

Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee - 28 July 2020

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 28 July 2020 at 7.30 pm.

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

Also Present: Councillor: Champion

Councillor Dave Poyser in the Chair

371 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Hamitouche. The Chair stated that the Committee would wish to send their best wishes to Councillor Hamitouche for a speedy recovery

372 DECLARATIONS OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)

There were no declarations of substitute members

373 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest

374 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2020 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

375 CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 5)

The Chair said he had attended various meetings in Islington about the environment. At one meeting with the MP for Islington North the NLWA had been raised following on from our early meeting.

The Chair added that Islington's plans for Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, which had been discussed at this committee, are emerging as an important issue of a lot of concern locally, he had heard that there had been a significant number of people objecting from outside Islington Town Hall, however there had also been support within the Borough. He emphasised the importance of encouraging people to give their views on the 'CommonPlace' web-site.

376 ORDER OF BUSINESS (Item 6)

The order of business would be as per the agenda

377 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 7)

The Chair outlined the procedure for Public questions

378

BEHAVIOUR CHANGES - INTRODUCTION TO APPLIED BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE AND ITS IMPACT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT - PRESENTATION BY IMPOWER (Item B1)

Debbie Crossan and Geoff Hinks, IMPOWER, made a presentation to the Committee, a copy of which is interleaved

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

- IMPOWER had worked with Local Authorities to develop strategies to change behaviours and develop interventions to do this. Small changes often can make a large impact
- Complex problems – noted that some behavioural changes may work in one situation and not necessarily in others. Local Authorities are seen as a complex problem and there is a need for behavioural science as people do not always act rationally and strategies are needed to deal with this. Communication programmes need to target awareness and there is a need to understand behaviours in order to influence them
- Behavioural science tools – a number of these are used to solve complex problems
- Does behaviour matter? COVID has shown that people’s behaviour can be changed and there has been a significant shift in behaviour due to COVID
- Important issues – there needs to be compliance with behavioural change e.g. wearing of face masks, and COVID has presented the opportunity to implement change. A survey has indicated that two thirds of people feel that climate change is as important as COVID
- Is it ethical to change behaviour? Choices can be presented to people to influence the one that is taken, it is about the right thing to do at the time whilst letting people actually make the choice – examples are the ‘eyes’ campaign and other initiatives as highlighted in the Brent slide
- There is often a need to present choices in a novel way in order to get interest and engagement
- Applying behavioural science – Investigation, trial design and complete investigation are needed when applying behavioural science
- Behavioural change challenge - can achieve significant change through simple interventions, help to influence change to influence desired behaviours and support local authorities to achieve financial goals and achievement of outcomes
- In response to a question as to the success of the scheme involving the mural in the reduction of fly-tipping and graffiti it was stated that it was felt that this had been successful as it had involved the community and therefore they felt that they owned it. A Member referred to the ‘eyes’ campaign and that this could be seen as the Council watching residents and that this was not an impression that she felt should be conveyed in Islington, although she recognised that all Councils were different
- Noted that there is a financial cost to implementing change and that behavioural change often needs to be reinforced

- There is also a need to think about 'long term' goals and that there is an opportunity to build team skills to get a more long term sustainable approach
- It was felt that the pandemic had shown the importance of community and communication, and the positive thing was that communities coming together and supporting each other
- In response to a question it was stated that if there is a need to discourage car use, there is the need to look at peoples motivations for car use and challenges, and to stress the importance of essential issues such as the effect on climate change, health of children etc. so that people adapted and changed their behaviour
- It was stated that COVID had enabled the Government the opportunity to effect behavioural change, and that the public looked to Government and Local Authorities for clear messages, and in some instances the Government's messages on COVID could have been clearer. The message needs to be as simple as possible in order to communicate effectively

The Chair thanked Debbie Crossan and Geoff Hinks for their presentation

379

QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE REPORT (Item B2)

Councillor Champion, Executive Member Environment and Regeneration was present for discussion of this item. Keith Townsend, Director of Environment and Regeneration was also present

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

- Members were informed that changes had been made to the format of the report and she would welcome Members comments in this regard
- It was stated that there had been an improvement in recycling figures from 27.1% in quarter 3 to 31.8% in quarter 4, giving a yearly total of 29.6%
- Residual waste was 353kg which is one of the lowest figures ever
- In response to a question, the recycling targets were 33% by 2020, and 36% by 2025, and the recycling rate was still one of the highest in London, however Islington did not have the benefit of organic waste recycling, which some outer London Boroughs had. Contamination of waste is also an issue and work is being undertaken on this
- Reference was made to the need to target food waste and that work is also taking place on a low plastic zone, in order to expand this with businesses
- In response to a question on recycling and challenges in tower blocks and difficulty of elderly people to use communal recycling areas, as these were usually situated at the bottom of the block, hence the use of refuse chutes, meeting was informed that work is taking place with tenants to get them to use recycling facilities and assist elderly neighbours in this area by encouraging caretakers and concierge to take a proactive role. The Corporate Director acknowledged that a lot of work is required on individual estates and importantly changing the behaviour of its residents. It was noted that in the past tenants had been encouraged to use refuse chutes, however behaviour change is required in general about recycling. Members were reminded that

there are both physical and financial challenges especially with retrofitting some estate blocks.

- Approximately 50% of estates had a food waste service, and this is being rolled out to other estates, however it is an expensive service and is not well used at present
- In response to a question about the increase in fly tipping it was stated that it was unclear whether this was a trend, however COVID would no doubt lead to an increase
- A Member referred to the number of deaths/injuries to residents on roads, and if there were any more up to date figures available. It was stated that the figures were for 2018, however measures introduced would hopefully have the effect of reducing these numbers
- In response to a question on carbon emissions it was stated that following the electric refuse vehicle trial a vehicle had been purchased and is due for delivery later in the year
- It was noted that the Council has plans to reduce emissions from its Council fleet, however this is expensive process and at present modelling is taking place to move away from its diesel fleet in the next 10 years
- Members were informed that GLA funding had been agreed for £1.5m which will assist in the infrastructure for its fleet, which the Council is match funding.
- In response to a question it was stated that the Council's fleet is a small part of the Council's net carbon strategy, and further work needed to take place

The Chair thanked Councillor Champion and Keith Townsend for attending

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REDUCING SINGLE USE PLASTICS IN ISLINGTON (Item B3)

Matthew Homer, Street Scene and Strategy Manager presented the report on Single Use Plastics.

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

- It was stated that some of the actions proposed had been delayed due to COVID, however these would be actioned once it is practical and safe
- A Member expressed concern at the number of discarded pieces of PPE in the street, such as gloves and masks, and there is a need to think how the Council deals with this issue, such as an information campaign
- A Member also stated that there is a challenge to reduce the use of single use plastic, whilst still keeping safe in the pandemic
- In response to a question it was stated that contracts with film companies specify not to encourage single use plastic, but there were challenges to reducing this. The Street Scene Strategy Manager stated that Council is hopeful that when the pandemic ends there will be a return to more normality ,where there will be a move away from single use plastic
- It was stated that there has been ongoing discussion across London about how to address the noticeable disposal of PPE, and discussions were taking place with London Boroughs and the GLA on a campaign to encourage people to dispense of PPE in a sensible manner. Reference was made to the

need to encourage people to wear reusable face masks, and it was stated that this could be discussed with the Council's communications team

The Chair specially thanked Matthew Homer for attending during his holiday

381 WORK PROGRAMME 2020/2021 (Item B4)

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the addition of a report on Low Traffic Neighbourhoods to the September meeting, the draft work programme be noted

The meeting ended at 9.45 pm

CHAIR