



Report of Executive Member for Environment and Transport

Meeting of:	Date:	Ward(s):
Executive	10 February 2022	All

Delete as appropriate:	Exempt	Non-exempt
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SUBJECT: Behaviour Change / Science – Executive response to the report of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 In November 2020 the Executive received a report from the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee regarding the use of Behaviour Change / Science to support the achievement of our Net Zero Carbon ambitions as set out in Vision 2030. The report provided recommendations to pilot and incorporate behaviour change science into workstream activities.
- 1.2 The council has now established the Net Zero Carbon Programme team to support workstream teams in their delivery of the Vision 2030 Strategy.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree the Executive responses to the eight recommendations of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee as set out in section 4 of this report below.
- 2.2 To agree that officers report back to the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee within six months following the completion of the pilot programme.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee collected evidence from September 2019 to November 2020.

3.2 The aim of the review was to consider ways to change behaviours of both individuals, and organisations/businesses in all areas of activity that will help Islington Council achieve its 2030 environmental targets.

3.3 Witnesses included:

- Islington's Communications Team.
- Professor Ivo Vlaev of Warwick University
- Amy Jones of Ernst Young LLP
- Debbie Crossan and Geoff Hinks, IMPOWER

4. Responses to recommendations

The committee set out eight recommendations, reported to Executive. The Executive agrees to the eight recommendations. The individual recommendations and associated responses to these recommendations are set out below:

4.1 **Recommendation 1: That given the success in a number of other Local Authorities of effective behavioural change being implemented, an appropriate organisation be engaged to undertake a pilot/s project to investigate the provision of applying behavioural change. The pilot project/s should be developed to support the Council's Net Zero Carbon strategy action plan. The pilot project/s should be determined by the Director of Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair of the Committee, Executive Member Environment and Members of the Committee**

Response: the recommendation to undertake a pilot project is welcomed and will be taken forward as a programme of projects across the NZC workstreams. Through our participation in various sub-regional networks, it is recognised that this is a common priority for other local authorities, and the council will also reach out to other north London Boroughs to explore the potential for cross borough collaboration to maximise the impact of initiatives through shared learning.

4.1.1 The council has already undertaken some successful work to encourage behaviour change which will help to inform this. In the wake of the covid-19 pandemic, the council embarked on a **major behaviour change initiative in the form of the People Friendly Streets programme**, which includes low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs). LTNs aim to make it easier and safer for people to travel on foot, using a wheelchair or other mobility aid, by cycle and public transport and reducing motor traffic as well as making the local neighbourhood cleaner, greener and healthier. The council commissioned Stand Agency who developed the comms and branding approach. Under this programme, the council has introduced seven low-traffic neighbourhood trials in St Peter's, Canonbury West, Canonbury East, Amwell, Clerkenwell Green, Highbury, St Mary's Church, as well as a similar scheme at Mayton Street and accelerating the School Streets programme. Public consultation on these schemes began in 2021, the outcomes of which will be considered alongside scheme monitoring reports in the final decision making about whether or not to make each scheme permanent. The primary objectives of the LTNs are: to reduce motorised traffic and vehicle emissions across internal roads; reduce motorised traffic overall across internal and boundary roads and increase levels of cycling across internal roads; and reduce levels of speeding on internal roads. Monitoring from the first LTN in St. Peter's showed motorised traffic fell by 56% and the number of vehicles speeding by 78%, while cycling rose by 72% overall across roads within the area. Subsequent monitoring

reports similarly point to success against our behaviour change objectives. Engagement and consultation on the introduction of liveable neighbourhoods (LTNs with additional public realm improvements) is also being planned.

4.1.2 Since lockdown, the council's communications team has focused on crisis communications around the pandemic – with the exception of the People Friendly Streets programme which has had dedicated officer support from launch onwards with significant input from across the media, design and digital teams. As part of the capacity building for the NZC programme, the Communications Team have now also appointed a **dedicated NZC communications officer** who has experience of delivering behaviour change projects and she will be working directly with the NZC workstreams to identify opportunities and scope potential campaigns. The council appointed JBP in the summer of 2021 to develop an **engagement strategy for the Net Zero Carbon programme**, focused on three priority external audiences: housing providers, community groups and businesses. Furthermore, in late 2021, the **new Net Zero Carbon programme team was formed** which will help to provide support and governance across teams and facilitate behaviour change campaigns.

4.1.3 In October 2021, the council launched the **Community Municipal Investment** providing Islington residents with the opportunity to invest in key delivery elements of the Net Zero Carbon programme. This innovative investment model, the first of its kind in London, encourages investors to think differently about how to invest their money, and consider the direct benefits that their investment can offer.

