

Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee - 5 March 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held at Committee Room 4, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 5 March 2015 at 7.30 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** James Court (Chair) - not present at the start of the meeting, Diarmaid Ward (Vice-Chair), Gary Heather, Clare Jeapes, Nurullah Turan and Nick Ward

Councillor Diarmaid Ward in the Chair

44 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item A1)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Russell.

45 **DECLARATIONS OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item A2)**

None.

46 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item A3)**

None.

47 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item A4)**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee meetings on 3 February 2015 and 12 February 2015 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

48 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item A5)**

Questions from members of the public were addressed during the relevant items.

49 **CHAIR'S REPORT (Item A6)**

None.

50 **COMMUNITY ENERGY SCRUTINY REVIEW - WITNESS EVIDENCE (Item B1)**

Agamemnon Otero, Repowering London and Oliver Hombersley, Senior Sustainability and Climate Change Officer, Hackney Council, gave evidence.

In the presentation and the discussion which followed, the following points were made:

- Repowering was a not-for-profit co-operative which specialised in co-producing community owned renewable energy, mentoring and fuel poverty.
- Repowering was registered with the Financial Conduct Authority. It was a community benefit society which delivered social outcomes.
- Repowering work included:
 - reducing CO2 emissions by generating decentralised low-carbon energy
 - tackling fuel poverty and educating residents about energy efficiency
 - promoting local leadership through community engagement and ownership
 - providing opportunities for local and responsible financial investment
 - creating training, internships and employment opportunities for local people
 - encouraging behaviour change

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- Repowering's vision was to create resilient, empowered communities that controlled and owned the generation and usage of renewable energy and to promote and facilitate the wide scale development and local ownership of renewable energy projects across London.
- The services provided by Repowering included technical, financial, legal and administrative expertise needed to deliver projects. It also offered a range of guidance, advisory and project management services. It provided access to a network of potential investors to assist the financial backing for a community-owned renewable energy project and it specialised in community engagement.
- Repowering had installed 500 kilowatts peak (kWp) of community owned renewable energy, saving almost 200 tonnes of CO2 per annum.
- Repowering had delivered a series of energy advice sessions, community events, home energy audits and energy surveys. Many people did not know how to claim fuel poverty credits. Door knocking was used to engage residents. Specific programmes were held for the unemployed, young people and to upskill professionals.
- Under the Repowering scheme, the community invested in the renewable energy co-operative and the co-operative installed new renewable energy on local buildings. The technology generated an income which was used to pay into a community energy efficiency fund, an annual dividend for shareholders and covered the administration costs. Each investor had one vote.
- £165 million left Islington each year in energy bill payments and £13 billion left London each year.
- The council could be a shareholder of a community energy co-operative. Investors included tenant management organisations (TMOs), councils and local residents. Repowering's first social enterprise scheme was in Brixton and investment just came from local residents. Stakeholders included schools, installation companies, residents and the council. Inputs included project management, financial modelling, community engagement, legal and IT expertise, public relations and marketing. Outcomes were related to wellbeing.
- Hackney was the second most deprived area in the UK and Lambeth was the fifth most deprived area in London.
- The programmes undertaken in Brixton allowed people to invest in their community. Residents were consulted and then a programme was delivered in line with the consultation results.
- A solar energy project had taken place on Banister Estate, Hackney. This estate had 15 blocks, all with flat roofs. There were 340 residents.
- Solar panels worked best when facing south and could not be used when facing north. Repowering did not just undertake solar projects and other renewable projects could be undertaken.
- There were many buildings in Islington where solar panels could be installed.
- Projects on bigger estates were the most effective.
- Barriers to community energy schemes included the Financial Conduct Authority changing the way it dealt with co-operatives and changes to the distribution of funding through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- As part of the last project, 15 young people have been given internships and had then gone on to full time employment or education.
- Oliver Hombersley had put in a business case to undertake a co-operative project in Hackney. He submitted a business case, procurement took place and £40,000 seed funding was provided by the council to undertake a pilot on an estate. The chosen estate had an active Tenants' and Residents' Association and the scheme was installed at the same time as a roof renewal programme. When the second project was undertaken, the process was more streamlined and shorter.

- Hackney had a long term community energy strategy. It included a link to health and wellbeing work.
- Individuals who had invested received a return on their investment. There were no direct savings on energy bills from the energy produced. Energy bills could be reduced by energy switching and draught-proofing. Draught-proofing resulted in a 40% reduction in energy bills.
- 95% of funding for projects was raised from local people within 1½ miles from the scheme.
- Intermediaries did not generate energy so they had to buy it. Repower could work with intermediaries to provide energy. Agamemnon stated that councils should generate energy if they were using an intermediary to maximise the success of the project.
- There were a number of intermediaries Repower could work with and the options were being considered.
- Repower was insured.
- The Hackney project would be launched at the end of March 2015. The projects in Brixton were mature.
- A 20 year lease to the co-operative was required to ensure longevity and payback.
- If shareholders wanted to sell their shares, they sold them back to the co-operative rather than transferred them to another individual as the shares were non-transferable and could not be sold on the open market.
- If community engagement dropped below a certain level, door knocking would be increased to engage and consult the community.
- Management costs were build into the project costs. However these could be reduced by the community taking on a management role.
- Repower had run a course for residents on how to use their boilers. This was run in community centres and if residents preferred, they would be visited in their homes to be shown how to use their boilers.
- Financial modelling calculations were tabled and would be interleaved with a copy of the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the evidence be noted.

