

Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee - 14 June 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held at Town Hall on 14 June 2022 at 7.30 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** Clarke (Chair), Heather (Vice-Chair), Jeapes, Hayes, Zammit, Weekes and Jegorovas-Armstrong

Councillor Tricia Clarke in the Chair

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillors Finn and Craig.

2 DECLARATIONS OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)

None.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)

None.

4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 07 March 2022 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

5 MEMBERSHIP, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND DATES OF MEETINGS (Item 5)

RESOLVED:

Membership and Terms of Reference were agreed

6 CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 6)

The Chair welcomed Dr Daniel Evans, Cranfield University, with Charlotte Glazier, Greening the Public Realm Programme Manger to give a presentation on the Urban Agriculture STFC project Urban Cultivate. The presentation highlighted the work of the benefits of Urban Agriculture and the Rurban Revolution project.

The Chair thanked Dr Daniel Evans and Charlotte Glazier for the presentation and welcomed members to raise issues and ask questions.

On vacant spaces being identified, a map of underutilised areas will be explored to see if they will beuseful for growing food or for another environmental reason. Lots of unconventional spaces are being looked at and hopefully will become community assets.

On diversity in the community, the project is reaching out continuously to the community to ensure that there is a lot of diverse representation. Working with the local Octopus Community Network has helped get the community involved in a big way.

On the suitability of the size of the spaces, when mapping sites, size of food cultivation is important, but even the smallest of spaces can be used for waste collection or soil formation.

On the sustainability of the spaces, it is a bit early to say how many future sites will be non-profit, but in the phase of the project, the stakeholders will be very useful in deciding how resilient and sustainable sites can be, and if they will be able to work within the food chain.

On using rooftops, while it will be possible to expand the acreage of food growing across rooftops, and while not all crops will be suitable, the evidence suggests that rooftops can be useful for food growing and will have a place in the future of the project.

The Chair invited Dr Daniel Evans to come back to a future committee meeting to give a project progress update.

7 ORDER OF BUSINESS (Item 7)

The order of business would be as stated the agenda.

8 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 8)

None.

9 QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE REPORT: PLACE AND ENVIRONMENT (Item B1)

Cllr Rowena Champion, Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport was present, together with Keith Townsend, Corporate Director Environment and Regeneration for discussion of this item and made a presentation to the Committee, copy interleaved. The following points were highlighted:

Audited quarterly recycling rate data from Waste Data Flow (the national waste and recycling performance database) usually comes in around three months after the end of the quarter with Q1-Q3 now showing at 29.3%. This compares to the overall 20/21 outturn of 31.3% and against the higher 21/22 target of 32%. However, due to some technical issues with tonnage data recording, the year-to-date rate does not contain all available data and this will be adjusted in due course in Q4. We are currently projecting an end-of-year rate of a little over 30%.

The Chair thanked Cllr Champion for the presentation and welcomed members to raise issues and ask questions.

On what can be done to reach further recycling rates, while Islington has one of the lowest rates of producing waste in the country, and the waste hierarchy is very clear throughout all of the council's work, it is important that the council continues to work towards 40 per cent by 2030. Service work changes include increase food waste recycling on estates, more capturing of recycling, but a large investment is still needed to ensure recycling is being done at a larger rate.

On food waste recycling, focusing on private housing blocks to take up food recycling in their communal waste points. There are a few barriers to this, including the space to house this within accommodation, but working with resident's groups and managing agents to ensure that food waste provision exists. A pilot project on food waste on shops is being rolled out, in a new area for the council.

On understanding recycling data, the data published is the real recycling data and excludes anything lost due to contamination. The level of contamination is relatively low in household waste, but this is higher in estate waste, due to the nature of the waste. Work is being done to continue to drive down contamination levels.

On cleaning of food waste bins, the perception of food waste has a perception of being unclean and the more attractive you can make this for residents the better, currently it is once a year, but officers will come back to the committee on any areas where this is having an impact. Action.

On bike parking, there is a commitment to installing 100 bike hangers, with a similar commitment with estate bike parking too. There is demand for more cycling hangers and the council is looking to use more digital technology to ensure residents can book spaces.

On parking for different vehicles, there are a range of parking charges across the borough, with the idea to move away from polluting vehicles. However, cycle parking seems higher than car parking in places, but it costs a lot for the council to install cycle parking structures, but economically car parking less so. The council will continue to review parking charges.

