

London Borough of Islington

**Environment, Climate and Transport Scrutiny Committee - 3 September 2024**

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment, Climate and Transport Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 3 September 2024 at 7.30 pm.

**Present:**           **Councillors:**       Clarke (Chair), Bossman-Quarshie, Hayes, Jeapes, Heather and Russell

**Also Present:**       **Councillors:**       Champion

**Councillor Tricia Clarke in the Chair**

**12**           **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item A1)**  
Apologies received from Councillor Graham and Weekes.

**13**           **DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item A2)**  
Councillor Heather was a Substitute member.

**14**           **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item A3)**  
No Declarations of Interest were made.

**15**           **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Item A4)**  
**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the previous meeting on 29 July 2024 were agreed.

**16**           **CHAIR'S REPORT (Item A5)**  
The Chair explained to the committee that the North London Waste Authority were supposed to attend the meeting to discuss the Joint Waste Strategy. However, due to delays in their timeline, they will now attend in November.

They further explained there had been a deputation received on the Council's policy approach to motorcycles, focusing on them as an active travel mode, which was part of the agenda.

In the previous meeting, it was agreed to invite Thames Water to attend the Committee and discuss waterfalls in London. The Chair noted that they are still working on that, as well as on the Nature Neighbourhoods project.

The Chair reminded everyone about upcoming events, including a community conversation on regulation and implementation at the Hilldrop Community Centre on September 18th at 5:30pm, a talk on food systems at the Whittington Park Community Centre on October 24th at 5:30pm, and an event on local access to nature at the Hildrop Community Centre on November 23rd from 12:00pm. Information about these events can be found on the Food Partnership website.

**17**      **SCRUTINY INITIATION DOCUMENT (Item C1)**

Councillors made suggestions for witness evidence sessions the committee could receive throughout the review.

**RESOLVED**

That the Scrutiny Initiation Document was agreed.

**18**      **UPDATE FROM THE ISLINGTON CITIZENS PANEL: ENGAGEMENT AND GREENER SPACES (Item C2)**

The team from the Strategy and Engagement division discussed their role in delivering projects that enhance community involvement in Council initiatives. They collaborated closely with the Climate Action, Greenspace, and Transport teams to develop the Climate Citizens' Panel.

The team outlined the background of the Panel, which emerged from the Council's 2019 declaration of a climate and ecological emergency and the subsequent net-zero strategy. The Panel aimed to ensure resident involvement in shaping the Council's climate response, focusing specifically on climate resilience and how the borough could adapt to climate change. The team chose to emphasise building community resilience and greening the borough as key areas for resident feedback.

The Panel was designed to engage a diverse group of 34 Islington residents, recruited through a democratic lottery process by the Sortition Foundation. The recruitment focused on ensuring representation from a broad range of demographics.

A variety of measures were implemented to remove barriers to participation, such as providing London living wage payments, childcare support, and transportation support, while ensuring the sessions were inclusive and accessible.

The Panel consisted of eight sessions from April to July. The initial sessions focused on learning and providing residents with the necessary background on climate science, adaptation, and resilience. The group then moved into a "visioning" phase, where they identified guiding principles for the Council's climate strategy. Finally, they developed specific proposals focused on community resilience and greening the borough, working closely with Councillors and Council officers.

They highlighted that the second phase would continue in November, with a follow-up session, followed by a final celebratory event in January. The panellists' feedback would be incorporated into key Council initiatives, including the Climate Action Plan and the Green Infrastructure Strategy. The Panel's input would also shape the Council's approach to extreme weather events and communication with residents.

They noted that the Panel's contributions would be published in a report next year, and ongoing engagement with panellists would ensure their recommendations were implemented effectively. The team expressed hope to continue working with the group beyond the initial scope of the Climate Panel.

The discussion reflected on the successful completion of the sessions. The participants were highly engaged and thoughtful about the topics being discussed. Moving forward, it was noted that although no more sessions were planned, the work would continue with two scheduled follow-up sessions in November and later in the winter of the following year. Additionally, there was an intention to maintain a close working relationship with the group of residents involved in the sessions, ensuring their continued feedback on climate policies being developed by the council.

