

London Borough of Islington

**Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee - 25 April 2017**

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held at Committee Room 4, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 25 April 2017 at 7.00 pm.

**Present:**           **Councillors:**           Poyser (Vice-Chair), Hamitouche, Heather, Jeapes and Russell

**Councillor David Poyser in the Chair**

**109        APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)**

Apologies were received from Councillors James Court and Raphael Andrews.

**110        DECLARATIONS OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)**

There were no declarations of substitute members.

**111        DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)**

There were no declarations of interest.

**112        MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2017 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

**113        PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 5)**

None

**114        CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 6)**

None

**115        EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT - PERFORMANCE PRESENTATION (Item B1)**

Councillor Webbe gave a presentation on the work of the Environment and Transport Directorate. A copy of the presentation would be interleaved with the agenda.

In the discussion the following points were made:

- On the issue of Fuel Poverty, over 700 households had received 'Energy Doctor in the home' measures and advice and that the 50 high-risk households identified had received substantial energy efficiency packages through 'Warmth on Prescription'. In addition over 4700 households had signed up since November 2013 ensuring a savings of £1.1million for the residents. The committee was informed that the Council had delivered a successful partnership with Robin Hood Energy with a view of encouraging residents to switch to lower tariffs especially low income earners and those using smart meters.
- SHINE (Seasonal Health Interventions Network) - In 2016, 2,399 vulnerable residents had been referred with each person being offered an average of four to five interventions. The meeting was advised that as a result of its success SHINE had been rolled out to all over London with EDF funding.
- Following the success of the Bunhill Heat Energy Centre (phase1), work was ongoing especially with regards to replicating similar schemes around the borough using defunct London Underground stations. The installation of PV panels on Council buildings had resulted in savings of £75k a year and the switch to LED lighting had resulted into a further £120k savings.
- Air quality measures such as text notifications to inform residents about pollution levels; promoting travelling by public transport; the launch of Archway 'Zero Emissions Network' and working with Mayor on 'Ultra Low Emissions Zone were initiatives the Council continues to promote to ensure that residents live in a healthy and clean environment. In response to concerns about banning diesel vehicles in inner London and its impact on lower income earners, the Executive Member acknowledged that consultation was on going and the introduction of electric /hybrid vehicles would be implemented on a phased basis. A suggestion for the committee to revisit a previous review into the impact of diesel vehicles on the various social groups was noted.
- With regards to Strategic Transport, the meeting was advised that dangerous junctions at Old Street and Highbury Corner were in the process of being transformed and consultation regarding the road network around Kings Cross will commence around 2018. It was suggested that TFL should give due consideration to the siting of pedestrian crossings especially around stations. Members were also notified that following Council lobbying with TFL, the lift replacement works at Caledonian Road station were being carried out without unnecessarily closing the station. The Executive Member informed Committee that Islington's first cycle Quietway was almost complete and with the extra TFL funding the Council would continue its cycle improvement programme up to 2021/2. In addition Committee were informed that as part of its air quality programme the Council over the next 10 months would increase the number of EVCP ( Electric Vehicle Charging Points ) from 10 to more than 100 bays
- On the issue of waste and recycling, the Executive Member advised that in spite of the fall in recycling rate to 29.4 % in 2015/16, Islington still remained the third highest recycling authority within inner London. She acknowledged that issues about contamination would need to be tackled and addressed by improved ways of communicating the message especially to a widely diverse borough. On the issue of

recycling in Estate blocks the meeting was informed that bespoke measures had been designed to suit different estate blocks. Residents had been consulted with options such as designated chute systems for recycling and others with option of street level collection points. On the question on whether the Council is able to measure recycling performances, the meeting was advised that adequate infrastructure would have to be in place and introduction of technology in the future would enable Council patterns and analyse recycling performances. Members welcomed the news that complaints regarding missed collections had fallen after resolving a few technical hitches.

