

London Borough of Islington

Regeneration and Employment Review Committee – 15 November 2012

Minutes of a meeting of **REGENERATION AND EMPLOYMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on Thursday 15 November 2012 at 7.30pm.

Present Councillors: Paula Belford, Wally Burgess, Steph Charalambous, Theresa Debono, Greg Foxsmith, Rakhia Ismail, Marian Spall.

Councillor Greg Foxsmith in the Chair

192 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item A1)

None.

193 DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item A2)

None.

194 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (Item A3)

None.

195 MINUTES (Item A4)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Regeneration Review Committee meeting held on 11 September 2012 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

196 CHAIR'S REPORT (Item A5)

None.

197 40% CARBON REDUCTION BY 2020 SCRUTINY REVIEW – 12 MONTH REPORT BACK (Item B1)

Lucy Padfield, Energy Services Manager and Martin Holland, Head of Service, Highways Services provided an update on the implementation of the committee's recommendations.

In the discussion the following points were made:

- The positive work being done to reduce carbon was outlined.
- The latest analysis showed Islington on track to reach the target of 40% carbon reduction by 2020. The Council was currently within 1 or 2% of the target for 2012.
- The programme of putting solar panels on communal housing blocks had been stopped after 25 blocks as there had been changes to the tariff rates in 2012 which meant it did not currently represent good value for money. If in future this changed, the council would consider restarting the programme.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That officers provide members with more detail about targets and whether these were being met at the next meeting.

198 SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT SCRUTINY REVIEW / COUNCIL STRATEGY FOR INCREASING EMPLOYMENT – 12 MONTH REPORT BACK (Item B2)

Lela Kogbara, Director Regeneration Strategy and Partnerships provided an update on the implementation of the committee's recommendations.

In the discussion the following points were made:

- The Council was focussed on breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty and was trying to ensure that young people did not become workless.
- The Council was working closely with Job Centre Plus. The 24,000 people on benefits had to interact with Job Centre Plus and most referrals for training came from there. In addition outreach work was being done and referrals could also be through word of mouth.
- The Council was on track to meet the target of 30% increase in the number of local residents it employed by 2014. Moving HFI and the cleaning contract in-house had contributed to the increase as had apprenticeships.
- The scrutiny review had helped the Council to focus on employment and develop ideas.
- Data relating to the Work Programme was not yet available.
- Much of the training offered was related to specific jobs available. For example, Delaware was a business responsible for Arsenal catering. They guaranteed that anyone who had completed the relevant training with the Council would receive an interview.
- There had been a significant increase in the number of apprenticeships with Aquaterra, private sector gyms, leisure facilities and in the hospitality sector.
- Work was taking place to try and find opportunities for young people still in school where appropriate.
- The K & M McLoughlin decorating apprenticeship school had opened in Islington.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the Committee be provided with data on the progression of apprentices in six months' time.

199 AIR QUALITY SCRUTINY REVIEW – WITNESS EVIDENCE (Item B3)

Simon Birkett, Clean Air London gave evidence.

In the discussion the following points were made:

- The Clean Air campaign was a cross party organisation set up seven years ago.
- Nitrogen dioxide levels were high in Islington. Air pollution in London regularly exceeded twice the World Health Organisation guidelines.
- London had the worst air pollution in the UK and among the worst in Europe.
- Only smoking caused more early deaths than air pollution in the UK.
- Research published in 2010 by the Aphekom group of scientists had shown that living on roads used by 10,000 or more vehicles per day on average could be responsible for 15-30% of all new cases of asthma in children and of COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) and CHD (coronary heart disease) in adults aged 65 years and older.
- Concerns were raised that the government might not meet air quality laws in London until 2025.

- 2013 would be the EU Year of Air which would aim to highlight the problems of air pollution and air quality.
- 5th December 2012 would be the 60th anniversary of the Great smog of 1952. During the Great Smog the air pollution was visible. It was now mostly invisible and therefore awareness was low.
- The media had a role to play in raising awareness.
- In London there were 10-15 smog episodes per year.
- Biomass burning reduced air quality and should not take place.
- Buses travelling through Islington were a major source of air pollution. Cleaner buses had been introduced in Putney and Islington could lobby the Mayor for these to be introduced in Islington.
- The Mayor had included the suggestions of Clean Air in his London Plan and had also published health statistics. However there were no air quality related points in the manifesto for the Mayor's current four year term.
- Concern was raised about diesel engines. Diesel contained 20 times the harmful molecules of petrol.
- Particle traps could be fitted to buses.
- Germany had 47 low emission zones. Only vehicles in certain emission categories were permitted to drive in the low emission zones. Stickers specifying the correct emission category for each vehicle had to be bought and displayed before permitted vehicles could drive into the zone.
- It was recommended that if the Council had to buy diesel vehicles, they bought diesel vehicles which met Euro 6 standard.

Chris Rutherford, Transport Manager gave a presentation on sustainable transport.

