

**Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee - 29 September 2020**

Minutes of the Virtual meeting of the Committee on 29 September 2020 at 7.30 pm.

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

**Councillor Dave Poyser in the Chair**

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

There were no apologies for absence

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

There were no declarations of substitute members

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

Councillor Convery declared a personal interest in item B2 Angelic Energy update as he was a former customer of Angelic Energy

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

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2020 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

**386       CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 5)**

The Chair stated that he had had discussions with officers on Angelic Energy, the draft scrutiny review on Behavioural Change, and had discussed a non-formal joint scrutiny with the Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee, Councillor O'Sullivan on net Zero Carbon emissions 2030 in relation to retrofitting homes etc. Items on Angelic Energy and Behavioural Change were on the agenda that evening

The Chair added that the Annual Environment public meeting, as agreed at Council, would be held next March and this would be added to the work programme

**387       ORDER OF BUSINESS (Item 6)**

The Chair stated that the order of business would be as per the agenda

**388       PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 7)**

The Chair outlined the procedure for Public questions

**389**     **MEMBERSHIP, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND DATES OF MEETINGS (Item B1)**

RESOLVED:

That the membership, terms of reference, and dates of meetings be noted

**390**     **SCRUTINY REVIEW: BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE - DRAFT REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Item B2)**

Members considered the revised draft recommendations circulated

During consideration the following main points were made –

- A Member stated that in her view the report needed to be more concise, and that there needed to be a clear statement of aims and targets included in the report
- In relation to a question as to the sum needed for ‘pump prime’ funding it was stated that the budget was being looked at in terms of the budget required to achieve Net Zero Carbon 2030 and more work needed to be done, but a decision would be made by the Executive as part of the budget making process
- A Member stated that she felt that there was a need for the report needed to reflect the need for change in behaviours in areas, such as heating and recycling, and also reflect the relationship to the Net Zero Carbon 2030 aims. There also needed to be consideration given as to how ‘nudge’ techniques would be used to change behaviours

RESOLVED:

That in view of the comments above, approval of the report be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee, and Members be requested to submit any changes they wish to be made to the report for consideration

**391**     **ANGELIC ENERGY - UPDATE (Item B3)**

Councillor Rowena Champion, Executive Member Environment and Transport was present, and accompanied by Keith Townsend, Director of Environment and Regeneration

Keith Townsend gave a verbal update on the position with regard to Angelic Energy to the Committee

During discussion the following main points were made –

- Robin Hood Energy, parent company of Angelic Energy, had sold the business to British Gas, and the Council were looking at the options to provide opportunities for residents who were customers of Angelic Energy to transfer to a comparable cheaper provider
- It was stated that two providers had been looked at, Peoples Energy and London Power, who were the white label supplier for the GLA, and that options were being looked at for a Housing Energy contract
- Members were informed that Robin Hood Energy had breached the terms of their contract with the Council and this was being pursued
- A Member expressed concern that nearly half of Angelic customers in the borough had come from Housing voids, and that these were the customers who were likely to be less digitally aware, and enquired how these residents

would be reached, given that the information on Angelic customers were not available to the Council.

- The Corporate Director acknowledged that information will be made available support customers affected on Angelic Energy and the Council websites. The information would also include how to switch suppliers and with customers being signposted to SHINE. In addition the Council will use the electronic noticeboards on estates to provide information and that considering the Council has access to postcodes of Angelic customers in the borough, it was felt that a high level of reach could be achieved.
- In response to concerns that there had been warning signs of financial problems for Robin Hood Energy as far back as 2019, it was stated that assurances had been given by Robin Hood Energy that the Chief Executive and Financial Director had been replaced, and Nottingham City Council who were the parent guarantor of Robin Hood Energy had put additional monies in. The Council had received assurances about the stability of Robin Hood Energy, however Council staff decided to monitor the situation, and a report was planned to look at review the situation and look at options in October
- Members expressed concern that the Council had promoted Angelic Energy in good faith, and it was extremely disappointing that this situation had arisen, and that in future consideration should be given as to whether the Council should promote providers. A Member stated that it was even more disappointing, that despite the Committee raising concerns 18 months ago, that the former Executive Member for Environment and Transport had assured the Committee that the situation was satisfactory
- Members were informed that the Council would endeavour to reach as many customers of Angelic Energy as possible

