

Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee - 5 September 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held at Committee Room 4, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD - Islington Town Hall on 5 September 2019 at 8.00 pm.

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

Councillor Dave Poyser in the Chair

299 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillors Convery and Khurana.

300 DECLARATIONS OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)

There were no declarations of substitute members.

301 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

302 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2019 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

303 CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 5)

The Chair welcomed Keith Townsend, the new Corporate Director Environment and Regeneration, informing members that over the summer months he had met with representatives of the Islington Clean Air Parents where they discussed the scrutiny process and issues around air quality in the borough. He also indicated that he had met officers from the Communication Department, and subsequently with both the outgoing Director and the new Corporate Director, Environment and Regeneration about the scrutiny.

Cllr Poyser thanked officers and Cllr Webbe for arranging a site visit to observe the Waltham Forest Mini Holland project, which he and many members had been able to attend, as an example of a healthy street initiative.

Cllr Poyser also informed the meeting that prior to the meeting he had attended a meeting of Xtinction with Cllrs Khondoker and Clarke.

In response to a question about Member's being allowed to scrutinise and

contribute to the Transport Strategy before its adoption by Council in February, the Executive Member for Environment and Transport acknowledged that members and the wider public would be invited to contribute to the strategy however at this stage in light of the Council's ambitious target regarding the 2030 zero emission, it was important at this stage for both officers and Executive to be focussed.

A request that Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee have an opportunity to view the final version of the strategy before its adoption by Council in February was noted.

The Chair advised informed the meeting that in light of the Council's recycling team being named the Recycling Team of the year, the committee would like to express their thanks to Matthew Homer, the Street Scene Strategy Manager and his team for their wonderful works.

Members were informed about two events being held which relates to the committee's scrutiny topic, a seminar being held in London on Wednesday 3 October titled - 'Using behavioural insights to improve resilience to the climate crisis' and an event in Wigan called 'The Deal Conference' on Monday 7 October. Interested members were advised to contact the committee clerk with further details.

304 ORDER OF BUSINESS (Item 6)

The order of business would be as per the agenda.

305 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 7)

None

306 SCRUTINY REVIEW - DRAFT SCRUTINY INITIATION DOCUMENT AND PRESENTATION (BEHAVOURIAL CHANGES) (Item B1)

The Committee received a presentation from Lynn Stratton, Head of Strategy, Marketing and Communications, which was supplied with the agenda. Kevin Townsend, Corporate Director, Environment and Regeneration Services introduced the Draft Scrutiny Initiation Document.

The following main points were noted during the discussion:

An overview of nudge theory

- Behavioural science or in some cases referred to as 'Nudge Economics' was developed by two US academics as an approach to improving decisions about health, wealth and happiness.
- Members were advised that central to the 'nudge' concept is that people are helped to think appropriately and make better decisions by being offered choices that have been designed to enable those outcomes.
- The core principles of 'nudge' are that the choices offered to encourage a shift in behaviour should be easy, attractive, social and timely.

- Members were advised that to determine what works best, initiatives need time to be tested.
- Members were advised that the scope of the review should be narrowed down to certain areas and then trialled to observe effectiveness. The Committee should agree on focused behaviours and audiences that could be influenced to make big difference.
- Members were advised that besides employing nudge techniques to influence behaviour change, some forms of enforcement and incentives may also be required. The review would consider how to encourage positive behaviours and discourage negative behaviours.

Changes to the Scrutiny Initiation Document

- The Corporate Director, Environment and Regeneration welcomed the opportunity of the review topic especially within the Service and advised that the actions and campaign should focus around a narrow cohort of which behaviour would require change and useful to pilot it within a narrow geographical area.
- As part of the review exercise, academic experts will be invited to share their experiences on how it works. Evidence will also be provided of best practice in other public sector organisations. A visit to Wigan Council may also be considered. The invitation to an event focusing on behaviour change and the environment was also circulated – A seminar in central London about Behavioural Insights
- Various issues were raised regarding Planning including developers not being clear on what type of scheme to build in certain areas of the borough, the use of green roof gardens etc. The Corporate Director advised this was – more a matter of improving communication than behaviour change.
- The Corporate Director proposed that the following topics could usefully be explored as part of the Scrutiny: recycling behaviour - in particular food waste; short journey personal car use; take up of Angelic Energy and flytipping (residential and businesses). He confirmed that the council is part of a London-wide pilot which is considering innovative ways to combat fly-tipping that he would share some of the generic techniques used during the pilot in London-wide fly tipping exercise with members.
- Members agreed to amend the list of topics to be explored by the Scrutiny Initiation Document to the above. They also asked that schools and council staff should be among the target audiences encouraged to change their behaviour.
- Finally it was noted that austerity was a factor affecting the council's ability to deliver change.

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Initiation Document be agreed subject to the changes noted above.

Councillor Webbe, Executive Member for Environment & Transport presented the Islington Transport Strategy 2019-2041 to the Committee.