In the discussion the following points were made:

- Over the last seven years the Council had had access to funding through the low carbon van procurement programme. £600,000 had been saved buying 10 Smiths vans, 2 Modecs and 2 Ashwood hybrids and £269,000 had been saved in the last vehicle purchases for grounds maintenance (21 Ashwood hybrids).
- Lifecycle costs made the use of sustainable vehicles possible; however, cost would be the biggest barrier to having a completely green fleet.
- Fuel costs were approximately £2m per year.
- In an urban environment, it was fundamental to reduce particulate matter and oxides of nitrogen. This was to ensure that lung related diseases caused by fine particles were reduced.
- The council had electric cars, van and scooters and hybrid cars and vans.
- Diesel vehicles were used where appropriate due to cost constraints. Filters were fitted and engines were downsized wherever possible.
- Drivers were trained to make their vehicle run as efficiently as possible so that less emissions were produced.
- Islington had an award winning green fleet.
- Smiths/Modec electric vehicles were approved for the Government's Plug-In Van Grant of £8,000. Companies purchasing commercial electric vehicles could write down 100% of the capital cost against tax in the first year of ownership. Electric commercial vehicles were exempt from the annual Road Fund and all Smith vehicles were exempt from the London Congestion Charge, had a 100 mile range, 50mph top speed, zero emissions, a 2 tonne payload and were silent.

- Electric cars were commercially available, had zero emissions, were powered by wind turbines, had been through the NCAP (New Car Assessment Programme) for safety, had a 75mile range, had 300 miles per gallon and cost £1 to charge.
- Important technology included stop start technology, hybrid technology which resulted in a minimum saving of 15% in fuel and carbon dioxide, retro fit solutions, global positioning systems and fuel monitoring.
- Biodiesel was used extensively until the subsidy was removed.
- The government focus was on reducing grams of carbon dioxide per kilometre to establish the best technology.
- Each car club reduced the number of cars on the road by up to 5,000 and resulted in significant carbon dioxide savings each year.
- Promoting walking, cycling and the use of public transport would reduce emissions. The council had a 15 year contract for vehicles which would end in June 2013. After this time there would be a potential reduction in vehicles.
- In June 2013 the Enterprise contract would end and decisions about vehicles would have to be taken. The decisions would be taken at director level and the options could be shared with the Committee.
- The Council had been awarded a bronze membership of FORS – Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme. It was hoped that in time the Council could upgrade to a gold membership.
- The Council could consider air quality during procurement.
- The benefits of planting were discussed and Simon Birkett advised that plants should not just be planted in order to offset air pollution. It was expensive, space in London was a problem and the money should be spent addressing the causes of pollution. There was however some evidence to show that physical barriers between people and the source of pollution could help.

Paul Selby, Career Grade Planner gave a presentation on air quality related planning policies

In the discussion the following points were made:

- The Development Management Policies were to be adopted.
- The Core Strategy had been adopted.
- The London Plan could be used to make decisions on planning applications.
- Islington's existing and emerging planning policies included a range of policies which influenced air quality. These covered development in locations of poor quality, impacts of new development on air quality, urban greening and sustainable transport.
- Policy DM34 (part E) stated that "Developments in locations of poor air quality should be designed to mitigate the impact of poor air quality to within acceptable limits. Where adequate mitigation is not provided and/or is not practical planning permission may be refused."
- Policy DM34 (part F) stated that "Developments should not cause significant harm to air quality, cumulatively or individually. Where modelling indicates significant harm would be caused this shall be fully addressed through appropriate mitigation."
- There should be a precautionary approach to the use of biomass on a site by site basis. Where air quality impacts were deemed acceptable – dispersion modelling and best available technology and fuel should be used. Domestic scale and other small biomass boilers were inappropriate in Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). Guidance on the use of biomass was due to be published by the Mayor.

- Strong policies on energy efficiency and CO² emissions would lead to reduced NO_x emissions from gas heating systems.
- A policy on supporting decentralised energy networks would lead to air quality benefits.
- Vegetation cleaned the air and urban greening could reduce street level pollution by up to 30%.
- Policy DM38 required developments “to maximise the provision of soft landscaping, including trees, shrubs and other vegetation” and “maximise the provision of green roofs and the greening of vertical surfaces as far as reasonably possible”.
- A Green Wall had been created on the Edgware Road.
- Policies CS10 and DM49 required all new development to be “car free”.
- Major developments were required to support the provision of car clubs (DM49).
- Major developments were required to provide a transport assessment/statement and travel plan (DM4).
- Short vehicle journeys contributed to air pollution and those making them should be encouraged not to make short journeys.
- Freight consolidation for the businesses on Regent Street had reduced vehicular movements there by 75%.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

200 NOTES FROM VISITS (Item B4)

RESOLVED:

That the notes be noted.

201 WORK PROGRAMME (Item B5)

Members discussed the Planning Committee Structure Questionnaire.

RESOLVED:

1) That the work programme be noted.

2) That questions be asked relating to whether attendees who wished to speak were given the opportunity, whether they were given sufficient time and how easily they were able to access the online application.

202 ANY URGENT BUSINESS (Item B6)

None.

The meeting ended at 10.00pm.

CHAIR.