

Wandsworth Cost of Living Commission: 3rd evidence gathering session: Transport

Date: 27 April 2023 at 14:00 –17:00

Venue: Tooting Leisure Centre

Objective: The objective of this session is to capture the lived experience of the impact and key drivers of the cost-of-living crisis looking at transport issues, to then identify potential longer-term solutions and actions for the Council, partner organisations and Wandsworth communities.

- to review the transport system in Wandsworth
- identify systemic solutions to improve access to transport issues in a sustainable way for all Wandsworth citizens.
- The primary areas of enquiry are identifying the cost-of-living issues and who suffers from access issues to transport, considering the accessibility of transport in Wandsworth and looking into Transport solutions and opportunities.

Attending the meeting:

- Ian Tattum - Joint Chair
- Dorian Leatham - Joint Chair
- Councillor Kemi Akinola - Vice Chair
- Toby Costin
- Lauren James
- Professor Tim Lang

Apologies

- Tylor Maria Johnson
- Professor Alex Colas
- Gillian Norton
- Kath McDonnell
- Beverley Corson
- Cathy Warwick
- Liz Moreton
- Arshad Daud

Wandsworth Council officers

- Peter Quirk: Secretariat
- Alice Addison: Secretariat
- David Tidley, Transport Strategy Manager
- Bethany Pepper COL programme

Observer: Charlotte Maguire, LGA

1. Joint Chairs - Welcome

Apologies & introductions

- Context of the Commission: Running for around one year, using a place-based approach to find long-term solutions to support residents through the cost of living crisis.

2. Lauren James, Commissioner - Introduction & Context

- Part of the Commission is reviewing the theme of Transport and related issues in Wandsworth, this includes improving access to transport, issues of cost, how can we find solutions in a sustainable way, linking with public health around air quality and active travel.

Key Lines of Enquiry

1. Identify the issues, who suffers from access issues to transport.
2. Who is transport poor / agree clear definition?
3. Consider how accessible is the transport system in Wandsworth.
4. Review of sustainable transport options for Wandsworth.
5. Review of why people use transport in Wandsworth (impact on employment /leisure).
6. A focus on the young people, education, and training perspective.
7. Examine Transport solutions and opportunities (I.e., mitigating gendered disadvantage)
8. Transport policy cannot work in isolation, determine linking factors.
9. Consider the Impact of the GLA regional transport policies (ULEZ expansion)

3. Mark Brown, inclusive cycle manager, Wheels for Wellbeing Statement (read by Lauren James)

- London based charity, campaigning to make cycling more inclusive for disabled individuals, focus on cycling but feeding in wider issues
- Wheels for Wellbeing highlights cost as a significant barrier to transport for disabled people, who are often on lower incomes or unable to work, barriers through infrastructure and the absence of mobility issues considered in transport policy.

4. Michael Barret, construction advisory innovations Manager, Transport for London Statement (read by Lauren James)

- Michael Barret looks at inclusivity of infrastructure and highlighted areas where TFL are trying to positively improve accessibility infrastructure, for example step-free access stations scheme, reduce steps at stations. There is also the TFL Independent Disability Advisory Group, who comment on current infrastructure and accessibility.

5. Josh Cottell, Centre for London - Research on Transport accessibility, affordability & future solutions

- Centre for London is a dedicated London think tank, which looks at various issues including housing, transport, temporary accommodation, and other policies.
- Josh highlighted issues around the average household spend on transport, and how the COLC is going to affect different households differently, some households have savings and others don't where some will be living month to month.
- 4 ways that travel increases cost of living; cost, barriers to opportunities, time cost, health costs regarding air pollution.
- 4 areas of action for transport:
 1. Reduce cost of travel, particularly public transport
 2. Improve connectivity and transport options, especially disabled access
 3. Reduce time it takes to travel
 4. Reduce air pollution from travel

5. Laura Elms, Human Forest - Sustainable transport

- Human forest is an electric bike sharing company, to them sustainability means environment but also communities
- Human Forest gave an overview of e-bike options for Londoners, and their low cost approach. They have a completely zero emissions fleet, operations and bikes and warehouse powered by renewable energy. They also highlighted the ebenefits of using shared bike schemes, which avoids the need for upfront capital to buy a personal bike that many vulnerable families lack in the cost of living crisis.

