

**Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee - 4 February 2020**

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 4 February 2020 at 7.30 pm.

**Present:**      **Councillors:**      Poyser (Chair), Clarke, Convery, Khurana, Jeapes  
and Russell

**Councillor Dave Poyser in the Chair**

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

Apologies were received from Councillors Khondoker and Hamitouche.

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

Councillor Gill substituted for Councillor Hamitouche.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

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

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2020 subject to the correction be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

**Matters arising -**

In response to a suggestion of replacing council building roofs with solar panels when due for repairs, members were advised that any low carbon emission measures would be part of the Council's zero carbon strategy.

**338      CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 5)**

The Chair reported on announcements that day from the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, meetings he had held since the previous meeting, and arrangements for the next Environment and Regeneration Meeting to which various interest groups would be invited. He welcomed Councillor Champion in her new role as member of the Executive

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

The order of business would be as per the agenda.

**340 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 7)**

None

**341 LIVING STREETS - PRESENTATION (Item B1)**

The committee received a presentation from David Harrison of Islington Living Streets, a copy of which was interleaved with the agenda.

The following points were highlighted:

- 70% of households in Islington do not own a car, however Islington's roads are vehicle friendly with the result that children no more play in the neighbourhood streets.
- Although walking in the borough accounts for 42% of all trips, it is noticeable the increase in short trip journeys by cars, leading to high carbon emissions and air pollution. Resident inactivity results in high levels of obesity, social isolation and, worryingly, one of the worst child pedestrian casualty rates in western Europe.
- In order to address the above consequences, the meeting was advised of the need to reduce car use and alternatively provide more investment for sustainable modes of travel across the borough. The meeting was informed that Islington Living Streets welcomes Islington's Transport Strategy.
- Members were advised of the 3 elements to any behaviour change programmes – (1) price mechanism, (2) bans and (3) making major infrastructure changes.
- Although public health messages are useful, their effectiveness in terms of behaviour changes is limited as such messages are dwarfed by the amount spent on advertising, especially by the motoring industry.
- Evidence shows that employing price mechanism to address behaviour changes is welcome and effective. With the congestion zone and the Ultra-Low Emission Zone there have been 13,500 fewer cars per day. Introducing car parking charges and the workplace levy will have an impact on car use.
- The Meeting was advised that any proposal to ban vehicles in certain areas or roads is beneficial to the environment in terms of air quality/vehicle emissions and will result in an increase in walking and cycling and, importantly, reinvigorate town centres and shopping areas.
- Significant infrastructure changes have brought huge benefits to residents and the environment. The introduction of cycle superhighways and the pedestrianisation of town centres/shopping areas continually attract more walking by residents and visitors, especially as evidence shows that 22 % of all car trips made by London residents are under 2km.

- Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) will result in residents being active and increase life expectancy. David Harrison welcomed the council's effort as over 51,000 households in the borough are no longer living in areas with dangerously high levels of air pollution.
- Members were advised that despite resistance, improving a street for walking and cycling has resulted in an increase in footfall and has had no impact on businesses with the number of empty shops falling to 17%. Also evidence shows that cyclists and residents who walk to shops tend to spend 40% more than those who drive into these high streets.
- The meeting was informed that although traffic levels have fallen by 56% or 10,000 fewer vehicles a day, there has been a slight increase in traffic on the two main roads bordering the LTN areas.
- In response to a question about lack of funds, David Harrison acknowledged the challenge, however noting that investing in low cost measures would transform neighbourhoods to low traffic areas. Measures such as introducing traffic-free streets with bollards or planters; ensuring connectivity across routes for pedestrians and cyclists and changing roads to become more like boulevards will go a long way. In addition, making pavements wider, introducing more crossings, closing side streets to motor vehicles, increasing the cost of parking while restricting the availability of parking, developing sustainable delivery/consolidation hubs to reduce number of delivery vans will go a long way changing the outlook of neighbourhoods and town centres.
- Members were reminded that most of the discussions around behaviour change and improving neighbourhoods and streets was not about its effectiveness but political fear which evidence shows has not been realised.
- LTNs are noticeable around major cities, notably the super block in Barcelona and the Knip in Amsterdam. Lambeth, Camden, Southwark, The City of London and Tower Hamlets have proposals in place to introduce such neighbourhoods especially with the increase in awareness of benefits to residents in terms of air pollution reduction and road safety.
- In addition to economic benefits from LTNs, evidence shows improvement in the health of children living in the area in comparison to those who live out of the area. A member suggested that Islington's Public Realm working in partnership with NHS would bring additional benefits.
- With regard to huge investment received by Waltham Forest, with funds from the Mayor of London and the transformation of that part of Waltham Forest, David acknowledged the lack of funds in Islington but advised that low cost measures such as placing bollards and planters, and removing roundabouts would transform neighbourhoods.

