

<b>Committee:</b> Overview & Scrutiny	<b>Date:</b> 7 April 2015	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted	<b>Agenda Item:</b> 7.4
<b>Report of:</b>  Louise Russell, Service Head for Corporate Strategy and Equality  <b>Originating officer(s)</b> Shamima Khatun, Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer Corporate Strategy and Equality		<b>Title:</b>  Improving Cycling Safety  <b>Wards Affected:</b> ALL	

## 1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report presents the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a summary of the findings of a Scrutiny Challenge session held in January 2015 to help identify cost effective measures that can be implemented to improve cycling safety. It sets out a number of recommendations to improve practice and performance in this area.

## 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:
- Agree the draft report and the recommendations contained within it for submission to Cabinet; and
  - Authorise the Service Head for Corporate Strategy and Equality to amend if necessary the draft report before submission to Cabinet, after consultation with the Challenge Session chair.

## 3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In recent years, cycling has grown in popularity for both work and pleasure. The Government aims to make cycling a more convenient, attractive and realistic choice for short journeys, especially those made to work and school. It cites the need to reduce congestion, improve health outcomes and create more pleasant places to live as key issues that cycling can help address. The increased popularity of cycling has also been helped by the success of British cyclists in the London Olympics, during which Tower Hamlets was a host borough, and the Tour de France.
- 3.2 However, as cycle usage has grown, the potential for conflict with other road users including motorists and pedestrians, together with the overall safety of cyclists, has become an area of increasing concern.

- 3.3 High profile pan-London movements such as the London Cycling Campaign's 'Space for Cycling' look to change the emphasis and ensure better conditions for cyclists in London. In 2013, the Mayor of London published his 'Vision for Cycling in London' – a strategy that intends to “normalise” cycling and make it an integral part of the capital's transport system. This includes the implementation of dedicated cycle lanes and the central London cycle hire scheme which demonstrate the emphasis on cycling as a credible and feasible alternative to other forms of road transport.
- 3.4 Recognising the mounting concern over road safety for cyclists in the borough, particularly given the rise in fatalities on busy arterial roads and the importance of cycling as a viable means of increasing physical activity, the scrutiny challenge session focused on considering the issue of cycle safety, chaired by Cllr John Pierce, the scrutiny lead member for Communities, Localities and Culture.
- 3.5 The aim of the challenge session was to assess all transport interventions and policy in relation to cycle safety and draw on good practice from partners and other local authorities in London. The session also sought to identify causes of cyclists' safety concerns and barriers preventing people from cycling or from cycling more frequently.
- 3.6 The session was underpinned by three core questions:
- a) What has been the general response to date from cyclists in the borough to the measures introduced both in terms of training and infrastructure improvements?
  - b) What further cost-effective measures can the council implement to improve cycle safety?
  - c) What issues/areas of concern do cyclists want the council to address specifically that have not already been acknowledged in the London Cycling Campaign ward asks for Tower Hamlets?

The Group also considered examples of practice in other London boroughs.

- 3.7 The report of the Challenge Session is attached as Appendix A. It provides a summary of the findings of the Review Group and makes ten recommendations to improve practice in this area:
1. The council produces an enhanced plan for cycling in Tower Hamlets to ensure that the borough is at the forefront of this agenda.

2. The council explores the costs and feasibility of an affordable scheme in partnership with the borough's registered providers for the provision of secure estate cycle parking.
3. The council works with local schools and Sustrans to incorporate route plans proposed by young people into the enhanced plan for cycling in Tower Hamlets as part of the consultation process.
4. Support for the 'Safer Lorries Safer Cycling' scheme is the policy of the council and the council should now sign the pledge.
5. The council imposes a 20mph speed limit on all residential and borough roads and the council should work with the police to ensure that 20mph is enforced.
6. The council publicises annual spend on its cycling agenda.
7. The council consults residents and ward members on the London Cycling Campaign's proposal to keep the road to the south of Victoria Park open for longer and explore ways to influence the park's statutory opening hours.
8. The development of a cycle friendly borough is treated as a priority by the council.
9. The council better influences developers to provide greater cycle parking facilities for their developments.
10. The council works with TfL to roll out more cycle specific signals across the borough.

