

Scrutiny Streets, Environment & Homes Sub-Committee

Meeting of held on Tuesday, 20 March 2018 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall,
Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Sean Fitzsimons (Chair);
Councillor Jan Buttinger (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Pat Clouder, Patricia Hay-Justice and Joy Prince

Also Present: Councillor Robert Canning, Simon Hall and Louisa Woodley

Apologies: Councillor Phil Thomas

PART A

15/18 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2018 were agreed as an accurate record.

16/18 Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

17/18 Urgent Business (if any)

There were no items of urgent business.

18/18 Trams

Officers from Transport for London (TFL) attended to provide a presentation to the Sub-Committee on this item.

The following officers were in attendance:

Chris Hall, Community Partnerships Lead
Allan Kill, Programme Manager
Carol Smales, Business Analysis Manager

Tram Safety

The Programme Manager expressed his deepest condolences to the families affected by the tragic events of 9 November 2016.

TFL advised that they were committed to ensuring the safety of their customers and staff and as a result had introduced new safety measures to ensure a similar incident would not happen again. TFL continued to support those affected and worked closely with partners on lessons learned. Both the Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) and TFL had conducted investigations into the accident, with the results of which being published in December 2017 and January 2018 respectively. The findings from these investigations had reached similar conclusions on the root cause of the derailment.

As a result of recommendations arising from these investigations, additional safety measures had been introduced which included the following:

- Reduction of the maximum speed from 80kph to 70kph which allowed drivers to be extra vigilance should the Tram reach top speed
- An upgrade of the CCTV and recording systems
- Step-down speed signage at various locations
- An in-cab driver protection device
- Installation of Chevron signs at Sandilands and other identified bends.

Going forward TFL would continue to explore other safety measures, with various options in the process of being developed and tested.

The Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance and Treasury, and the Ward Councillor for Fieldway, highlighted that the tragic accident had affected the lives of many within the tight knit community, with some of those involved left with life changing injuries. He acknowledged that trams were a much used service for the local community and commended the support that was provided in the immediate aftermath.

However, there was a concern that support for the ongoing issues experienced by the families since had not been as satisfactory, with a need for more 'wrap around' support for ongoing issues such as rehousing and finances. The Director of Public Health was commended for successfully lobbying for extra funding to be allocated to the community which had resulted in an £150k award from TFL.

The representative from the trade union ASLEF agreed that the impact of the accident on the local community had been immense and reminded the Sub-Committee that the tram staff were also part of that community. They shared the same grief and had been amongst some of the first people at the scene of the accident.

It was questioned why after 15 months since the tragedy, reassurances were still being sought about safety, why the implementation of new technology, much of which had been used on the underground and rail services for many years, was taking so long and what safeguards had been implemented in the interim?

Officers advised that:

- Work on the system to provide speed alerts was almost completed and would be rolled out by the end of 2018.
- There had also been discussions about a new system that would intervene once it detected that the tram was speeding. This was new technology and in-depth consideration was still undergoing.
- This new system would be difficult to install on the current system which was approximately 15-20 years old.
- In the interim, enhanced speed checks had taken place and would continue to take place across the network.
- There had been spot checks across the network and the re-education of drivers about speed limits
- New speed signs and step down signs had been installed across the network

In response to a question about how to ensure a fool proof system without the risk of accident being placed on the driver, officers stated that the responsibility placed on driver could not be removed as that was the only way to ensure a safe service, but it was acknowledged that there needed to be a balance.

Following questions about safety measures employed in other countries, Officers advised that there had been successful collaboration with various European countries. As a result, lessons learned and best practice had been utilised where relevant.

John Jeffkins from EARS/Datatrans LTD highlighted that Tram incidents were rare, that TFL were ahead of many in addressing issues related to sharp bends and had introduced many best practice accident preventative measures.

