

London Borough of Islington

Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee - 14 November 2017

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held at Committee Room 4, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 14 November 2017 at 7.30 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** Champion (Chair), Hamitouche (Vice-Chair), Andrews, Russell, Heather, Jeapes and A Clarke-Perry

Councillor Rowena Champion in the Chair

160 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillors Doolan and Gallagher.

161 DECLARATIONS OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)

There were no declarations of substitute members.

162 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

163 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2017 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

164 ORDER OF BUSINESS (Item 5)

The order of business would be as per the agenda.

165 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 6)

There were no public questions

166 CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 7)

The Chair circulated a document that updated Members on activities that had taken place since the last meeting or planned events. (attached to the minutes)

167

PEABODY - RECYCLING IN ISLINGTON (Item B1)

Sunny Vadher, Caretaking Service Manager and Steve Mercer, Caretaking Team Manager of Peabody gave a presentation on recycling issues and challenges regarding their properties across Islington and neighbouring boroughs.

A copy of the presentation is interleaved with the agenda.

In the discussion the following points were made:

- Peabody was established in 1862, managing over 27,000 properties in London incorporating Peabody, Thamesmead, CBHA and Crown Estates, however with the recent merger with Family Mosaic, the portfolio size has increased to over 55,000 properties. Members were advised that within Islington, Peabody manages 1689 properties in 6 Housing Estates.
- The Caretaking Service Manager highlighted Peabody's corporate approach to recycling in various London borough estates. It is presently involved in the Loop reuse project on the Pembury Estate in Hackney where bulky items such as furniture are offered at discounted prices to new tenants. Members were advised that Peabody currently works in conjunction with local authorities on different aspects of recycling, Hackney (food waste) and Tower Hamlets(mattress)and over the years provided advice to Hammersmith & Fulham and Kensington and Chelsea with regards to bin designs.
- In response to issues around participation levels, the Caretaking Services Manager was advised the meeting that a number of innovative things had been introduced to suit different estates such as introducing different sizes of food bins and bags. Members were invited to visit the Priory Green Estate to witness recycling activities on one of Peabody Estates which experiences a high level of participation.
- In response to questions about Hackney's food collection services, the Caretaking Service Manager advised members that although it's success could be attributed to factors such as ongoing communication with both residents and education programmes in schools, highlighting both the environmental and costs implications to both Council and residents and the introduction of incentives, the resolve and determination of Hackney Council to persist has been the key.
- With regards to the issues affecting residents living in the old housing estates managed by Peabody which have no lifts or waste chutes, the Caretaking Manager advised that residents are provided with different sizes of bins and are encouraged to dispose their wastes in communal bins. Residents receive regular communication/updates to ensure that the recycling agenda remains a high priority.
- Members were advised that caretakers on estates play a vital role in relation to recycling issues in that they work closely with local authorities in reporting missed collections, help remove and report contamination in their estates, advise residents in identifying recyclable materials, provide feedback when consultation is being carried out by developers on new builds and work with asset management team on communal improvements.
- On suggestions about how to increase recycling rates in Islington, Members were advised that the Caretaking Manager considered Council resources could be utilised more efficiently. The Council staff should be encouraged to undertake activities

such as more door knocking and distribution of leaflets. However, to be really effective such initiatives must be sustained rather than one off or short term.

- Incentives such as providing vouchers for residents or financial contribution to projects such as gardens in estates and landscaping activities was noted.
- The design of the bins are very important. Residents do not like touching bins when disposing of their waste and recycling. The position of bins is also critical as they have to be convenient to use.
- Peabody work well with Islington but would be prepared to engage more to increase re-cycling.

168

COMMUNAL & ESTATES RECYCLING SERVICES (Item B2)

Bill Sinfield, Operations Manager, Street Environment Services gave a presentation on the operations and challenges with regards to recycling services in Islington borough. A copy of the presentation is interleaved with the agenda.