#### **4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations to this committee as detailed in section 2.1
- 4.2 However, the ten recommendations to Cabinet that are detailed in section 3.7 above are likely to involve some additional cost to the Council. These costs will need to be quantified and the necessary funding identified before the recommendations can be implemented.

#### **5. LEGAL COMMENTS**

- 5.1 The Council is required by section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 to have an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to have executive arrangements which ensure the committee has specified powers. Consistent with that obligation Article 6 of the Council's Constitution provides that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants and may

make reports and recommendations to the Full Council or the Executive, as appropriate, in connection with the discharge of any functions.

- 5.2 The recommendations in the report appear to be capable of being carried out within the Council's powers, although the following matters should be noted.
- 5.3 In 2011 the Council prepared its Second Local Implementation Plan "LIP2" in accordance with statutory requirements under section 145 Greater London Authority Act 1999. The LIP2 is consistent with the London Transport Strategy and was approved by the Mayor of London. Any enhanced plan for cycling will need to sit alongside the Council's LIP2 complement its objectives, which are to:
- i. To promote a transport environment that encourages sustainable travel choices for all;
  - ii. To ensure the transport system is safe and secure for all in the borough;
  - iii. To ensure the transport system is efficient and reliable in meeting the present and future needs of the borough's population and economy;
  - iv. To ensure transport is accessible for all; and
  - v. To encourage smarter travel behaviour.
- 5.4 Care must be taken with any commitment to the Safer Lorries Safer Cycling scheme, to ensure that the Council continues to comply with its legal obligations in relation to public procurement. Any selection criteria for haulage contracts must be objective, related to the subject matter of the procurement and non-discriminatory. The Council must also act proportionately. A commitment to only contract with haulage companies who sign up to the scheme may not meet these requirements. It may be preferable to limit any commitment to the scheme to use in evaluation of tenders.
- 5.5 On 4 February 2015, Cabinet agreed to proceed with the implementation of a 20mph limit on the majority of the Borough's roads pursuant to an experimental traffic order which shall take effect for a period not exceeding 18 months. The proposed start date for this order is 13 April 2015.
- 5.6 The opening hours of Victoria Park are presently governed by byelaws, which would need to be amended if a successful amendment to the park's opening hours is to be implemented.
- 5.7 When considering any recommendations, consequent upon the review, the Committee must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don't

(the public sector equality duty). There is some information in the report relevant to these considerations.

## **6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 Fear of traffic is a key barrier to cycling for many people. Providing attractive, safe and convenient cycling infrastructure will remove key obstacles to cycling for all sections of the community, in particular women, children, older people and those with disabilities. All of these groups are currently under-represented among cyclists in the borough.
- 6.2 As real and perceived danger from traffic is reduced, cycling will become a realistic mode of travel for all, increasing opportunities to access jobs, training, services and leisure opportunities. Many of our residents face financial constraints. Cycling is much more widely accessible than private car ownership in that it is relatively inexpensive to access, yet provides similar benefits of flexible point to point travel.
- 6.3 Making cycling genuinely safe and welcoming for all sections of the community will increase opportunities for regular physical activity, social interaction and leisure, with known positive impacts on physical and mental health and wellbeing.

## **7. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

- 7.1 Cycle infrastructure schemes and the introduction of traffic management measures can be difficult to integrate into the surrounding environment. Any scheme should ensure that it is designed so as to fit into the character and surroundings of the area affected both as a whole and in the individual elements of the scheme.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no direct risk management implications arising from the report or recommendations.

## **9. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no direct crime and disorder reduction implications arising from the report or recommendations.

## **10. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Improving Cycling Safety

Appendix 2 – London Cycling Campaign Ward Asks for Tower Hamlets