- With regard to public resistance to LTNs, the meeting was informed that it is important to communicate with residents so that they understand the benefits and how LTNs impact their quality of life and public health.

The Chair thanked David Harrison of Living Streets for his presentation and in particular for the clarity of his contribution.

**342 AIR POLLUTION UPDATE (Item B2)**

Andrew Ford, Environmental Pollution Policy & Strategy Manager gave a presentation to the Committee, a copy of which was interleaved with the agenda, and responded to questions. The main points were as follows:

- Islington is designated an air quality management area. Its N02 levels exceed the EU limits across in over 60% of the borough. Air quality is monitored around the main roads especially in south of the borough and in and around schools.
- Overall pollution levels are falling in the borough and are likely to continue to do so as a result of current actions, particularly as many of the actions to tackle the climate emergency dovetail in with the actions to reduce air pollution. However, the Council is keeping an eye on 'new' sources of pollution such as commercial cooking which has been highlighted in recent research.
- A combination of policies have been introduced at national, London-wide and borough level to influence air quality with the Government launching its new Environment Bill just before the General Election with a view to it coming back to Parliament on the 30<sup>th</sup> Jan 2020. The Bill will affect many areas that the committee deals with but in terms of air quality there are updates to the Clean Air Act and Smoke Control Zones as well as new powers around canal boats etc. There is much more of a focus on PM2.5 than previously and although the Council is currently meeting the UK/EU targets for PM2.5, this is not the case with the World Health Organisation limits
- The introduction of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) in April 2019 resulted in a 30% reduction in N02 emissions. The meeting was informed of plans to strengthen the LEZ (Lorries, Vans and Buses) and ULEX by October 2020 and October 2021.
- Further measures have been introduced in order to reduce air pollution and the Council continues to work with other boroughs, TfL, and the GLA to improve air quality.
- Local programmes to mitigate poor air quality include the introduction of Air Text which forecast high pollution to enable subscribers to take action to

avoid exposure, air quality audits near schools, the promotion of walking and cycling, anti-idling events and car free days. The meeting was informed that Council officers are working in conjunction with the Whittington Hospital regarding Clean Air Hospitals.

- With regard to the Non-Road Mobile Machinery (NRMM) monitoring programme, a pan-London Project, members were advised that this relates to the use of heavy machinery, heavy construction vehicles and generators being used on construction sites as there is a recognition that it is a significant contributor to London's air pollution.
- New pollution modelling released by the GLA continues to show that large parts of the borough do not meet the UK/EU pollution targets for NO<sub>2</sub> (Nitrogen Dioxide) and its air quality map particularly highlights that TfL roads are major sources of air pollution and they show high air pollution concentration. However, the modelling also shows that by 2025 the vast majority of Islington (and indeed London) will be meeting these limits (apart from some very small areas around some major road junctions most notably Kings Cross and the stretch of upper street from Angel station to Islington Green). This is largely due to the Ultra-Low Emission Zone expansion.
- Members were advised that results from the first schools Air Quality Audits are to be released by the London Mayor. Officers are working with community groups to design and distribute a Schools Clean Air Toolkit. Islington Council will be expanding the monitoring of air quality outside schools.

The Chair thanked the Air Pollution Manager for the update

**343 ROAD SAFETY: VISION ZERO - PRESENTATION (TO FOLLOW) (Item B3)**

Head of Traffic gave a presentation to the Committee, a copy of which is interleaved, and responded to questions. The main points were as follows:

- Vision Zero aims to reduce road danger, working towards the elimination of road traffic deaths and serious injuries by reducing the dominance of motor vehicles on London's streets.
- London remains at the forefront of this approach, with the Mayor of London setting out his goal to eliminate all deaths and serious injuries from London's transport network by 2041.
- Members were informed that achieving Vision Zero in Islington is set out in both the Mayor of London's Vision Zero Action Plan and the draft Islington Transport Strategy. It supports promoting or introducing safe speeds, creating safe streets, introducing safe vehicles and changing behaviour. Members were advised that the Draft Islington Transport Strategy had been out for public consultation in the summer of 2019.
- With regard to safe speeds, the meeting was informed that the aim is to maintain a borough-wide 20 mph speed limit; working with the police to

enforce and raise awareness, and to continue to campaign for a change in legislation to allow local authorities to enforce speed offences and other unsafe driving which is presently the sole responsibility the Police.