4.1.4 As a next step, the council's **net zero pledge tool**, and re-written/redesigned greener lifestyles microsite, will be launched in January 2022. This behaviour change tool, which was a deliverable in the Vision 2030 strategy, has been developed by the communications team to engage with residents and organisations across the borough, raise awareness and inspire action. The tool provides residents and businesses with a calculation of their carbon footprint based on lifestyle questions. Those who sign up to make a change will be signposted to relevant information on the website to guide them and will be contacted (nudged) at regular intervals to check in on their progress in achieving the pledges they make. Surveys will be undertaken with participants to understand how well received the tool is, the barriers to undertaking/achieving pledges, etc. in order to inform further development work and specific targeted projects and campaigns.

4.1.5 Work is underway to scope a brief for an appropriate organisation to be engaged to design an initial **behaviour change programme**, delivering a range of projects across the net zero programme. The NZC Programme team is currently working with the Waste and Recycling workstream to scope a pilot project for delivery in the new year, as the value of a project in this area was emphasised in the Scrutiny Committee report. However, we are exploring the potential for behaviour change within all workstreams, to create a holistic programme that will support the achievement of the strategy. The five priorities identified within Vision 2030 are being taken forward through the establishment of workstream delivery teams and these teams are currently developing detailed work package action plans. This process will help to identify specific behaviours that require intervention, and proposals will be presented to the Corporate Director for Environment, Executive Member for Environment and Transport and members of the committee for selection as pilot project/s in Spring 2022. The communications team will support as appropriate.

4.2 Recommendation 2: That all council departments should consider how behavioural change can support the delivery of council priorities and desired outcomes and ensure a cross departmental approach to any future behavioural change progress and projects

Response: The council has already introduced net zero carbon as a key consideration within the **decision making process** through decision reports, to encourage all services to consider the impact of their activities. A staff network of **Net Zero Carbon Champions** has also been established and will formally launch activities in the new year – with a push timed around the return to work (when there is a good opportunity to establish new behaviours after the disruption of the last few months). This will be strengthened by work with **Organisational Development** to embed NZC ambitions and the practical application of a behaviour change approach into the council's Learning and Skills programme for all staff.

In addition, the Communications Team commissioned JBP to deliver an **Engagement Strategy** for the NZC Programme in the summer of 2021, involving workshops and desk research focused around three priority external audiences: housing providers, community groups and businesses. This has provided valuable pointers to attitudes, level of knowledge and barriers to action which will now be developed into a fresh plan and taken forward with workstream delivery teams. These teams encompass a wide range of council departments and functions and their activity is coordinated through the NZC Steering Group. The NZC programme team is also currently exploring **learning from Islington's 2019 Housing led behavioural approach** to increasing downsizing delivered by Warwick University and EY, along with our project to tackle gum litter as part of the LGA's Behavioural Insights programme.

4.3 Recommendation 3: That appropriate 'pump prime' funding be made available for the behaviour change programmes in order to support the development of specific behaviour change trial projects in support of the New Zero Carbon Strategy. Whilst this funding has not yet specifically been identified it is noted that the Director of Environment and Regeneration is working on this, and appropriate funding should be put in place.

Response: The Council has allocated **£40,000 per annum** from 2021/22 to 2023/24 for the delivery of NZC related Behaviour Change projects. This has been earmarked for the appointment of a specialist organisation to support a pilot project and for associated materials and service infrastructure identified for the trial(s). The outcomes of this will inform the allocation of further funding.

4.4 Recommendation 4: That following the completion of the pilot project, an analysis take place of the effectiveness of the project, and the results submitted to the Environment and Regeneration Committee within six months for review with a view to promoting further work on behavioural change within the Council.

Response: Behaviour change projects by their nature involve closely targeted audiences and interventions. Insight and evaluation is key to the design of any behaviour change project to enable the effectiveness of interventions to be assessed and inform next steps. Officers welcome this recommendation and will **submit the findings of the initial**

programme of projects to the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee within 6 months of the completion and welcome the committee's feedback.

4.5 **Recommendation 5: That a key element of commissioning and appropriate organisation(s) includes the transfer of knowledge, expertise and tools to within the Council to enable future capacity and skills within services and corporately e.g. within the strategy and change unit.**

Response: Any procurement of a specialist organisation will include the requirement to **upskill the project team**, develop relevant training and capacity building so that officers are able to take forward projects themselves with confidence. The NZC Programme team have also engaged with **Organisational Development** to ensure that the council's Net Zero Carbon priorities are embedded throughout our organisation and into updated training modules. The need to upskill in understanding approaches to behaviour change and effective targeted engagement is part of this. Officers are working to ensure that knowledge, tools and skills can be transferred more widely through the forthcoming **new Learning Skills portal**. The council already has **environmental awareness training** which is mandatory for all new staff. This will be reviewed and refreshed.