RESOLVED:

That the verbal update be noted, and that a representative of London Power be invited to the next meeting of the Committee

The Committee thanked Councillor Champion and Keith Townsend for the update

**392** **QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21- ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE**  
**(Item B5)**

Councillor Rowena Champion, Executive Member, Environment and Transport was present, and was accompanied with Keith Townsend, Director of Environment and Regeneration

During consideration of the report the following main points were made –

- Recycling rate – this has shown an increase from 29.3% to 29.6% from the previous year
- Missed collections – average missed rate collections in Q1 were a strong 267 compared to the 20/21 target of 305
- Determination of planning applications was on or above target

- Leisure centre visits were reduced to COVID, however the reopening of Highbury Fields pool is on schedule to reopen in January 2021
- A Member stated that whilst it was good to see that road deaths had reduced, however the reference to road traffic accidents should not be used in future, and the Executive Member stated that she would endeavour to ensure this was reflected in future reports

The Chair thanked Councillor Champion and Keith Townsend for their presentation

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**LOW TRAFFIC NEIGHBOURHOODS/PEOPLE FRIENDLY STREETS - PRESENTATION (Item B4)**

Martin Cooijmans, Head of Strategic Projects and Transport Planning and Interim Head of Traffic was present, together with Ayanda Collins, Traffic and Parking Programme Manager, and outlined the report

During discussion the following main points were made –

- Context – transport challenges – climate emergency, traffic casualties, inactivity obesity crisis, air pollution
- Data – walking and cycling improves physical and mental health, reduces air pollution and less traffic on residential streets
- Impact of COVID – public transport running at one fifth of normal capacity, many journeys will be made by other means, nearly 70% of residents do not have access to a private vehicle, modelling shows that without action there will be significantly more motorised traffic than before the pandemic
- Strategic context – Corporate strategy, Draft Transport strategy, Draft Zero Carbon strategy, Budget commitment
- People Friendly streets – aim to make it easier and safer to walk and cycle, for people to be healthier, to allow social distancing and to help people enjoy their area. Early engagement launched in May
- People Friendly streets – low traffic neighbourhoods – a third to be delivered by the end of 2020, to date implemented in St.Peters and Canonbury East
- People Friendly streets – cycleways – permanent lanes under construction Highbury Fields to Finsbury Park and Balls Pond Road section of superhighway 1, and pop up cycle lanes under construction in York Way and Pentonville Road to Holloway Road
- People Friendly streets is a cross- Council programme
- Key lessons – Emergency services understanding requirements, correspondence – sufficient staff resource available, nimble response -making amendments where needed, communication getting the message right, and understanding proposals – good graphics and explanation of local access
- Next steps – Delivering more people-friendly streets schemes and cycleways, listening to residents feedback, making adjustments where needed. Monitoring impact of changes and public consultation after 12 months and decision after 18 months
- School streets – All primary schools not on main roads to be School Streets by end of 2020 – timed restrictions with camera enforcement. 13 historic

school streets which were pre-COVID, 16 delivered over the Summer, and 10 more to be delivered by end of year

