London Borough of Islington

Regeneration and Employment Review Committee – 8 September 2011

Minutes of a meeting of REGENERATION AND EMPLOYMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE held at the Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on Thursday 8 September 2011 at 7.30pm.

Present Councillors: Wally Burgess, Steph Charalambous, Greg Foxsmith, Lucy Rigby, Claudia Webbe.

Councillor Greg Foxsmith in the Chair

120 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item A1)
Apologies from Councillors Belford, Debono and Spall.

121 DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item A2)
Councillor Webbe for Councillor Spall.

122 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (Item A3)
None.

123 MINUTES (Item A4)
RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Regeneration Review Committee meeting held on 14 July 2011 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

124 CHAIR’S REPORT (Item A5)
There was no Chair’s report.

125 LICENSING AND SEX ESTABLISHMENTS SCRUTINY REVIEW – 12 MONTH REPORT BACK (Item B1)
Janice Gibbons, Service Manager (Commercial), Public Protection presented the report.

The Chair thanked officers for the comprehensive report and the progress that had been made on the recommendations.

RESOLVED: 1) That the report be noted.

126 THE COUNCIL’S WINTER MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME AND RESPONSE TO COLD WEATHER SCRUTINY REVIEW – WITNESS EVIDENCE (Item B2)

In the discussion the following points were made:
Camden Council had a Winter Maintenance Panel consisting of representatives from different departments within the council.

Both Camden and Islington Councils had a shortage of space for salt storage. Salt storage was also a problem on estates. The salt should be kept inside as it was affected by moisture and if damp salt was distributed by a vehicle, this would affect its performance.

Camden did more precautionary gritting of carriageways than Islington.

Camden had areas of high ground which required more gritting than elsewhere in the borough. At lower levels, the gritting was similar to the way in which Islington was gritted.

Both Camden and Islington used the same Meteorological Office forecast data.

On roads shared by Islington and Camden the two boroughs co-operated to ensure the gritting of these roads was not duplicated.

When a borough required more salt, neighbouring boroughs would try to assist.

TfL was responsible for gritting the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN). This included every red route carriageway and footway. As well as using forecasts, weather station data was also used. TfL had 25,000 tonnes of salt stored for TfL use and there was 27,000 for emergency use by London boroughs. TfL could provide an opportunity for boroughs to store salt in a TfL salt store. However this was not in Central London.

In Camden in the last three years, insurance claims had risen but the number of payments made had decreased. The wording of the Highways Act 1980 meant councils had a duty to “ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice”. In most cases, councils were found to not be at fault.

Camden Council put information advising residents about going out in wet weather on its website, in local newspapers and bus shelters.

When snow and ice was a problem, TfL received calls about areas of concern from the TfL call centre, information received from borough colleagues and network inspections that were undertaken.

When Contact Islington received complaints that related to the TLRN, these were forwarded on to TfL. Most complaints related to footways. TfL had a footway prioritisation regime. Prestige footways were to be gritted first. These were footways with very heavy footfall. Primary footways were to be gritted within four hours and secondary footways were to be gritted within 24 hours. Councillors would be sent copies of the TFL winter maintenance plan including the prioritisation regime. If they were of the view that any roads had been wrongly categorised, their comments would be welcomed by TfL.

Since Winter 2009, when TfL had to withdraw the bus service during a period of extreme winter weather, a bus review had been undertaken. There was now a plan to keep all main bus routes running.

All Islington bus stations were on Islington’s priority network.

London Buses was responsible for clearing snow within the bus stations. Where bus stations were on private land, support was given to ensure the buses could access the carriageways.
• It was suggested that as the public were not usually aware of who was responsible for a particular road, a central phone number be made available for the public to phone if they had a complaint.
• In Islington, snow and ice was more of a problem in the North than the South. More gritting was undertaken in the North and when the whole borough was gritted the North was gritted first.
• Communications between the council and some social housing providers required improving. Abena Asante from HFI would look into this.
• The public were welcome to use salt from the council’s salt bins for the footways but there were concern that some people used it on their private property. On occasions salt and/or salt bins had been stolen. Replacing the salt and bins was expensive.
• Camden Council had a ‘snow friends’ scheme. Snow shovels were provided to residents associations, community groups and members of the public who had volunteered to clear snow.
• More work could be done in Islington to encourage residents to clear snow.
• Best practice was shared between boroughs in the Winter Maintenance Services Group.
• Bill Sinfield, Enterprise PLC explained that staff had worked very hard during last year’s winter weather. Staff had raised concern about their clothing being inappropriate in the severe weather conditions and this was being reviewed.
• In 2010, grounds maintenance staff had gritted highways for the first time.
• Abena Asante, HFI explained that estate caretakers and other estate staff had worked very hard during the severe weather. They had ensured estate roads, entrances and pathways leading to the bins were cleared of snow and ice. Last year, they had been given thermal clothing and manual lifting guidelines to assist them in lifting bags of salt. There was a co-ordinated approach to the gritting of HFI estates which enabled waste carriers to access the estates.
• If enough boroughs were interested, TfL could obtain a delivery of salt at a competitive rate.
• Camden and Islington councils should look into buying an area on the Kings Cross Development for a mutual salt store.
• Islington Council, Camden Council and TfL should look at boundary roads e.g. Brecknock Road, part of which was the responsibility of all three organisations, to work out a plan for gritting with these roads.

RESOLVED:
That the evidence be noted.

127 WORK PROGRAMME (Item B7)

RESOLVED:
1) That the Parking Scrutiny Review – 12 Month Report Back be deferred until January/March 2012.
2) That the work programme be noted.
The meeting ended at 8.40 p.m.

CHAIR.