

London Borough of Islington

Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee - 21 July 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 21 July 2022 at 7.30 pm.

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

Other **Councillors** Jackson
present:

Councillor Tricia Clarke in the Chair

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

Apologies were received from Zammit and Khondoker

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

None.

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

None.

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

Corrections to be made to the attendance of the last meeting.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2022 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

16 **CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 5)**

The Chair was pleased that the agenda was packed with council work that aimed to tackle the climate emergency as the UK was in a heatwave.

The chair reported that Islington Council was ranked top in London for Healthy Streets, with the highest proportion of school streets and the lowest level of car ownership and the third highest for LTNs.

The Chair reported that on July 7th she attended the launch of Islington and Camden Councils Parks for Health, a joint plan to harness the potential of the boroughs' parks and green spaces as focal points for improving wellbeing and reducing health inequalities.

The Chair reported that they attended a workshop with Cllr Hayes run by the Urban Cultivate Research project at Resources for London where Urban Cultivate team shared and discussed more details about the specific sites that they wish to investigate as part of their study, with one site being looked at in Tufnell Park.

The chair highlighted an email from a resident concerned that an event held recently in the borough used plastic cups and plates, didn't recycle the plastic and food waste. Event organisers need to understand their role in creating waste.

17 **Order of Business (Item 6)**

The order of business would be B4, B1, B3, B2 and B5.

18 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 7)**

None.

19 **SCRUTINY REVIEW- OVERVIEW OF THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY ACTION PLAN (Item B1)**

Sarah Hitchcock, Head of Net Zero Carbon Programme 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:

Circular Economy Model

1. Rethink and reduce e.g. Library of things
2. Redesign e.g. New homes design guide
3. Repair & remanufacture e.g. Repair cafes
4. Reuse e.g. Dress for success
5. Recycle e.g. Bulky item recycling
6. Recover e.g. Energy from waste (last resort)

A Circular Economy Tackles Consumption Based Emissions

- Islington generates an estimated **two million tonnes of consumption based co2 emissions per year** (also known as scope 3 emissions). (London councils, 2021)
- For context, **scope 1** (direct and local, e.g. Burning gas in boilers to heat homes and businesses or petrol/diesel vehicle emissions), and **scope 2 emissions** (indirect, e.g. From using electricity generated in another location) account for **680,000 tonnes of co2e per year** (2005 – 2018 figures; BEIS, 2020).
- A circular economy can help to tackle consumption related (scope 3) emissions, and scope 1 and 2 emissions

Our circular economy action plan was developed to explore possibilities for CE in Islington, and sets out:

- How we will apply circular economy principles to our policies and strategies
- Actions we are already taking
- Additional actions we are committing to

The plan focuses on eight areas broadly aligned with vision 2030 priorities, and is:

- The start of the journey
- About embedding principles
- A foundation for action

Next Steps

Ongoing review

- New initiatives – horizon scanning
- Learn lessons

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- Internal and external awareness raising

Deliver, monitor and measure

- Bi-monthly working group and work stream delivery teams to ensure ce embedded and actions delivered
- Performance indicators to be developed

Update

- Publish new, updated circular economy action plan by April 2024

The chair thanked Sarah Hitchcock for the presentation and welcomed members to raise issues and ask questions.

On Islington's Carbon benchmark compared to over London Boroughs, due to Islington being a smaller borough in size and population, the council is not an outlier in carbon admissions. The model formula that is used to calculate the amount of carbon will also include the emissions from outside the borough, the supply chain of emissions, to produce the goods and materials that are purchased.

On the Library of things, the waste team are looking at growing this project, with more items and more hubs across the borough. The waste team will consider cost and affordability as the scheme continues. Officers will provide further details.

On estate recycling, the council has found the estate recycling is more difficult to carry out effectively, than other resident recycling, due to the storage issues and different distances. There are a few projects that the council will be working on to improve this, including improving estate recycling bins and storage. Private estates will also be targeted for improvement.

On Carbon targets, the different workstreams will be investigated to see what the carbon impacts are, and each workstream will have its own set of KPIs and targets based on the work that needs to be done. Research is being done at Leeds University for the council, this will be helpful for a greater understanding of the borough's carbon footprint.

