

Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee - 26 February 2018

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 26 February 2018 at 7.30 pm.

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

Councillor Rowena Champion in the Chair

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

Apologies were received from Councillors Andrews, Doolan and Gallagher.

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

There were no declarations of substitute members.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

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

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2018 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

187 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item A5)**

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

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

The Chair informed Members that she would circulate her report to Members by email.

189 **RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT - HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING (Item B1)**

The Chair informed the meeting that as part of the review into household recycling , representatives of the Tenant and Residents Associations (TRAs) had been invited to share their experiences and challenges and suggest ways to improve resident participation and importantly increase recycling rate.

In the discussion the following points were made-

- Members were informed that although Tenant Resident Associations and Tenant Management Organisations play a vital role in engaging residents and raising issues such as residual waste and recycling collection within housing blocks, there was still more work to be done to increase resident participation.
- In response to questions about the challenges experienced by TRAs, a representative of the St Luke's Estate TRA informed Members that despite the good efforts of his TRA, a minority of residents still refused to participate in any form of recycling and it was noticeable on the estate there was still some low levels of fly

tipping.

- TRA's would welcome Council support in areas such as residents being able to access recycling bags and properly labelled bins in suitable locations on the estate to prevent contamination issues.
- Residents were concerned that the labelling was not clear enough and suggested the provision of larger recycling bins to address overflowing concerns. Other concerns raised included the untidiness of communal bins and the communal areas. A suggestion that replacing car parking bays with lumber storage facilities to prevent fly tipping and dumping was noted.
- Members were informed that although St Luke's Resident and Tenant Resident Associations could be described as active in areas of facilitating recycling and levels of participation, only very few residents were directly involved, which was not sustainable in the long run. Members were advised that residents who actively participate in recycling regularly complain about the indifference of residents who, for example, leave items of clothing by the concierge or on the ground floors raising safety concerns.
- In response to a suggestion on whether converting the use of chutes from residual waste to recycling waste would improve recycling, Members were advised that although it had worked on some estates, concerns about blocked chutes and contamination could not be disregarded.
- A representative of the Westbourne TRA informed the meeting that the Council needed to address the root causes rather than the symptoms of recycling and advised that the Council's contractual arrangements may need to be reviewed as one of the reasons for high contamination levels was residents are not interested in separating the various items for recycling.
- In response to a question on whether the Council would be able to offer assistance to estates that performed well with kitchen waste recycling, the Street Scene Strategy Manager informed the meeting that bags of compost could be provided especially where there were gardening groups.
- Members were informed that accumulation of rubbish in any housing estate if not addressed could easily descend into the realm of anti-social behaviour and possibly illegal and criminal activity.
- In response to a suggestion on whether charging residents waste collection like countries as Belgium and Germany could result in an increase in recycling, the Street Scenes Strategy Manager advised that the Council had a statutory duty to collect waste and although the Council could not charge residents it could decide on the frequency of collection times and the number of bags that it provides residents.
- A volunteer of the Loop project (sponsored by Groundworks) informed the meeting of her involvement in the Community driven reuse and well-being programme on the Andover Estate and highlighted some of the benefits to the local community such as community cohesion, acquisition of craft skills by volunteers, prevention of fly tipping and facilitating community events.
- Members were informed that Groundworks which runs the Loop project would be bidding for about £10,000 to build on the success of the Repurpose and develop a

community driven reuse and well- being project reaching out to even more people to build participants' confidence, develop skills and contribute towards positive social, economic and well- being outcomes.

- In response to a question on future plans for the Loop project, the volunteer advised Members that funds would be used towards raising the awareness of the programme, engagement in informal educational activities to highlight benefits of the reduce/reuse/recycle agenda. In addition, the project would engage harder to reach groups, such as older/isolated men, BAMER women and young people not in education/employment training.
- The Executive Member for Environment & Transport acknowledged the importance of recycling but reiterated that in as much as the Council continues to encourage recycling rates, it supports the waste hierarchy with regards to waste collection, namely prevention, recycling and then reuse, and that it was important to encourage residents to change their behaviour to reduce waste.

190

QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2017/18- EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS (Item B2)

Councillor Shaikh, Executive Member for Economic Development presented the Q3 Performance Report which set out the corporate performance indicators for Employment & Skills.

