

**Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee - 27 March 2023**

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 27 March 2023 at 7.30 pm.

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

**Councillor Tricia Clarke in the Chair**

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

None.

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

None.

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

None.

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

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2023 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them, with an ammendemnet to the work plan that Better(GLL) will attend a future meeting.

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2022 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

**92      CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 5)**

The Chair reminded everyone about the special meeting that had taken place on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023, this would be a virtual meeting to allow as many residents and external stakeholders to attend at possible. It had consisted of various breakout discussion groups on how The Council had met their net zero 2030 target.

The Chair further commented on the issue of menstrual waste and told the committee that Marks and Spencer had good value washable period pants and encouraged those that menstruated to look into these as a sustainable option for when they menstruate.

The Chair told the council of the City nature challenge that would take place on 31<sup>st</sup> march via zoom and she would have been happy to forward this onto members that had been interested.

Finally the Chair informed the committee that Councillor Convery had circulated a report on the decarbonisation of the pension fund.

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

The order of business changed so that item B8 was presented after Item B12

**94 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 7)**

Public questions were taken after each Agenda item.

**95 Q3 PERFORMANCE REPORT (2022/23) - ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT (Item 9)**

The Executive Member for Environment and Transport presented this item.

The figures in E1, particularly in Q1 and Q2, explained why there had been a reduction in recycling and waste. Q1 showed a reduction due to contaminated timber being burned rather than recycled, this was an error by the contractor and had been rectified for future which would have led to more accurate figures. In Q2 the reduction came from the extreme hot weather leading to a reduction in organic waste. These therefore had been specific issues that led to reductions rather than overall trends.

The Executive Member further told the committee £2 million had been invested to focus on recycling on estates.

The Executive Member then answered questions from the committee, the following key points were raised:

- She explained recycling was a percentage of waste collected so therefore this figure is down because recycling had decreased not overall waste.
- Questions over the £2 million investment arose and the Executive Member clarified this was new investment money for estates recycling that would be used for better facilities and infrastructural improvements. As well as 2 officers being recruited to help with specific work surrounding this such as 'doorstep' engagement and more individual conversations with residents to increased education o recycling.
- Keith Townsend explained that there had been a large drop in the waitlist for cycle hangars due to the team finally being able to work through the historic backlog and contacting those on the waitlist, many of whom had withdrawn for various personal reasons.
- The committee wanted clarity on what was happening with SHIN, the Executive Member explained the work had shifted to more debt advice and that the Council would continue to invest for the next couple of years.
- Many concerns were raised on the issue of fly tipping. Officers in response explained that the Council aims to remove 90% in 24 hours, this figure is currently at 93%, which is the best figure in London for least fly tips. This also meant that most of the time they had been removed before people got a chance to report and therefore this could have explained the reduction in reports. However, councillors pointed out that fly tipping was still a big issue on certain estates and hotspots for this still existed. Officers further explained that there would be a review of street cleansing operations to maximise resources and technology. There had needed to be a balance to ensure there is sustained action to manage hotspot areas.
- Officers also clarified on road sweeping that side roads should be cleaned 5 times a week and if workers had any difficulties doing this it had been reported to a supervisor.

- The Council would work harder to make residents more aware and put out more information on how to recycle household white goods.
- Officers also explained that they had to do a Planning Performance Indicator Review, so they had to come back with further information on residual waste at a later date.

**ACTION:**

Officers to provide information on the planning performance indicator review and residual waste.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted

**96 Q3 PERFORMANCE REPORT (2022/23) - LIBRARIES AND HERITAGE (Item 10)**

The Executive Member for Equalities, Culture and Inclusion presented the report

Key Points were raised in the discussion:

- The executive member explained that the restructure of the council had led to a delay to progress being made for libraries but now this was well underway.
- Councillors suggested stocking literature and other library amenities in different languages to appeal to those that may not have English as a first language. The executive member explained they had already begun making progress on this but hope to expand further with the increase of Ukrainian refugees in the borough.
- Councillors suggested increasing comms on what was available in libraries, such as audiobooks, magazines, e-books, to begin to appeal to a wider audience.
- The Executive member said they would explore behaviour changes as to why there had been a decrease in usage in libraries even since the end of the pandemic.
- Post-covid libraries needed to be reinvented to engage more people, possibly by hosting exhibitions. Suggestions were made by councillors to explore the possibility of making libraries a point of socialising for the community, with the possibility of opening a café or hosting community events in the facilities.
- The Executive member explained these were all very good suggestions but there had been issues of funding and space but she was happy for the committee to present these ideas for her to take further.

**97 Q3 PERFORMANCE REPORT (2022/23) NET ZERO CARBON PROGRAMME (Item 11)**

Sarah Hitchcock presented the report. She explained most of the programme was on track and hitting targets with a few delays in certain areas such as transport where a new project manager had been recruited. There had also been delays in buildings due to funding, but this was picking up pace now. They had also secured funding in certain areas such as more funding for tree canopy covers and funding bids had been put in for decarbonisation plans on corporate buildings.

Key points in the discussion were raised:

- Sarah explained the team had been working hard to address concerns in Bevin Court on new heat sources.
- Over queries on key fob operated recycling bins for flats above shops, it was explained this is an added cost and the most effective method for increasing recycling was to place waste bins next to recycling bins to make sorting waste easier.
- There had been ongoing engagement plans in which external people had been brought in to deliver events and provide skills on how to increase engagement in this

area. As well as looking at other councils that had been successful with this such as Hackney Council.

- In response to concerns over Bright Sparks it was explained that they were working hard to try to rejuvenate this so that it can benefit Islington residents. Moreover, if the NLWA can get this up and running it will allow residents to have the same access as they did before.
- Additional funding had been allocated to schools to cope with increased Energy Caps as well as all schools being contacted and asked for feedback on a Schools Recycling Service.
- Conversations around recycling centres had taken place but it was difficult to facilitate these due to nature and size of certain goods recycled, for example white household goods.
- The Council were aiming to make pavements and people friendly streets as inclusive as possible to ensure there were dropped curbs and space on pavements for wheelchair users, but this had been difficult with restricted space and street trees.
- Councillors asked for more information on green jobs from the Executive Member for Inclusive Economy and Jobs.

**ACTIONS:**

Executive Member for Inclusive Economy and Jobs to circulate information on green jobs.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report was noted.

**98 SCRUTINY REVIEW - DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS (Item 8)**

Councillors had the following suggestions for the draft recommendations:

- Add another point (v) to point 1: NLWA to report back to the Council and the Scrutiny Committee on the scope for mixed waste sorting to maximise the recovery of recyclable materials, alongside promoting initiatives in the community to change behaviour to increase the reduction, reuse, and recycling of waste.
- Point 3 reword as follows: Work with London Councils to lobby government for greater regulatory powers on managing the reduction of residual waste, particularly on supermarkets and retail bodies to enable the reduction, reuse, and recycling of waste both in their own supply-chains and for their customers.
- Recommendations to improve the publicity on use of libraries.
- To work with the NLWA on apprenticeship and other opportunities.

**RESOLVED:**

That the above recommendations be added and/or amended to the recommendations report.

**99 WORKPLAN 2022/23 (Item 12)**

**RESOLVED:**

That the workplan and responses to previous actions arising were noted.

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

**CHAIR**