On furniture reuse, officers will get back to members on what is happening with Brightsparks.

On waste in commercial skip containers, officers will get back to members on any action or project that is happening with the waste team.

On scope three emissions, while scope three admissions are reducing, it is very hard to prove and not many local authorities or organisations are currently able to.

On engaging young people and schools in Net Zero work, currently workstream one included retrofitting school buildings, but the council is currently looking at doing more engagement work with schools, the messaging needs to be more consistent to allow for schools to pick up on it collectively,

On heat networks, there is a feasibility study being done to investigate areas on the borough that could use this energy, but this is still in the early stages.

On the award scheme, this was a limited scheme for late 2021/early 2022, with nearly 50 businesses applying. The council is reviewing the scheme and seeing what can be learnt from it.

Members agreed to invite ReLondon to a future committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the presentation

20 QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REPORTS 2021/22 - LIBRARIES AND HERITAGE (Item B2)

The chair asked members to send any questions to report authors of the Quarter 4 Performance report.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the report

21 NET ZERO CARBON PROGRAMME REVIEW 2021-22 (Item B3)

Sarah Hitchcock, Head of Net Zero Carbon Programme 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:

- Progress towards delivering commitments in the net zero carbon 2030 strategy is reported quarterly through council's scrutiny function
- Ensures transparent progress reporting, easily accessible to the community and accountability to residents
- Summary annual report highlighting progress to date published in march 22
- Net zero carbon strategy annual progress report 21/22 details progress against each commitment and our plans for next steps

Workstream (WS) 1: Buildings, Housing, Commercial and Infrastructure

- Partnered with ucl to complete an analysis of retrofitting and energy change options for existing council housing stock
- Four pilot estates selected for large-scale trial of low carbon heating solutions (delivery subject to feasibility)
- Developed decarbonising new homes and tree mitigation strategies
- Secured funding to carry out feasibility studies for 20 schools
- Secured funding to implement decarbonisation measures at new river college school. The work carried out will act as a pilot for future work carried out at other schools in the borough
- Launched a business audit scheme for small businesses for energy efficiency improvements

WS2: Transport

- Established 35 school streets covering almost half of schools; the highest percentage in London
- The first two main road school streets environmental improvements were delivered in April 2022 at ambler primary school on Blackstock Road and Canonbury road primary
- Delivered eight low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNS) trials (plus a similar scheme at Mayton street).

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- Cycleways completed at: green lanes, balls pond road, York Way, Highbury Fields to Finsbury Park (cycleway 38 north), and Holloway Road to Pentonville Road (cycleway 38 south)
- 336 electric vehicle charging points delivered by end of March 2022
- 14% of the council fleet was electric at December 2021
- Introduced emissions-based parking charges for petrol and petrol hybrid vehicles (an addition to the existing surcharge of £5 per hour for all diesel vehicles paying for short stay parking, established in 2018.)
- Installed electric charging bollards across all regent's canal moorings in Islington

WS3: Sustainable and Affordable Energy

- Greenscies2 partnership, supported by innovate UK and including islington council, concluded at end of May 2022, delivering substantial set of engineering and architectural design work, financial modelling, and community engagement resources for handover to Islington council
- 100% of electricity procured by the council is now from certifiable renewable sources
- Energy advice (shine) service made 1,021 home visits saving people £92,911 = ~378 tonnes co2
- Delivered energy efficiency measures to 53 properties (including council and privately owned and rented homes). These measures included wall, loft & underfloor insulation & secondary glazing

WS4: Green Economy

- Allocated £200,000 to a training and development programme for local aspiring or start up circular economy businesses
- Launched the Islington working portal providing local jobs for local people, useful travel plans and promotes a lower carbon footprint as part of our commitment to a greener local economy
- Together greener website now has a section for business advice (awareness, action, grants)
- Started a low plastic zone project at Cally road

WS5: natural environment, waste reduction and recycling

- Community-led boroughwide green proposals programme 'Islington greener together' launched in march 2022 and received 94 applications
- Planted 700 trees in the 2021/2022 planting season
- Secured £1.5 million over 3 years to invest in greening improvements in the public realm
- Launched library of things at the Finsbury Park bright sparks store with 81 items borrowed between 1 November and 31 December 2021, saving a tonne of waste.
- £100,000 per annum of funding secured to improve communal recycling sites at estates
- Completed new commercial waste strategy

WS6: planning

- New local plan is being progressed through adoption process
- Secured funding to appoint an officer to develop supplementary planning document (SPD) on delivering net zero carbon improvements, to be appointed once the plan is finalised.

