

Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee - 25 January 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held at Committee Room 4, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 25 January 2018 at 7.30 pm.

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

Councillor Rowena Champion in the Chair

172 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillors Doolan and Clarke-Perry.

173 DECLARATIONS OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)

There were no declarations of substitute members.

174 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

175 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2017 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

176 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 5)

The Chair informed the meeting that public questions will be taken during consideration of each item on the agenda.

177 CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 6)

The Chair advised that she would be updating Members of a number of issues during consideration of item 9, Recycling Scrutiny Actions.

178 SMART CITIES SCRUTINY REVIEW - REPORT BACK (Item 7)

Jo Barker, Assistant Director of Digital Partnership, John Saul, Business Relationship Manager and Lynn Spendilow, Business Analyst updated Members on progress of the

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recommendations in a report produced in May 2016 following the review undertaken by the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on Smart Cities.

In the discussion the following points were made -

- The Smart Cities Advisory Board provides leadership in implementing the Council's Digital Collaboration Strategy, together a panel of citizens, key partners, private sector experts and technology providers including technology specialist such as InLinks UK, Microsoft, Three, private consulting firms and local authorities have been brought in to provide expertise and knowledge.
- The Advisory Board has produced an action plan.
- Members welcomed the inclusion of representatives of Age UK on the advisory board so that everyone's views are taken into consideration while shaping the strategy.
- The Council continues to retain ownership of data collated through the internet of Things and Smart cities. It was suggested that that officers should ensure that valuable data shared and in the possession of third parties is not lost. It could be used by the Council in the future especially as it plans for the delivery of or shaping its services.
- In response to a question on the baseline audit, the Business Analyst informed Members that Internal Audit is reviewing all Council services that have potential for smart cities involvement, as it was important not to reinvent what is working. Members were informed that having other local authorities on board was a positive thing as lessons and experiences are shared so as to avoid pitfalls.
- With regards to consultation, its methodology and community engagement, two years ago the committee received a presentation on an interactive consultation tool called 'Common Place' and it was suggested that officers liaise with their counterparts in Waltham Forest which employed the tool while undertaking a transport project.
- Members were advised of the 'soft' launch of the Clean Islington app which was still being tested. The intention is that it would be integrated with other Council systems.
- In response to concerns about digital exclusion, the meeting was informed that this was an ongoing discussion with their various partners and is also being addressed through the Council's apprenticeship programme, various online forums and training.
- With regards to the impact of Digital Champions, Members were advised that the initiative was successfully taken up by council officers when launched especially with the provision of tablets, however interest faded especially when it involved community engagement.
- The possible extension of digital services into the issues around anti-social behaviour would be considered as the present system which involved calling a telephone hotline is not for purpose in today's modern digital society and that victims should be offered an online platform where it is easy to log and report cases quickly. Officers welcomed the suggestion and indicated that this would be fed back to the Advisory Board

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- Members were advised that housing officers were piloting an app to monitor noise nuisance in their estates. If successful the app would be extended to areas other than reporting complaints by the residents such as being used by council officers for identifying hot spot areas and resources allocation.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

179 HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING - PRESENTATION BY HOUSING SERVICES (Item 8)

Billy Wells, the Neighbourhoods Services Manager provided an insight into the relationship between Housing and Street Environment Services.

In the discussion the following points were made:

- Regular meetings are held between officers of Street Environmental Services and Housing Services to ensure that there was a joined up approach on issues around collections in estates and over the last 12 months there had been significant progress in addressing recycling issues.
- Members were advised that the introduction of technology especially on some of the recently acquired refuse collection vehicles would enable officers to identify levels of recycling participation in different areas and help them direct resources to address the different challenges around participation and contamination.
- In response to a question on how to improve recycling rates on Estates, the Neighbourhood Service Manager advised that this could be done by using the caretaker app that is being developed for the caretaking services; working with and supporting caretakers to be recycling ambassadors; providing regular training to caretakers; siting of recycling sites closer to residents; introducing competitions amongst estates and resident involvement.
- The Head of Homes and Neighbourhood Services reiterated the importance of resident's involvement as the key to participation levels with the view to getting resident volunteers to be recognised as 'resident champions'.
- In response to concerns that recycling bins were being placed in locations that had no clear signage, thereby confusing residents, the Chair requested that when this is brought to the attention of Members that this should be reported to officers so they could investigate and address it. The Street Scene Strategy Manager reassured Members that although there were differences in management style by TMO's or TRA's, the decision regarding the siting and design of bins would have been agreed following a consultation process with residents.
- With regards to residents' complaints about the condition and state of the bins especially damaged lids and untidiness, the Street Scenes Strategy Manager acknowledged that both operators and caretakers would need to be proactive in reporting these cases. Members were advised that the Council was in the process of replacing more bins with better designed bins through it's Capital programme.