- In response to a question it was stated that consideration was being given as to how improvements can be made to air quality on main roads. In relation to school streets the programme had been carried out very quickly, and there were problems with the installation of cameras at some school sites, however these installations would be carried out as soon as possible, and appropriate signage displayed Enforcement officers were at schools where cameras were not yet working
- In response to a question as to the ramps for disabled access at Highbury Barn, it was stated that as these were not fixed ramps, and that officers would regularly check that the ramps had not been moved
- Reference was made to the changes at Mayton Street, and that this could impact on Grafton school, and that traffic could increase by the school. It was stated that this was being looked at in order to ensure that this was not the case
- Discussion took place as to the need to ensure that communications to residents about the low traffic neighbourhoods needed to be improved, and it was stated that work was taking place, and that in future better information would be provided on schemes, especially in relation to communication with emergency services. In addition, more improvements for disabled residents were planned, such as ramps and dropped kerbs
- A Member stated that it was important to work closely with the Mayor of London on People Friendly Streets, and there was a need to ensure that cycleways had appropriate crossing points, especially in Holloway Road. It was stated that discussions are taking place with the Mayor in this regard
- A Member expressed the view that this was an ambitious project, and that whilst there was vociferous opposition to some of the proposals, this was an extremely important scheme to shift traffic from residential streets onto main roads. However, there was a need to engage Google and Ways to ensure that satellite navigation systems were kept up to date on the changes made. It was stated that TfL had links to the apps suppliers, and that work is taking place to inform them of changes. School streets however is a more complicated situation, however work is taking place with TfL on this
- Members stressed the importance of People Friendly Streets in order to improve air quality, reduce carbon emissions and safety for residents. Members stated that it is hoped that as many residents as possible would respond positively to the proposals during consultation exercises. Members were informed that as many methods of enabling residents to respond would be put in place

The Chair thanked Martin Cooijmans and Ayanda Collins for their presentation

Councillor Champion, Executive Member Environment and Transport, and Keith Townsend Director of Environment and Regeneration were present for discussion of this item

During consideration of the item the following main points were made -

- Draft of Net Zero Carbon strategy published in February. Final version to be adopted by Executive in October
- CO2 emissions from Council buildings down by 8.7%
- Phase 2 of the Bunhill Heat and Power Scheme was launched in March 2020
- Smart Energy Networks – launched the Green Smart Community Integrated Energy systems
- £500k bid submitted to Green Homes grant for funding to deliver energy efficiency improvements
- Air Quality Action plan adopted last year, work started on schools clean air toolkit, work started to install electric charging points
- Ongoing replacement of vehicle fleet with zero and low emission carbon vehicles
- Strategic Transport – Islington Transport strategy be adopted in October
- Removal of roundabouts at certain locations, low traffic neighbourhoods, school streets delivered and more to come, new cycleways, bike hangers now installed for capacity of 1326 bikes
- Waste and recycling – recycling rate increased slightly, and residual waste per household is an historically low level. Ongoing reduction in missed collections
- Members expressed their appreciation to members of staff in Environment and Regeneration, particularly the waste collection team , street sweeping and Parks staff for the excellent work that they had undertaken during COVID
- A Member stated that consideration should be given to provision of more solar panels on properties in the borough, as at present there is no requirement for developers to do provide these on new developments.
- On the suggestion for Council to review its planning strategy and retrofitting plans, the Executive Member reminded consider the six chapters of the Net Zero 2030 Carbon Strategy the meeting that issues and concerns about its impact on conservation areas would need to taken into consideration
- In response to an enquiry as to whether the Council were promoting the Beautiful Borough scheme and community litter pickers, it was stated that the Council did support this scheme, and the Executive Member stated that she would look at ways this could be publicised

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee place on record their thanks to the staff of the Environment and Regeneration Department for their excellent work during the COVID crisis in keeping services operating during COVID

The Chair thanked Councillor Champion and Keith Townsend for their presentation

- 395** **SCRUTINY TOPICS AND WORK PROGRAMME 2020/2021 (Item B7)**  
Discussion took place as to a possible scrutiny topic for the municipal year, and following a discussion it was:

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee consider the six chapters of the Net Zero 2030 Carbon Strategy with particular focus on Planning and Green Energy in the first instance.

The meeting ended at 9.45 p.m.

**CHAIR**