Members queried how speed limits were enforced, the effectiveness of signage, and sought clarification on the purpose of the in-car driver alerts. Officers advised that signage acted as an alert for drivers to check that they maintained the correct speed at specific points. Spot checks were carried out regularly. The in-cab driver alert used infra-red scanning of driver's faces to check for responses such as compromised vision, but driver alertness responsibilities rested with the operator. The CCTV systems also ensured that all events in the Tram were recorded and had recently been upgraded to improve the quality of recording.

The Chair commented that the Trams service was key to the infrastructure of the borough and as such, there had to be a central reporting line for residents to raise issues and concerns. There also needed to be a mechanism for regular data on safety measures taken to be provided. Officers confirmed that discussions were planned within the Council to improve the transparency of improvements made in safety culture.

The Deputy Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment welcomed the recommended ideas to strengthen the working relationship with TFL, which would help to ensure that the system was as safe as possible.

Finn Brennan, ASLEF reminded Members that drivers were human and as such an automated protection system was still required to ensure the safety of passengers. Many fatalities resulted from ejection from the tram, which remained an area of safety that required addressing. It was also highlighted that issues with the windows remained a concern and needed to be addressed. Officers confirmed that network rail type glazing had been sought for the trams, with replacement work due to commence in May 2018.

Future Proposals

The Business Analysis Manager presented the future proposals for the network to the Sub-Committee, during which it was confirmed that a progress had been made on the Trams for Growth Strategy since the last update in 2016, with a further update due later in the year. The vision for the plan remained to support growth in Croydon, deliver improvements for South London services and to feed into major transport hubs.

Phase one of the strategy focused on improvements to the network to ensure efficiency through changes to the timetable, line enhancement and increased daily services. Phase Two of the Plan would involve work with borough partners to deliver further enhancements with options including a possible Sutton extension being discussed. The Chair advised that reassurance was needed on the viability of tram extensions, with more work needed to ensure that any possible extensions were funded.

It was questioned why TFL had not explored the possibility of connecting the Docklands Light Railway with the tram service. Officers advised that a business plan would be needed which clearly identified external funding for any such project.

Disappointment was expressed that an extension for Crystal Palace had not been explored as this would improve connectivity for the area, potentially reduce car usage and improve air quality. It was highlighted that revenue funding had been reduced with a need to break even across the service. As a result funding was not currently available for most new schemes.

John Jefkins challenged TFL's prediction that showed an 85% surge in usage as there had been 9% growth recently in passengers using the service. It was also suggested that if longer trams were brought in at the current frequency as opposed to an increased frequency, as proposed on phase two of TFL's strategy, more revenue would be generated and costs reduced. Officers highlighted that the costs associated with longer trams would be high due to the extra maintenance that would be required.

Alan Hannaford raised concern that's the East Croydon line was operating at its limit and advised that the Wellesley road tram stop needed developing.

In response to a Member question about the lessons learned from the Westfield development in Shepherd's Bush and Stratford. Officers advised that the Westfield development had seen increased growth on both the rail and bus service, which would be factored into the plans for Croydon.

Members queried how the partnership between TFL and the Council would deliver the vision of the Croydon Plan and the potential cost. Officers confirmed that they had worked with TFL on the opportunity area plans. The draft London planning framework investigated how people travelled to Croydon, although this may need to be refreshed in accordance with the most recent housing targets. Officers from TFL confirmed that the approximate costs would be £165m, but this did not include the costs for extensions.

The Chair raised concerns that there had been a lack of upgrading of the tram links and extensions and queried if a review had been undertaken on the danger spots for cyclists. Officers confirmed that these concerns would be raised with senior officers. It was also highlighted that bikes were not currently allowed on trams due to the risk presented as a result of the braking system.

A Member the level of planning undertaken to integrate services as it was noted that there had previously been an inter-link between the trams and buses at Waddon Marshes which had been discontinued. Officers advised that service planning for buses and trams was now managed within one department and were all working together.