- On the issue of safe streets, the Council aims to target action against the sources of road danger, including enforcing existing weight restrictions on Islington Roads. Other initiatives will include banning lorries and HGV's weighing 7.5 tonnes or more; improving safety at dangerous junctions and seeking opportunities for transformational changes at key junctions.
- The meeting was advised that initiatives such as reducing the danger posed by lorries through the implementation of Direct Vision Standards for HGVs over 12 tonnes and gaining Freight Operator Recognition Scheme accreditation for the Council's fleet will ensure that safe vehicles ply Islington Roads. In terms of safe behaviour, the Council will continue to offer free cycling training to all Islington residents including school children, and deliver school streets or similar interventions at all schools in the borough so as to encourage walking and cycling.
- In terms of implementing safe speeds, Islington is the first London borough to have 20mph speed limit on borough roads which is enforced by the police since 2014. Members were advised that although the Council has 19 fixed speed cameras in place to enforce the 20mph speed limit, it is only the police that can enforce any breach. Members were informed of the Mayor of London's commitment to introduce the 20mph speed limit on all roads managed by TFL in Islington by 2024, which was to be welcomed Martijn Cooijmans said.
- Actions to implement safe streets include the removal of some of London's gyratory road schemes such as the Archway gyratory, Highbury Corner and the Old Street roundabout. Members were advised that feasibility studies are presently underway in conjunction with Transport for London on the Kings Cross gyratory and the Nag's Head gyratory. Additional initiatives to improve streets have been to implement 13 School streets in the borough with plans to consult on another 4. School streets involves temporarily closing roads to become a pedestrian and cycle zone during the school's opening and closing times all to improve safety, reduce air pollution and encourage walking.
- Members were advised of local safety schemes, where data collected will be used to address locations with the highest collisions. The Council is also undertaking parking reviews of junctions by removing obstacles so as to reduce collision and accidents to pedestrians and cyclists.
- With regards to enforcing the lorry ban, the meeting was informed that in addition to other initiatives planned, over 60% of Islington streets currently have width restrictions to deter large vehicles with a view that it will address safety concerns and prevent rat runs in neighbourhoods.
- A suggestion to remove the number of parking spaces, especially on main roads, considering the majority of collisions tend to occur there was noted.
- In response to a question from a member of the public that the Council's language would need to be changed from Road Safety to Road Vehicle Reduction Team, the Manager informed the meeting that this change is reflected in the Transport Strategy.

The Chair thanked the Manager for his update on Council's plans to address all incidents relating to road and pedestrian safety.

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**SCRUTINY REVIEW - ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE - STREET ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES (Item B4)**

John Mootealoo, Head of Street Environment Services (SES) gave a presentation to the Committee, a copy of which is interleaved, and he responded to questions. The main points were as follows:

- Members were informed that since 2005, SES in conjunction with Keep Britain Tidy's 'Great British Spring Clean-Ups, have organised community clean-up events.
- In addition to the above, key partners, council services and stakeholders including volunteering and faith groups have participated in various events around the borough which take place from March to April.
- The Manager informed the meeting that the Council's Compliance Team continually engages the public reinforcing the messages of doing the right especially with litter disposal or dog fouling.
- The meeting was informed that the SES team took part in a successful trial for reducing the anti social behaviour of chewing gum with a specialist Behaviour Change group. The campaign around transport hubs including Farringdon Station and a high street bus stop led to a reduction of gum littering by 48%.
- A tool kit developed by Mars Wrigley in partnership with a social enterprise called 'Behaviour Change' includes a range of free and unbranded materials designed to tackle gum litter in the UK .
- Waste enforcement remains an important function of the Compliance Team who carry out enforcement actions and campaigns to reduce the anti social problem of fly tipping. In addressing fly-tipping the efforts of SES and the Compliance Team has helped alleviate the issue around some problematic hot-spot locations across the borough.
- Members were advised of a new trial named the 'CSI Tape Pilot' which commenced in February. SES have selected 5 sites known for incidents of fly tipping which will be cordoned with the CSI tape, leaving the materials in place for three days before it is removed. The aim of the pilot is to look out for behaviour change around these fly tipping sites over a 12 month period.
- Members were advised that with regards to dog fouling incidents, a new trial has been launched within the St Georges Ward to tackle this anti-social problem. In response to a question on the effectiveness of the Keep Britain

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Tidy's 'We're Watching You' poster, which is attached to every bin, the meeting was informed that evidence from other pilots had shown that it had led to a reduction in dog fouling.

- With regard to the image on the poster, a member welcomed the initiative and was interested in the outcome but was concerned that images like this with prying eyes could be traumatic especially to young people.
- In response to a request for more information on the success as a result of the Keep Britain Tidy's 'We're Watching You' poster, the Executive Member Environment and Regeneration agreed that it will be shared with the committee.

The Chair thanked the Manager for his contribution.

The meeting ended at 9.35 pm

**CHAIR**