51

OVERVIEW OF THE BOROUGH CYCLING PROPOSALS (Item B2)

Will Umney, Career Grade Planner, presented the report which provided an overview of Grid and Quietways cycling improvements proposals and a summary of the Council's wider cycling programme in Islington.

In the presentation and discussion which followed, the following points were made:

- The key policy direction for the programme came from Islington's Transport Strategy and from the Mayors Vision for Cycling.
- Islington's Strategy recognised that Cycling was popular and affordable. It reduced air pollution and made better use of a constrained road network. Encouraging more cycling helped to free-up space on public transport. In addition to the transport and environmental benefits, there were significant health benefits to be gained from a more active population.
- Islington had a target that 8% of all journeys would be made by bicycle by 2026. The London-wide target was 5% by 2026.
- Whilst the number of road casualties had reduced, cyclists were disproportionately represented. Cyclists made up 22% of casualties but only 3.4% of trips. For this reason road safety was a key feature of the improvements being delivered.
- The Mayor of London's Vision for Cycling had four outcomes. These were 1) to provide a tube network for the bicycle, 2) safer streets for the bicycle, 3) more

people travelling by bicycle and 4) better places for everyone. £913m would be spent over 10 years to deliver the programme.

- The London-wide strategic programme for cycling included a better junctions programme to address the major junctions with the most problems and a programme of additional improvements for junctions on the TLRN, particularly where cycle routes met these busy road (e.g. City Road, Farringdon Road).
- The programme for cycle routes included Cycle Superhighways, the Central London Cycling Grid which had a budget of £54m to 2015/16 and the Quietways programme which had a budget of £120m over 10 years.
- There was also a London Wayfinding Strategy that would increase visibility of the network and to help people find their way around. TfL was leading on the project. There would be an overall map plus street signs which were intended to complement the networks and allow people to navigate as they cycled. Cyclists had not been able to do this on the London Cycle Network.
- There was a separate Borough Cycle Programme with £2.1m to 2016/17. This programme included cycle training, Safer Urban Driving and the provision of cycle parking.
- Better Junctions was a London-wide programme which covered all major junctions on the Transport for London road network. The intention of this programme was for junctions to be made safer and more attractive for cyclists and other vulnerable road users. 5 of the 33 Better Junction projects were in Islington - Archway, Old Street, King's Cross, Highbury Corner, and the Nags Head.
- The proposal at Old Street was to remove the north-west arm of the gyratory, remove the roundabout and provide two-way operation. This would create a new public space with Dutch-style segregated cycle facilities. The consultation closed in January 2015 and construction could start later this year.
- Consultation had been carried out at Archway and Old Street and construction could commence in 2015/2016.
- The Archway proposals were for a change to two-way operation and a road closure outside the station to create a new public space in the heart of the town.
- Consultations for the Nags Head and Highbury Corner were scheduled to take place in 2015.
- The King's Cross gyratory was subject to considerable feasibility work, with scheme development and modelling continuing through 2015-2017.
- At Highbury Corner, bridge work had commenced in October 2014 and would be completed in spring 2017.
- Proposals for town centre improvements for Nag's Head and Seven Sisters Road including cycle improvements.
- King's Cross design and modelling work would continue up until 2017.
- Cycle Superhighways were usually on the Transport For London Road Network. They tended to involve segregation for safety and to provide for less confident cyclists. Segregation, however, often led to a loss of parking.
- The North South Cycle Superhighway and Cycle Superhighway 1 (CS1) were the two schemes which impacted on Islington.
- The North South Superhighway was a route between Elephant and Castle and Kings Cross. The proposal included long sections of bi-directional segregated cycle lanes. It met the borough boundary at Farringdon Road north of Charterhouse Street. The council continued to lobby for TfL to extend the route to King's Cross. Construction was due to start at the south of the route in March (2015) and work north of the river would commence in the summer. The changes would have an impact on loading and parking and could result in increased journey times for motorised traffic of up to four minutes.
- CS1 would run from Liverpool Street to Tottenham and would largely be in Hackney, Haringey and Waltham Forest. This route did not follow the A10 TfL road but

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proposed a parallel route using borough roads as this offered significant time savings for cyclists. The average journey would be 30 minutes rather than 42 minutes on the A10. The proposed route involved eight sets of signals as opposed to 54 sets on the A10. By keeping this route off the main roads, there was minimal impact on public transport or traffic.

- CS1 was out to consultation until 29 March 2015. Construction could begin later in 2015 and be completed in 2016.
- A number of Central London Cycle Grid routes were proposed in the south of Islington and these were subject to consultation. Islington was helping deliver part of the Bloomsbury to Walthamstow route which was one of two pilot routes.
- TfL had a series of specific initiatives to tackle cycle safety around large vehicles. From September 2015 there would be a ban on vehicles over 3.5 tonnes that were not fitted with side guards and safety mirrors.
- The Council worked with Islington Cyclists Action Group.
- The planned cycling programmes were being funded by TfL.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

52 WORK PROGRAMME (Item B3)

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting ended at 9.55 pm

CHAIR