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QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE REPORT: INCLUSIVE ECONOMY AND JOBS **(Item B2)**

Cllr Santiago Bell-Bradford, Executive Member for Inclusive Economy and Jobs, was present, together with Caroline Wilson, Director of Inclusive Economy and Jobs for discussion of this item and made a presentation to the Committee, copy interleaved. The following points were highlighted:

The Council's corporate plan 2018-22 set out an objective to 'Deliver an Inclusive Economy', supporting people into work and helping them with the cost of living. As part of delivering this objective, the Council set a target of supporting 4,000 residents into employment over a 4-year period. The target for this year was 1,000 residents placed in paid employment. We have surpassed the target by supporting 2,120 residents this year and by the end of March 2022 had successfully placed 5,778 residents into employment. This reflects the embodiment of the Islington Working Partnership who this year have collectively contributed 82% of the overall outcomes (1,738 people), with the remaining 18% (382 people) being supported into paid employment by council services.

We continue to report strong outcomes for Black Asian and Minority Ethnic residents with 1,061 people supported into paid employment by the end of Quarter 4 exceeding the year-end target of 600. The Council has recently completed work with London Metropolitan University to explore the nature of unemployment for specific Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities in the borough. The research comprised both quantitative and qualitative analysis through a series of focus groups. The final report provided recommendations on how to better connect and support residents from marginalised communities, along with a specific targeted approach. The research highlighted that those most in need of support are residents who describe themselves as African (particularly

North and East African), Black Caribbean, Turkish, Bangladeshi, and Other Black. In 2022-23 in addition to a yearly target for Black Asian and Minority Ethnic residents we will have specific targets for specific sub groups.

We will continue to focus on apprenticeships in 2022-23 as we want to support local employers to address their skills shortages through investing in their workforce. We are doing this through the offer of a levy transfer to smaller employers who pay the living wage. We have found that employers are keen for employees to be able to hit the ground running so we are developing a strong communications campaign to re-engage more employers with the benefits of apprenticeships. We are also continuing to raise this with schools as we have not seen high demand for information about apprenticeships through our 100 hours of the World of Work programme despite an event in February 2022 for parents being well received with 30 attending.

The Chair thanked Cllr Bell- Bradford for the presentation and welcomed members to raise issues and ask questions.

On apprenticeships, there is a target of 1,000 apprenticeships, which goes along side the new strategy that will support the overall corporate plan, post-election. These apprenticeships will be internal and external, alongside the council's anchor institutions, and local employers. The strategy will be brought back to the committee.

On the importance of case studies, the council held a celebration event for apprenticeships, where many successful apprentices spoke of the help it gave them, it was important to hear these, as it shows how important these schemes can be. Officers will provide members with case studies. Action.

On those not wanting to work, post pandemic there has been a rise in this area, and a lot of it is from those with mental health issues. It is something that the council will interrogate further, and officers will make sure those who are able to, get full allowance of benefits for support.

On comparisons between different councils, while many London boroughs do not offer coordinated support and Islington is in the cutting edge in this area. Officers will try and provide more comparisons on future reports.

On London Living Wage Employers, Arsenal FC have shown recently shown an interest in becoming an accredited London Living Wage Employer, this has been an aim of the council as one of the more notable employers in the borough. Generally, the council will be working further with employers across the borough on the living wage. There is a target of 450 businesses getting their accreditation, which will have an impact on residents who are employed by them.

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WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23 AND SCRUTINY TOPIC (Item B3)

The Chair presented the draft Work Programme 2022/23 to the committee and highlighted the suggestions that members had sent to the Chair in the run up to the committee meeting.

Members agreed the following:

- The main scrutiny topic is The Council's Net Zero Carbon 2030 Strategy with a focus on the Circular Economy and Jobs.
- One off Scrutiny reports will cover the following:
 - Menstrual Waste

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- Last Mile Delivery
- Urban Agriculture
- An Informal Working Group on Affordable and Sustainable Energy
- Quartey Reports to come to committee on the progress of the Net Zero Carbon Strategy 2030
- Presentations from North London Waste Authority and Better Leisure

Subject to the above amendments, the draft work programme was approved. It was noted that the work programme would continue to be updated throughout the year.

The meeting ended at 20:55

CHAIR