It was acknowledged that the council had provided comprehensive support to participants, such as covering living wages, transportation, childcare, and food expenses, ensuring inclusive and accessible participation. A report detailing the outcomes of the sessions was expected to be published in the winter, with a plan to share preliminary insights with the panellists before the final report. There was also a discussion about the range of ideas proposed by residents, some of which were practical, while others were strategic, with varying timelines for implementation. It was emphasised that accountability and engagement with the residents were crucial to the success of the projects.

The discussion also touched on other environmental concerns beyond climate adaptation, including street cleaning, enforcement, and accessibility issues. While these topics were not the primary focus of the sessions, it was suggested that future engagement projects could address these areas. The importance of listening to residents' lived experiences of the local environment was highlighted, particularly in relation to making Islington streets more resilient and safer for residents.

The discussion also addressed the importance of learning from other councils and sharing best practices. Collaborative efforts with other boroughs, universities, and external evaluators were already in place to improve future processes. Finally, it was recognised that the climate panel's work was not just about greening the borough but about creating resilient communities. This included understanding how residents could adapt to extreme weather events, and ensuring that vulnerable individuals, such as the elderly, would be safe during heatwaves or other crises.

The Chair expressed gratitude for the dedication of the officers and the residents who contributed to the process and looked forward to continuing the important work of building a resilient community.

**19**      **REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:  
ACTIVE TRAVEL REVIEW 2023-24 (Item C3)**

A Typo in the report was noted.

A deputation was received on two-wheel electric vehicles. Rachel, a representative of the Motorcycle Action Group and an Islington resident, addressed the committee to advocate for a more evidence-based and proportionate policy approach toward motorcycles. She pointed out that Islington currently lacks a specific policy for motorcycles, and they are generally categorised with other traffic, which she found irrational and counterproductive. She noted that the current residents' parking permit charges for motorcycles are half that of cars but argued that motorcycles are a different mode of transport with different impacts. Specifically, she saw no justification for charging electric motorcycles under the current policy.

Rachel mentioned that when discussing the matter with the council, they justified the charges by referring to emissions. However, she argued that electric motorcycles have similar emissions impacts to bicycles, which are supported by the council, even though motorcycles are not a priority in the council's transport strategy. She emphasised that motorcycles, particularly electric ones, should be considered a sustainable and active form of travel, especially for individuals with disabilities or impairments who cannot ride unassisted bicycles.

Rachel also highlighted that riding a motorcycle burns similar calories to walking or cycling, further justifying its classification as active travel. She questioned why the council had not embraced this sustainable transport option, noting that motorcycles could help increase the number of sustainable trips without significant effort from the council. She dismissed the

idea that the issue was financial, revealing that the total revenue from electric motorcycle residents' permits last year was just £170.

Rachel concluded by urging the council to adopt a rational, evidence-based policy that recognises the benefits of motorcycles, especially electric ones, in achieving sustainable transport goals. She noted that other councils, such as Oxford and the City of London, have already updated their policies to reflect these advantages, and suggested that Islington could do the same to demonstrate its progressive and forward-thinking approach.

The deputation was discussed by the committee. During the discussion, several key points were raised. One key issue was the quieter nature of electric motorbikes compared to traditional motorbikes. There was a request for clarification on what changes were being sought, and it was explained that the aim was to have motorcycles, particularly electric ones, recognised differently from cars in the transport strategy. The distinction between motorcycles and cars was emphasised, arguing that motorcycles should not be treated as smaller cars due to their different environmental and spatial impacts.

Councillors acknowledged the need for a rational approach to motorcycles in the transport strategy but expressed concerns about the negative impacts of motorised delivery drivers, particularly in residential areas.

Further discussion focused on the low financial revenue generated from electric motorbike permits and the small number of electric motorcycle owners, highlighting that electric motorbikes are still emerging technologies. A councillor mentioned that while electric motorcycles produce fewer emissions than cars, they are still more powerful and potentially harmful than bicycles, fitting into the transport hierarchy just below bicycles but above cars.

The council officers said they would take away the points raised for consideration.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Report was agreed.

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm

**CHAIR**