The Chair stated that it would be beneficial for the tram operators to attend Scrutiny, officers advised that both tram and bus operators regularly attended the public Transport and Liaison Panel meetings and would be encouraged to attend future Scrutiny meetings. The Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport advised that increased levels of engagement with the Council by TFL would be beneficial and welcomed future proposals to the network.

The Chair thanked officers and participants for attending the meeting.

In reaching its recommendations, the Committee reached the following **CONCLUSIONS:**

1. The tram crash of 9th November 2016 caused the death of 7 Croydon residents and injured many others. It had a profound effect on residents of New Addington and Croydon, and it is the duty of Croydon Council to ensure that another incident does not happen again.
2. Despite the best intentions of designers and engineers of the Croydon Tramlink system, and the inherent nature of how trams are operated, Croydon Tramlink was not as safe as it should have been, and that TFL and its operator underestimated the safety risks involved in running a tram system, both in terms of physical infrastructure and personnel, which resulted in a scale of death and injuries unprecedented in modern tram history.
3. Lessons from this accident will have a profound impact on not just Croydon Tramlink but on all trams system world-wide.
4. Committee was not re-assured that safety issues were being addressed fully, in particular in regards to experience of drivers. That further reassurance

was required to ensure that appropriate safety measures were in place whilst longer term measures were being explored.

5. To help ensure that TFI and Tram operators take passenger safety seriously the Council should devise measures of public accountability for TFL on its safety actions in regards trams. It would also be sensible to consider whether to include safety on buses within any proposed structure.

6. Tramlink has not had an effective champion this last 20 years since Croydon Council handed over this role to Transport for London. All other transport systems in London including trains, tube, DLR and buses have expanded in the last 20 years since Tramlink was built, during a time when other trams systems in UK have expanded and added new lines. Political promises have been made on expansion by various Mayors of London but necessary funding for expansion has never materialised. This has to change.

7. It was difficult to determine TFL's priorities on future proposals as a result of information contained in the presentation. Mayor's new Transport Strategy alludes to expansion to Sutton, but experience of previous Mayor's promises means these have to be taken with a pinch of salt.

8. The opening of Westfield Croydon will result in large number of visitors from surrounding South London boroughs, and the current road network will not cope with large increase in car usage. There is a need for improved public transport connectivity with places like Brixton, Lewisham and Peckham, which are difficult to access by train currently. Tramlink expansion and connecting Tramlink to tube and DLR networks will help alleviate this problem.

9. That the transport policy would have an impact on the Local Plan and should be developed in line with SPD.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Transport for London (TFL) that

1. Provide an updated report to the Committee in 6 months on Tram safety and Future proposals.

2. Tram Operators to attend a future meeting to provide an update on safety measures implemented. The committee should also invite Trams drivers/their representatives to the meeting to provide their view and perspective on safety measures that have been im

3. To review its funding criteria for major projects as currently the current regime means that significant tram expansion will never be funded.

4. A briefing on Capital Gains including figures to be provided to the Committee

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Croydon Council that

1) Croydon Council to ensure that safety on trams and buses are built into its accountability structure for Trams and Bus operators.

2) Croydon Council to consider how it can re-establish its original role as the Champion of Tramlink.

3) In its new role as Champion of Tramlink it should undertake a review about how Tramlink expansion could be funded and consider other form of funding outside what is provided by TFL.

4) To help improve public transport connectivity with other South London Boroughs, such as Sutton, Bromley, Merton, Lewisham, Southwark and Lambeth, It should set up a South London Tramlink Expansion Partnership. One of its first aims should be how the boroughs can help link up the tram system to the DLR and other major public transport networks/nodes.

19/18 Responses from Cabinet

The Sub-Committee noted the responses from Cabinet following the recommendations made by the Committee at the meeting on 12 September 2017

The Sub-Committee **Noted** the responses from Cabinet

20/18 Exclusion of the Press and Public

This was not required

The meeting ended at 9.31 pm

Signed:

Date:

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