In the discussion the following points were made:

- In response to a question on whether the weight of the waste collected per household could be measured, the operations manager advised that although technology existed for other aspects of the crews operation, the Service presently only collects data relating to the total tonnage in the refuse collection vehicles after each completed round of collections has been emptied, when a crew returns back to the depot in Hornsey Street.
- Members were informed that the Council's recently acquired fleet of Refuse Collection Vehicles(RCV's) is more efficient and reliable.
- With regards to the new fleet of RCV's, the operational manager advised that these vehicles collect waste from street level properties, not estate recycling bulk bins, however the vehicles currently used by the estate recycling service are scheduled to be replaced next year as part of the vehicle procurement exercise. The new vehicles would be fitted with bin weighing technology that would make it possible to ascertain the exact tonnage that each estate is actually recycling and this data could then be used in identifying areas with low participation rates. At present crews report back on such areas as well as high contamination areas.
- With regard to participation and contamination on estates, Members were advised that despite continuous messages and leaflet distribution to residents, participation rates remain low and contamination continues to be a problem. Suggestions such as offering incentives, appointing recycling champions and inviting residents to be stakeholders at resident meetings could raise awareness and raise participation.
- In response to questions about missed collections on the estates, the operational manager advised that this could be due to access issues for the vehicles or contamination which cannot be collected as recycling, However this is reported immediately and followed up by the refuse crew.
- With regards to crews' preference for bags as compared to plastic boxes/bins, the meeting was advised that each crew lifted up an average of 230 recycling boxes

Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee - 14 November 2017

daily. There were advantages to bags, such as they are easier to lift, do not need to be returned to the property making the operation faster, they keep recycling contained and so leave less mess on the streets. Boxes are too small for some households leading to littering. There is an issue with the capacity of the bags to hold heavy recycling loads like large amounts of paper and bottles and they can be blown about in high winds. Members were reminded that plastic sacks relate only to street based collections, and recycling bulk bins are made available to estate recycling collections.

169

HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING - PRESENTATION BY HOUSING SERVICES (Item B3)

Members were informed that although the Housing Manager was not available to respond to questions or comments arising from his presentation, questions could be directed to the Executive Member for Housing and Development.

A copy of the presentation is interleaved with the agenda.

In the discussion the following points were made:

- In response to a question on the relationship between Street Environment Services and Housing, the meeting was advised that a Service Level Agreement exists to ensure a scheduled collection service operates around the estates in the borough.
- Members were advised that responsibility in maintaining refuse storage units especially in communal area lies with caretakers. More work is required around issues of communication.
- Members suggested that with regards to promoting recycling on estates, Islington's 200 caretakers working within Housing could be more effectively utilised to raise its awareness and promotion on Estates.
- In response to questions about joined up working and the relationship between the two service areas, the Head of Street Environment Services informed Members that since the Council adopted the village principle, Street Services and Housing are regularly meeting to improve areas around neighbourhood. Also meetings are regularly being held by management of both Service area's to address issues.

RESOLVED:

That the Housing Manager be invited to the next meeting as part of the review exercise.

170

Q2 PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REPORT - ENVIRONMENT (Item B4)

Councillor Webbe, Executive Member, Environment presented the Q2 Performance Report which set out the corporate performance indicators related to Environment and Transport.

In the discussion the following points were made:

- The Executive Member for Environment & Transport informed Members that although data regarding fly tipping was not available for the meeting, Members were reassured that the Council continues to work with various agencies in addressing fly tipping wherever it occurs irrespective of whether it is on council or private owned

land and the issue is treated seriously.

- Members were informed that in light of new powers given to the Enforcement Team, the Council had been able to successfully prosecute serious cases of fly tipping. In particular the Council has been able to use evidence obtained from CCTV installed at trouble spot areas.
- The Executive Member for Environment & Transport informed the meeting that in as much as the Council continues to encourage recycling rates, it supports the waste hierarchy with regards to waste collection, namely prevention, recycling, reuse and then recycling. Hence it is encouraging residents to change their behaviour, reducing waste generated. An example is encouraging the re-use of bulk items such as refrigerators and furniture.
- On the lack of data for missed waste collections, the meeting was informed that it would be available in due course as is was presently being analysed.
- In response to a question on whether the Council's plan for all its public buildings including the town hall to meet its energy reduction target has been achieved, the meeting was advised that this would be reported in the Annual Report later in the year.

171 WORK PROGRAMME 2017/2018 (Item B5)

RESOLVED:

1. That the Neighbourhood Services Manager be invited to the next meeting.
2. That the work programme be updated prior to the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 9.45 pm

CHAIR