendment to the vote which was carried by 2 votes to 1.
- 5.12 The Head of Democratic Services put the Labour Group's amendment to the vote which was carried by 2 votes to 1.
- 5.13 The Head of Democratic Services then circulated a revised set of recommendations which took account of both amendments being carried and then put the revised recommendations as amended to the vote which was carried by 2 votes to 1.

5.14 RESOLVED:

- (1) That the removal of the Phase 1 temporary cycle lane on the Old Shoreham Road be agreed and that officers be instructed to take all steps necessary or incidental to the removal of the cycle lane as soon as reasonably practicable, and
- (2) That council officers be instructed to urgently develop and provide committee Members with proposed criteria for any further consultations and data reporting in relation to future active travel measures, in order to demonstrate-empirical evidence to support a balanced analysis.

5.15 The Chair noted the decision and brought the meeting to an end.

The meeting concluded at 11.41am

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of