- SES Cleaning Operational Performance – The Executive Member informed Committee that the arrival of new vehicles, mechanical sweepers and improved back office digital systems had resulted in an improvement with street cleaning. On concerns that housing association residents were being penalised for fly tipping, the Committee was advised that it was the responsibility of housing associations to inform their tenants of fly tipping issues and where Council are notified to remove fly tipping on highway safety grounds, a charge would be levied. In addition the meeting was advised that for future developments, planning consideration would include issues such as lumber storage and secure cycle storage which should alleviate issues around fly tipping.
- The Executive Member informed the Committee that with regards to Parks in the borough, user satisfaction was up from 93% last year to 96% and that Islington would be representing London in 'Britain in Bloom' competition this year. In addition the meeting was advised that the Cemetery Grounds Maintenance Service was now being provided in house. Finally the meeting was informed that the Council had secured a £1.8m Lottery funding for Caledonian Park Clocktower project.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the presentation be noted.
- 2) That Communication with residents regarding issues around recycling should be enhanced.
- 3) That Council Officers to liaise with housing providers on fly tipping concerns on their estates.
- 4) That the committee be circulated with the previous review on Air Quality and consideration be given to looking at the effect of diesel vehicles on various social classes.

**116**

**COMMUNITY ENERGY SCRUTINY REPORT (Item B2)**

The Energy Strategy Manager presented the report which updated members on progress on the recommendations of the 1 February 2016 Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee report on Community Energy.

In the discussion the following points were made:

- Funding changes introduced by central government and legislation was likely to lead to a reduction in community groups undertaking community energy projects. Some of the changes would make the installation of wind turbines harder.

- Following the success of the Bunhill Energy Centre, the Council continues to consider all available sources of external funding to deliver on Phase 2 of Bunhill and continues to work with partners across Europe on the Thermos project with the aim of accelerating the development of low carbon district energy across the EU. In response to a question on funding concerns especially in light of Brexit, committee were informed that funding had been secured and the project was still on going.
- With regards to the recommendation that information about community energy be made available, the Energy Strategy Manager advised that information was now available on the Council Energy Advice site sheets, factsheets were being developed and that the Council via its internal Affordable Energy Board would be producing a Community Energy Plan for Islington which would develop a more detailed communications proposal.
- Members were advised that the Affordability Energy Board chaired by Executive member for Environment and Transport seeks a joint up approach across the Council and that in December 2016, the Council launched an overarching energy brand called 'On Energy' which the Council uses to cover and bring together all its various energy activities, whether from helping residents to save money on their energy bills or providing expert advice to others or with pioneering projects like the Bunhill Energy Centre.
- The partnership between the Council and Robin Hood Energy provides an alternative energy provider for Islington residents especially with low income earners and those using pay meters as they tend to be more disproportionately affected.
- On the recommendation for Council to monitor the tariff of its chosen provider, the Committee was advised that this was not practical, however Officer assured Members that Council had insisted on a competitiveness clause in its agreement with the company. In terms of Robin Hood's sustainability the meeting was advised that the company had recently taken on a large number of customers following its takeover supply to the white label company Ebico from SSE

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the report be noted.

**117 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2016-2017 (Item B3)**

Councillor Webbe, Executive Member Environment and Transport presented the Quarter 3 Performance Report which set out the corporate performance indicator suite for 2016-17, together with a progress update for those indicators related to Environment and Transport over the first three quarters of 2016-17.

In response to a question from a member of the public about the Council's view on Play Streets in Islington, The Executive Member informed the Committee that the Council actively promotes and welcomes Play Streets, that there had been an increase in take up over the last few years however the challenge still lies in the sheer effort of organising these.

However the Council website continues to actively give advice and support residents who are interested.

On the issue of missed waste collections and data gathering, the meeting was advised that

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information provided was from residents who called in to report missed collections.

### **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the report be noted.

At the end of the meeting, the Committee expressed their thanks to Mr James Gilchrist, Head of Green Space and Leisure Services for his contribution whilst with the Council and wished good luck as he leaves to take up a new job.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

**CHAIR**