

Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee - 9 March 2020

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held at Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD - Islington Town Hall on 9 March 2020 at 7.30 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** Poyser (Chair), Khondoker (Vice-Chair), Clarke, Convery, Jeapes, Ozedmir and Russell

Councillor Dave Poyser in the Chair

345 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillors Graham and Hamitouche.

346 DECLARATIONS OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)

There were no declarations of substitute members.

347 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

348 CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 4)

Councillor Poyser welcomed everyone to the meeting and that the meeting should be considered as an opportunity for Islington residents and organisations to contribute towards the Council's aim in achieving its target of carbon zero target by 2030.

Councillors Watts, the Leader of Islington Council and Champion, Executive Member for Environment and Regeneration reiterated the essence of the meeting, welcoming suggestions, views and ideas about the draft strategy. The meeting was reminded that despite the council's own carbon footprint being less than 5% of the overall borough's, the Council through its range of techniques, measures and powers aims to influence carbon reduction in the borough.

The meeting was reminded to consider the Council's Commitment and the actions it has taken as highlighted in the strategy; what the Council presently identifies as potential commitments but would require further investigations before it can committing to doing and what the Council would require from others in order for the borough to achieve its net zero target which includes funding, extra powers and legislation.

The Council's collaboration with borough partners, the Mayor of London, the GLA and Transport is positive and welcomed, however it is important to be reminded that the government still has to take decisive actions by providing local authorities

with powers and resources, whilst putting in place legislation and funding to ensure that businesses, landlords, the education, health, energy and waste sectors, transport providers and the motor and haulage industries all play their part in achieving net zero carbon by 2030.

Keith Townsend, Director Environment and Regeneration informed the meeting that attendees should discuss around each of the themes in the strategy, after which the officers would take away their feedback and suggestions, all of which will be taken on board not necessarily with the present draft document being considered but as it is subsequently revised by officers.

Meeting was informed of plans for the 'listening and consulting' forum to be held annually.

349 ORDER OF BUSINESS (Item 5)

The order of business would be as per the agenda.

350 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 6)

None

351 TACKLING THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY (Item B1)

Members of the public in their discussions of the 6 themes within the Draft Strategy, made the following comments and suggestions listed below:

Residential buildings, Commercial & Industrial buildings and Infrastructure

- It is essential that fire safety issues and insulation be linked especially during the building phase of any future developments.
- The 2025 target set by the Council to raise the standard for future homes is not ambitious and should be brought closer.
- With regards to private housing and conservation concerns about windows/insulation has not been thoroughly addressed.
- Further consultation on issues regarding HMO's will be required as questions still exist on how 'green' are the homes in the borough. Council homes still have in place outdated heating systems and needs to be considered.
- With regards to repairs, Council should consider Repair hubs/cafes. Need to encourage intergenerational and inter community opportunities.
- The idea of delivery hubs centralised and distribute goods via e- assist bikes is welcomed.

Transport and Travel

- Council needs to reduce parking within the borough and this will deter car ownership and encourage more cycling or walking.

- Concerns still exist with vehicle idling around schools which has health implications for the children.
- Council needs to consider addressing vehicles driving through the borough especially as it is a smaller borough relatively to its neighbouring boroughs.
- Council needs to put in place measures which will result in behaviour changes of drivers. Council has to make it inconvenient to drive.
- Studies show that 40% of vehicles in the borough are commercial type of vehicles and TFL has a fair share of vehicle movement.
- Enforcement has to be enhanced all over the borough as present measures still result in displacement into neighbouring streets
- Low car ownership has to be encouraged.
- Although school streets are welcomed, it still does not make Islington roads safe

Sustainable Energy Generation and Supply

- Although it has taken the Council quite a long time to have a coordinated policy in this area, this is welcomed.
- More details on this issue in the strategy will need to be spelt out, for example its impact, its costs and the timeline so that the Council would be able to achieve its Carbon Zero target.
- More communication will be required for residents especially as most residents are not familiar with the issues relating to carbon zero and the urgency around climate emergency.
- Council would need to allocate adequate resources in order to achieve its zero carbon target and importantly must be willing to learn from other boroughs.
- Questions were asked about if Council had undertaken an audit of its commercial buildings and whether the council has considered ways of compelling businesses to address their building energy performance
- Carbon footprint for individuals, homes and businesses should be recorded and monitored if Council intends to meet its target.

Affordable Energy and Fuel Poverty

- The Council will need to expand its SHINE service around the borough and beyond as it addresses energy concerns of residents and poverty.
- The Council needs to encourage its residents to install Solar PV/Sustainable energy.
- Council should introduce compulsory tax such as diesel surcharge which acts as a disincentive to car useage.
- Schemes such as Solar Together need to be publicised more in the borough.
- Council should consider how to mitigate high costs incurred for example changing lights, loft insulation and windows, possibly offer grants or subsidies

The Green Economy & Planning

- The message on achieving a net zero economy is not clear with small businesses. More campaigns and encouragement will be required.
- Concerns that the current planning pipeline of approved applications would not meet the Council's target.
- The Council need to be more proactive in lobbying central government with legislation so that issues such as retrofitting will be possible
- The local plan needs strengthening especially where there are challenges in conservation areas
- Concerns about embedded carbon in buildings needs to be considered.
- With it's large housing stock, it is important that there is a joined up approach by the various departments

Finance and Engaging with Residents & Businesses

- The Council needs to commence on phase 2 with this priority. Concerns still exist with the strategy especially as it lacks structure for example no timetable, no information on return on investment or its impact.
- A big challenge will be getting local people to play their part, nothing in the strategy about young people or BAME communities.
- Deciding on priorities for funding, is there a mechanism of engagement
- Need to have hubs such as climate hubs, sustainability fairs to talk and act.
- Question still exist with regards to financial institutions that the Council presently engages with, or whether the Council should consider having its own bank.
- It is important that the Council have a changing perception about local government finance.
- Council should consider green investment, an example of Warrington council which has invested in solar parks as part of its treasury management.
- Council should consider engaging large businesses especially in the south of the borough following on from its Fairness Commission and its recommendations.

Natural Environment , Waste Reduction, Recycling & Carbon Offsetting

- Issues regarding mixed disposal for estate still needs to be considered. The Council should consider splitting residential waste and recycling .
- There should be an annual target for waste and recycling
- Questions were posed on whether it is possible to have free food waste collections for small businesses.
- The Council will need to engage with business/supermarkets/online delivery firms to collect waste .Possibility of engaging with clothing companies to encourage clothes recycling and lobbying for deposit payment on bottles.
- Council will need to provide more incentives to encourage recycling.
- To expand the range of what is recycable, more communication is required in this area.
- It was suggested that the Council should incorporate some of its previous outcomes from its research and best practise in its strategy.

- The forum will be held annually so that Environment and Regeneration Committee would be able to focus on tackling climate emergency and in addition it will be an opportunity for residents and organisations to share their views on the Council's response to the climate emergency.

The Chair thanked members of the public for their participation and feedback provided, informing the meeting that the draft strategy will be out for public consultation by the end of the month prior to its adoption later in the year.

352 **WORK PROGRAMME 2019/2020 (Item B2)**
RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm

CHAIR