6. Will Wright, Sustrans - Alternative transport and widening participation

- Charity making it easier to walk wheel and cycle, working with communities, local authorities, and government bodies
- Will gave an overview of their report published last year on COL on travel, highlighting that many people can no longer afford to drive where car ownership increases with income, car policies therefore have little impact on nearly half of Wandsworth households and emphasised the importance of considering those on low income, those with barriers to transport, and vulnerable groups when discussing transport policy. Additional barriers include the upfront cost of cycling, mobility aids, need to transport children, additional concerns beyond road traffic safety
- They suggested the following solutions: having a holistic and joined up approach, introduce a payment scheme to help people, introduce cycle loans, free cycle mobility maintenance, maintain accessibility during roadworks and construction is important to inclusivity.

7. Celia Duncan, Wandsworth Cycle Campaign - Transport Poverty in Wandsworth & Barriers to Cycling

- Charity founded in 1978 which campaigns to make London a safer and more enjoyable place to cycle. Celia presented a map displaying ONS census data low-transport areas in Wandsworth, highlight specific areas: the west of Wandsworth which has no tube line, no train line, no major cycle lanes, no Santander docking stations, high car ownership.
- Celia also explored the main barriers to cycling (financial, logistical, social/cultural, safety) and outlined solutions including bike support schemes, cheaper bike hangers, cargo bikes and education.

8. Keziah Gordon, Wandsworth Council - Feedback from Youth Groups

- Keziah has consulted with young people as Participation Development Lead at the Council. She fed back that most young people she spoke to use buses as preferred mode of transport and many had concerns regarding the cost, too expensive, and there are many barriers to them getting into cycling, e.g., cannot find anywhere to park bikes, not safe enough for them to travel distance from home to school, not accessible.

9. Wandsworth Community Empowerment Network, Shonaleigh

- Shonaleigh pointed out important aspects around young people including asking how the Commission is listening to their voices, solutions and how is this being focused on?
- The Commission responded with: Keziah as the Councils Participation Development Lead sits on the Commission as representative of the youth voice, where the timings and form of commission meetings may be impractical for younger people. Keziah has met with youth groups and discussed COLC and feedbacks the discussions. Alongside this, the Commission is running focus groups which will involve a session with young people.

10. Charlotte Maguire COL lead Local Government Association

- Charlotte provided an update on the work of the LGA in supporting the sector and collating good practice ideas.

Community Organisations

11. Lilias Gillies, Wandsworth Older Peoples forum

- Lilias recommended reorganisation of the Accessibility forum and improving help with applying for support for transport to elderly people. For example, users with EASL could get help through libraries. She also highlighted Roehampton issues with

isolation and low transport accessibility and the importance of older people getting out and about, socialising more, happier about transport.

Wandsworth Council Representatives

12. David Tidley, Transport Strategy Manager, Wandsworth Council - Q&A – Transport at Wandsworth Council

- David explained the range of data and information the Council holds on how people travel in the borough, including heat maps for public transport, walking, cycling, car ownership etc. showing layers on systems to ensure investment decisions are put in right places and needs of the borough. This is a significant tool for town planning, allows intentional development, and new transport coming in with development. David also explored 15-minute cities which aim to minimise time and cost of travel by having facilities close by. He also explained that some vulnerable groups have free public transport, and the different transport organisations that have responsibility over pricing etc. Wandsworth Council is also exploring the cargo bike schemes and Sustrans have helped them deliver school streets project.

13. Bethany Pepper, Wandsworth Council - Update on the COL Programme

Bethany highlighted some key areas from the Councils COLC Programme of Immediate Support:

- Successful use of the LIFT, low-income family tracker - software to look across information on families, to identify which families are most in need and how can we support them with benefit claims. We have also run a campaign on uptake of pension credits- £361,000 back into 78 households. We are making progress on free school meals and can tell where people are eligible but not claiming. The co-location of Citizens Advice staff at Council locations allows same day appointments. The programme is looking at moving Warm hubs into an offer of community spaces, co-locate advice and support, expanding offers, support for skills, employment, energy advice.