

**Extract from the draft minutes of the Policy and Public Initiatives Panel meeting of 20 January 2020**

**47. Secure and Covered Cycle Storage Options**

Mr William Bramhill addressed the Panel pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1). Mr Bramhill spoke to agree with the report's recommendations and request that pressure be exerted to improve the requirements for provision of cycle storage to be included in new-build residential developments, which in his view was currently insufficient and acted as a disincentive to modal shift from car use to cycling as an alternative.

The Panel raised caution that any requirements laid down for cycle storage within individual dwellings may be used for purposes other than cycle storage. A Panel member highlighted the issue of high-density developments, where space for external covered storage was reduced, and any provision of internal storage would act to increase property prices. It was further suggested that briefings on Section 106 requirements be expanded to specify requirements for cycle storage in new developments.

It was ventured by a Panel member that secure public cycle storage in the Town Centre and key areas was the crucial issue to be addressed, as the lack of such storage disincentivises the use of bicycles. Traditional cycle racks did not act sufficiently to deter theft or prevent damage, and it was put forward that cyclists should be asked for recommendations as to where to site secure covered storage in the Borough. The Panel agreed that cycling would be encouraged if cyclists could be given safer cycle routes and secure and protective cycle storage throughout Colchester.

Officers were asked to see whether data regarding the level of usage of electric bikes was available.

A discussion was held on the potential difficulties in siting secure storage areas in Colchester High Street, including the current one-way system, which resulted in cyclists from the East of Town having to dismount and push their bikes to where existing (unsecured) cycle racks are currently located. Several possible sites were suggested, including the Town Hall car park on St. Runwald Street, Holy Trinity Church and Vineyard Street Car Park and other car parks within the Town. The Town Hall car park was covered by a monitored CCTV system, whilst Holy Trinity Church could be used to provide covered storage in an easily-monitored location. Empty retail units were also suggested as a possible site for a cycle storage and repair centre for the Town Centre. A Panel member informed the Panel that the founder of 'Repair, Reuse and Recycle', Chris Blomley, had requested help to set up a centre which would include a bicycle repair service, amongst other services.

The Panel agreed that it would be worthwhile for officers to explore options for both secure public cycle storage at key locations, and options for secure and covered cycle storage in residential areas, consulting with residents as appropriate. It was suggested that land owned by the Council in residential estates could be used for residents' covered cycle storage. The cost of this was noted as being much higher than unsecured storage but would offer far better protection from damage or theft. Use of CCTV covering unsecured storage would increase safety but would be less reliable than secured storage. The Chairman argued that better advice and education should be provided to cyclists on how to maximise the security and protection of bicycles when parked.

In addition, it was noted that there remained broken links in the Colchester cycling network, which should be addressed. Rachel Forkin, Transport and Sustainability Manager, gave assurance that work was being conducted on wider cycling initiatives for the Borough, and that this included possible storage improvements and joining up the cycle network where links are currently not present. She laid out a number of possible options for Town Centre and residential secure parking and emphasised the need for any installation to be demand-led. Wide consultation would be required to identify need, and requirements for management and access arrangements would then be considered for each type of storage proposed. A Panel member noted that Colchester Town Station and the Hythe (Essex) Station did not have secure cycle storage options and so little cycle parking was to be seen at those locations. It was also noted that provision of station cycle parking was not within the Council's remit but was a responsibility of Network Rail.

The Panel stressed the need for any storage areas to be well-lit and overlooked by properties and passing pedestrians. This would be vital to ensure that cyclists felt safe utilising them.

The Transport and Sustainability Manager explained that she would obtain cost details for the range of options for secured cycle storage, should a recommendation be made and agreed to take this work further. The Housing and Planning Manager informed the Panel that it might be possible to bid for and obtain funding for cycle storage from the Town Fund, as part of the overall bid for this funding.

Councillor Julie Young attended and with the consent of the Chair addressed the Panel. Councillor Young explained that she had conducted a fact-finding visit to the 'Mini-Holland' area in Waltham Forest, which was aimed at improving links, safety and experiences for cyclists and pedestrians. She informed the Panel that the scheme had proved to be very successful, and that the secure and covered cycle storage option used there for residents' parking involved half-moon storage units, with keys provided to residents, which stored five or six bicycles each and cost around £2,500 per unit.

*RESOLVED* that the report had been noted and discussed.

*RECOMMENDED* to CABINET that officers be directed to explore options for secure and covered public cycle storage in the Town Centre and at key locations, and explore options for secure and covered cycle storage in residential areas, consulting with residents as appropriate and sourcing information as to the cost of potential

options to meet identified demand. This should be carried out as part of wider work already progressing on cycle initiatives and efforts to complete the network of cycle routes in Colchester.