In the discussion the following points were made:

- Members were advised that the Council was on course to meet its employment target and that the I Work Team continues to focus on the long term unemployed, those with multiple barriers and young people, whilst the Job Centres focuses on short term unemployed. Also the meeting was informed that Adult Community Services continues to provide a safe place for employment support as it helps build confidence for the long term unemployed and those residents with child care issues.
- Members were informed that Islington Council continues to benefit from a number of employment initiatives funded by ESF and large charities and that the Council is negotiating with the charities to create a "Team Islington" approach to coordinate the services.
- Members were informed that during Q3, the number of parents supported into employment was on target, an increase when compared to the same period last year and this was partly due to improved processes for capturing data on outcomes for parents from partners in the borough such as The Parent House, Islington Somali Community and the Pillion Trust.
- The Executive Member for Economic Development informed Members that data captured shows that residents supported into paid work through iWork still remained in employment and welcomed efforts of both the Council services and partners in reducing the number of claimants on Employment Support Allowance or Incapacity Benefit.
- In response to concerns about external apprentices placed with large construction firms not being able to complete their programmes, the Business Engagement and Employment Support Manager informed Members that Islington being part of a central London programme apprentices would still be able to complete their

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programmes. Apprentices and their line managers are regularly monitored and supported.

- Members were advised that on completion of their programmes apprentices have good job prospects especially with employers such as the Council and partners in both the public and private sector.
- With regards to the number of apprentices that had dropped out of the programme, the Executive Member for Economic Development advised that the information would be provided for Members.
- In response to a request for the informal minutes of the steering group for social value, the Officer advised that these would be made available and circulated to Members of the Committee.
- With regards to library visits, Members were advised that Officers are considering ways of capturing and representing the data

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.

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QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2017/18 - ENVIRONMENT (Item B3)

Councillor Webbe, Executive Member for Environment & Transport presented the Q3 Performance Report which set out the corporate performance indicators related to Environment and Transport.

In the discussion the following points were made:

- Members were advised that the recent 'Contender' IT software problems had now been resolved, however missed waste collections data for the first three quarters of 2017/18 is now indicating a steadily improved trend.
- Quarters 1 to 3 annualised estimated energy cost savings remains strong and ahead of target, mainly due to performance on Warm Home Discount and increased EDF contract funding.
- The Executive Member for Environment and Transport reported that performance on major applications remain strong in Quarter 3 achieving 100%.
- Members were advised that there had been a fall in the number of reported fly-tips across all land types and waste types from 4,174 in 2015/16 to 3,011 in 2016/17, however due to the recent contender software problems data from Quarter 1 to 3 was not available for consideration.
- With regards to the possibility of achieving the 50% target for recycling and composting set by North London Waste Authority (NLWA), Members were advised that Islington's contribution to the overall target was 35.6% for the year and at present the Council's rate of recycling was between 29-31%. Members were informed that other outer boroughs such as Barnet which had dwellings with gardens would be expected to help attain the 50% target due to their high levels of food and garden waste collections.

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- Members were advised that in comparison with other neighbouring boroughs of Camden and Hackney, Islington had similar levels of recycling rates, however was well above other inner London boroughs.
- Members agreed that the Council would need to consider doing things differently in order to raise the recycling rates especially as the rate of recycling over the last few years had remained the same.
- The meeting was informed that contamination remains a continuous challenge for local authorities and there is a recognition that more needs to be done regarding public awareness. Members were informed that due to shortfall in funds from central government over the years, local authorities have not been able to undertake awareness campaigns.
- Members were informed of NLWA's awareness campaign programme to address contamination issues especially as a recent public survey indicated that residents were not aware that nappies were not recyclable.
- With regards to the amount of missed collections, the Director of Public Realm informed the meeting that the figure represents less than 1% of the 500,000 collections over a year and advised that systems were now in place to address this issue.
- In response to a suggestion that more information about recycling such as disposal costs vis-a-vis cost of not meeting NLWA's target to residents could raise awareness and increase participation, the Executive Member Environment and Transport advised Members that the cost and savings was not easy to ascertain as there were a number of factors to consider such as the levy paid to the broker, the quality and prices of the items collected which vary and the disposal cost. Information on the comparison and cost analysis between boroughs is available for the committee's consideration.
- Members were however advised that since the acquisition of the new fleet of Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCV's), the Council regularly displays messages on the sides of these vehicles to raise public awareness of recycling.
- In response to a suggestion that Council provide containers and recycling facilities in the open spaces and parks especially in the summer the Executive Member for Environment and Transport indicated that this would be looked into.
- In response to a question from a member of the public on how many council tenants are eligible for the Mayor of London's Warmer Homes Scheme, the Executive Member for Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee advised that this she would look into this issue and provide a written response.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.

192 WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18 (Item B4)

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 9.10 pm

CHAIR