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- With regards to the Caretakers app, Members were advised that this tool would enable caretakers to identify residents who were not participating or reluctant. The Housing Officer informed the meeting that although the app is still being developed, it is considered a good tool for identifying low rates of recycling and reporting missed collections etc.
- On the issue of community engagement and consultation, officers were asked to consider seeking views beyond those regular residents who attend Tenant and Residents Association meetings by using online forums so that feedback is more representative.
- There was concern that some businesses were using communal bins designated for household recycling and some estates received both estate and street type collections which caused confusion. A Member queried why the Council only provided residual bins for properties managed and owned by Southern Housing as this would not encourage recycling by residents.
- The Neighbourhood Services Manager welcomed the offer of additional training for staff about recycling, facilitated by Matthew Homer, the Street Scenes Manager. On the concerns about tipping and environmental crimes especially around communal areas in estates, he advised that the Council has been successful in dealing with such cases by employing mobile CCTV's and in serious cases by way of prosecutions.

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RECYCLING SCRUTINY ACTIONS - UPDATE (Item 9)

Matthew Homer, the Street Scene Strategy Manager circulated notes he had prepared on various topics, activities undertaken and evidence gathered during the scrutiny and on planned meetings and activities.

In the discussion the following points were made -

- Members were informed that following a request by Committee, an online survey regarding recycling was placed on the council website which generated just over 120 responses. In summary comments were positive, there was a recognition that Islington was better than most London boroughs however there were concerns about the different services provided to street properties and purpose built flats. Residents suggested that more education and communication targeting residents who were not participating would result in an increase in the recycling rate.
- With regard to resident recycling champions, the officer advised that feedback from other local authorities on this issue was mixed, and it was notable that many schemes started but were subsequently dropped. The recycling champion scheme is effective for simply spreading the word, assisting at events or outreach and obtaining feedback for the service. However it would not be suitable for facilitating wider outreach to estates and communities as these areas would require a dedicated, trained and paid staff.
- The Council currently provides a food waste collection service to some 18,000 households in purpose built blocks of flats and that an expansion to the remaining approximately 21,000 households would cost about £413,000 with an annual cost of £120,000. A large portion of the initial cost is attributed to providing new sites with wheelie bins enclosed in new metal enclosures. The estimated cost of a new vehicle

is £70,000 and is apportioned over 7 years to the revenue estimates. The estimated annual savings, taking into account the cheaper disposal costs of recycled food as opposed to waste, would be £18,000.

- Members were informed of the good working relationship with the big social landlords such as Peabody Housing Association especially joint participation in an estates project in partnership with London Resources. The focussed work with the landlords has been on providing recycling facilities, agreeing local improvements to recycling facilities and developing joint communication with residents.
- With regards to addressing the low participation in the private rented sector especially houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), the Council would through its Public Protection Team continue to communicate with HMO landlords through its licensing schemes to ensure that landlords are aware of their responsibilities to provide recycling facilities for their tenants and to encourage their residents to recycle.
- In response to a question on support available for organisations that manage street properties such as Partners, the officers advised that clear sacks could be provided, an action plan and a template tenancy pack to help improve communication.

181 ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING (Item 10)

The Chair advised Members that in light of time constraints before the end of the Municipal year, an additional meeting would be required to enable the Committee consider the evidence gathered during the review and draft recommendations before the report is finalised.

It was **RESOLVED** that an additional meeting be set for Thursday March 22 2018.

182 WORK PROGRAMME 2017/2018 (Item 11)

RESOLVED:

The work programme was noted

The meeting ended at 9.45 pm

CHAIR