The following points were made:

- Public consultation ends in September 2019 with the view that it will be considered and adopted by Executive winter 2019/20.
- The Strategy aims to provide a healthy, efficient and sustainable modes of transport which will be affordable, accessible and enjoyable by all residents. The transport environment will be free from barriers to walking, cycling and public transport.
- The Executive Member advised that the council aims to build on its legacy by providing a safe travel environment within the borough. Members were reminded of the brand new public space that was built at Archway; designated school streets to discourage car movement around schools; building car-free developments; introduction of parking permit charges based on CO2 emissions and diesel parking surcharges and Bunhill 2 which aims to heat homes.
- In summary, the Executive Member informed the meeting about the 11 objectives of the strategy, the initiatives introduced to address the objectives and the targets.
- In response to a question of addressing the high volume of vehicular movement by big businesses and specifically the Emirates on match days, the Executive Member reiterated to Members that the Strategy sets the framework after which Action Plans will address local issues. Members were advised that the Strategy provides permission to develop Liveable Neighbourhoods, reduce the impact of traffic and parking and work with business to discuss sustainable mode of transport.
- On the issue of reducing car dependence and making public transport accessible and affordable, the meeting was informed that following discussion with the Mayor of London the hopper fare has been introduced on London buses travel. The meeting was informed that although the authority does not control bus routes it will continue to work with TFL and the Mayor of London. The authority encourages car club and the use of electric cars. Buses 43 and 134 are now electric which is to be welcomed.
- On the question about the 20mph speed limit on the borough roads not being enforced, the meeting was advised that the council has no power to enforce it or issue fixed penalty notices but will be raising the issue with the Mayor of London.
- In response to the suggestion that the resident roamer parking scheme should be scrapped because it is not aligned with the council's ambition to reduce net carbon emissions to zero, the meeting was informed that there were no plans to scrap the scheme which exists to support those families that need the scheme to stay in place. The air quality impact of roamer parking will be reduced by the uptake of EVs.
- With regards to the council's healthy street initiative and the possibility of incorporating low cost measures like those observed during the visit to the Mini Holland project, the Executive Member advised that the strategy set out

the criteria of what a healthy street should be like and where such street do not meet the criteria, an action plan would be put in place to fulfil the vision.

- In response to concerns that the Transport Strategy does not encourage cycling but improving other modes of transport, the Executive Member advised that this Strategy is about a radical shift away from the use of cars to sustainable modes of transport and where vehicles are used the Council will be encouraging the use of cleaner vehicles. The Council is aiming not to issue car parking permits in the long run for its residents.
- With regard to concerns that the Strategy is not evidence based and doubts about the data on which the strategy is based, the Executive Member advised that data utilised is from the office of the Mayor of London and will be checked.
- In response to concerns that the Strategy favours the use of cars rather than cycling, the Executive Member emphasised that although Islington is not an anti-car borough, the Strategy builds on what the council has done in ensuring that Islington residents live in a healthy environment. Members were reminded that Islington remains has second lowest levels of car ownership in the country and that the Strategy seeks to reduce the total number of parking permits issued and investigate phasing out permits for diesel and petrol vehicles.

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ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT - 2018/2019 (Item B3)

Councillor Webbe gave a presentation on the work of the Environment & Transport Directorate. A copy of the presentation would be interleaved with the agenda.

In the discussion the following points were made.

- Members were informed that energy costs for 3200 vulnerable households had been reduced by installing low-cost energy saving measures through the Council's 'Energy Doctor in the Home' service and the Council's Warmth on Prescription Scheme initiative had resulted in a saving of 25 tonnes of cO2 annually.
- Angelic Energy presently has 6,900 individual meter points on supply and outperforms the Big Six energy suppliers on standard variable, cheapest fixed direct debit and pre-pay tariffs
- With regards to Seasonal Health Interventions Network (SHINE), there has been 8,560 interventions covering Energy Doctor home visits, Warm Home Discount referrals and fuel debt relief.
- Members were reminded that within the last 3 years SHINE funding has tripled and expanded across all London Boroughs. SHINE is funded by EDF and GLA.
- The Executive Member informed the meeting of the various energy services such as Bunhill District Services which provides cheaper energy to 800 homes; the Solar Together London which has led to the installation of 27 new solar PV and the Energising Small Business fund.

- On the issue of air quality, meeting was advised that consultation on the new Islington Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2023 has now been completed and will be presented to Executive for adoption in October.
 - The Council continues to lead amongst the 16 London borough's with its Healthy Streets Every Day project to encourage street scape improvements, traffic regulations, car free events etc.
 - The Council has expanded school's pollution monitoring to nurseries and will be commencing auditing schools for air quality. In addition, the Council has delivered several air quality projects focussed at business such as Clean air villages, Zero Emissions Network and a Business Low Emission Neighbourhood in Archway.
 - Islington Council is working towards banning lorries(HGVs) from driving through residential roads and aiming to ensure that its own vehicles are as environmentally friendly as possible.
 - Public consultation on the new draft Transport Strategy takes place between August –September 2019 with a view that the final strategy be recommended for adoption by Executive in November.
 - The Council's recycling team had won the Recycling Team of the Year at the annual MRW National Recycling Awards
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- In response to concerns that the report does not have data about monitoring progress on vision zero, the Executive Member indicated that this would be available in the future.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

309 WORK PROGRAMME 2019-2020 (Item B4)
RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting ended at 10.15 pm

CHAIR