WS7: Engaging, Empowering And Partnering

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- Delivered our 'let's talk about a greener future' festival in October 2021, which involved around 100 council and community-led events over the two weeks prior to cop26
- Environment and regeneration scrutiny committee held their public event on the climate emergency in March 2022 and anchor institutions network met for the first time in February 2022 to agree priorities for action and next steps
- :aunched a new greener together microsite and pledge tool for residents, businesses and schools

WS8: Finance And Investment

- London's first community municipal investment - Islington greener futures 2027 - launched October 2021, achieved our £1 million target in January 2022. We have spent £495,000 on the projects we committed to fund with Islington greener futures 2027.
- By 31 March 2022, the Islington council's pension fund had decarbonised by 42.5%
- Islington's carbon offset fund is still the biggest offset fund in London generating income of c. £1.5m p/a to help contribute to achieving NZC

Adapting our approach

- Full review of all action plans is underway to ensure they are up-to-date and still accurate/relevant to future delivery.
- Going forward, reporting in 2022-23 will be based on the updated action plans.
- Establishing and monitoring key performance indicators for each workstream alongside quarterly updates on progress
- Establishing carbon monitoring – aligning with work on this at London councils level – aspiration is to quantify carbon impact of activities
- Establishing costs – developing our understanding of the cost of the net zero carbon programme
- By addressing the above over the coming months, we aim to support future planning and prioritisation of the programme going forward

The chair thanked Sarah Hitchcock for the presentation and welcomed members to raise issues and ask questions.

On trees on estates, the council has agreed to increase its budget and support for more trees in the borough and officers are always looking into how this affects estates, including the temperature. There is a lot of resident interest in greening the estates and the council needs to do more to bring together a lot of schemes that are currently ongoing, to allow for more resident engagement.

On reducing car travel in Islington, work needs to be done to change Islington to allow for those who are driving to be moved to alternatives, like public transport, cycling or walking. The way the council used to look at cars within the borough was via air pollution, but the Net Zero work has really changed how the council looks at this.

On communicating Net Zero work to residents, the council is looking at various tools for how we can communicate this, but a lot of national data is usually a few years out of date, compared to what the council collects. The work the council is doing with UCL will help make more sense of this and this will be carried over to the other workstreams as well.

On SHINE and the energy price cap, the council has a large role within Shine and the biggest priority is helping residents that need it most. While a lot more households have been supported than planned, the current cost of living crisis really has made many London wide organisations change what the goals are and how to give out the best support.

On the Low Plastic Project, the council has used this project as a business engagement tool, to build awareness on the impact that plastics have in businesses and how they can cut their waste.

On car parking in new developments, the council is working to add supplementary planning guidance to add further Net Zero goals in how developments deliver on planning regulations.

On if the council is still buying non-electric vehicles, the council will tend to hire vehicles that are not electric on a short-term basis, rather than buy them. Officers will get back to members on this.

On dealing with the impact of increased local deliveries, the council is working with franchises and businesses locally for them to take on responsibilities for delivery drivers. However, the council has limited powers in this area but is looking at how additional infrastructure can be used to ensure the deliveries are as green as possible.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the presentation.

22 **SCRUTINY INITIATION DOCUMENT: CIRCULAR ECONOMY 2022/23 (Item B4)**

The Chair introduced the Scrutiny Initiation Document and asked members for comments:

- The title of the scrutiny review to include Jobs in the title.
- Adding green jobs to the green economy evidence session
- Including the 5 Rs within the scope of the review
- Ensure that the resident voice and stakeholders are present throughout the evidence sessions
- Interested on holding public meeting opportunities with residents for feedback
- Keeping a singular item on menstrual waste as a one-off report

RESOLVED:

With the above comments included, members agreed the Scrutiny Initiation Document on Circular Economy and Jobs

23 **WORKPLAN 2022/23 (Item B5)**

RESOLVED:

Members noted the workplan

The meeting ended at 21:33

CHAIR