4.6 **Recommendation 6: That, in conjunction with recommendation 1) above, an appropriate organisation be engaged to undertake a pilot project to investigate the provision of applying behavioural change techniques to support the implementation of the net zero carbon strategy and as part the council's communications to specific cohorts of residents**

Response: This recommendation will be put in place and is welcomed by officers. Work is underway to scope a brief for an appropriate organisation to be engaged to undertake an **initial behaviour change programme of projects across the NZC workstreams**. As part of this commission, we will ask them to consider the learnings and how we could apply behaviour change to future elements of the programme. With the development of the pledge tool and microsite we will be able to follow up with residents and businesses on the challenges they face in making changes and gain some insight into where we can target further interventions. The communications team are committed to providing targeted ongoing communications to help to create awareness and signposting to support people to take action.

4.7 **Recommendation 7: That consideration be given to a more localised approach to communications that can target messages to specific cohorts of residents , rather than more generic messages that are often not as effective as they could be**

Response: This approach has been taken with the **People Friendly Streets project** which has enabled residents to provide detailed comments on an online map and where activities and feedback have been geographically targeted, monitored and communicated. The communications team have also launched **more localised ebulletins** that will enable more targeted messages to be produced for specific areas of the borough. The survey carried out with residents prior to the launch of the ebulletins revealed a high level of interest in environmental issues that we will be able to build on.

During the pandemic we have learned a lot about the value that trusted voices in the community can add for helping the council to communicate messages at a local and

community level. Our **'Let's Talk about a Greener Future' festival** in October 2021, which involved around 100 events, was an important opportunity to raise the profile of the council's work on Net Zero and establishing/reinvigorating links with interested stakeholder groups. The forthcoming **Engagement and Communications Plan** will build on this. A thorough analysis on demographics, service users, areas of deprivation, etc. will be undertaken to ensure that messaging is tailored to maximise impact. The NZC Communications Officer will be responsible for ensuring that messaging and campaigns are targeted based on local audiences and needs.

4.8 Recommendation 8: That the Council seek funding opportunities to support the pilot and long-term implementation of behavioural change activities e.g. funding from Government, Mayor of London, other organisations, the LGA etc. The Government is supportive of behavioural change approaches, and the Mayor of London and other organisations have various funds that support tackling environmental issues and behavioural changes

Response: The council has appointed a **NZC Commercial Officer** whose role is to support the workstreams in seeking appropriate funding. The officer will be attending all Workstream Delivery Team meetings for each workstream to fully understand the funding needs of the workstreams, ensuring a joined up approach to bidding that maximises the impact of any funding received. He evaluates the success of bids and lessons learnt to improve our chances of success in future funding rounds.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial implications:

The estimated cost for commissioning is £80k. The scheme is funded through the Net Carbon Zero Revenue budget. In May 2021 the council approved the revenue budget of £40k per annum for Behaviour Change Programmes for 2021/22 - 2023/24.

5.2 Legal Implications:

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report. Legal advice and support will be provided, as required, in the implementation of the recommendations.

4.3 Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030

Some of the activities in the behavioural change programme will have environmental impacts. The most significant of these are the capital works in the People Friendly Streets programme, which involves the use of materials and energy, the generation of construction waste, contractor travel and potential nuisance impacts like noise and dust during installation works. The digital offer will have an ongoing impact in terms of energy used in the servers hosting the website and pledge tool, while some other activities may have impacts related to printed material.

However, the objective of the work arising from these recommendations is to improve environmental awareness and action amongst staff and our communities through effective communication, engagement and service design. Therefore the impact of any activities in this programme should have an overall positive impact on the environment and contribute to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030. Any projects commissioned through this work will be closely monitored to measure their impact on behaviour and associated environment impacts, and through the use of small scale, targeted pilots, the efficacy of

interventions will be quickly identified and continuously monitored. Where successful interventions are identified, these can be explored for wider implementation, in order to increase the positive impacts across services and communities.

4.4 Resident Impact Assessment:

The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The Council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The Council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

A Resident Impact Assessment is not required for the purposes of this report but will be conducted when developing and agreeing the scope of specific Behaviour Change projects.

6. Reason for recommendations

- 6.1 This report details the Executive's response and agreement to the recommendations of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

Appendices - none

Background papers: - none

Final report clearance:

Signed by:



31.1.22

Executive Member for Environment and
Transport

Date

Report Author: Sarah Hitchcock, Head of Net Zero Carbon Programme
Tel: 020 7527 5577
Email: Sarah.Hitchcock@islington.gov.uk

Financial Implications Author: Nisshanth Narendran, Principal Accountant
Email: Nisshanth.Narendran@islington.gov.uk

Legal Implications Author: David Daniels
Email: david.daniels@islington.gov.uk