

Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee - 7 September 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 7 September 2015 at 7.30 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** James Court (Chair), Mouna Hamitouche, Gary Heather, Clare Jeapes, Caroline Russell and Jenny Kay (Substitute) (In place of Diarmaid Ward)

Councillor James Court in the Chair

100 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item A1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Marian Spall and Diarmaid Ward.

101 DECLARATIONS OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item A2)

Councillor Kay substituted for Councillor Diarmaid Ward.

102 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item A3)

None.

103 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item A4)

RESOLVED:

That the signing of the minutes be deferred to the next meeting.

104 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item A5)

There were no public questions.

105 CHAIR'S REPORT (Item A6)

There was no chair's report.

106 COMMUNAL HEATING SCRUTINY REVIEW - DRAFT REPORT (Item B1)

Garrett McEntee, Technical Services Manager, Capital Improvement Team explained that:

- individual heat metering had been considered and it had been decided that the council would not proceed with it at the current time.
- block level heat metering would be introduced in line with new legislation.
- a user friendly booklet had been produced for residents to help them familiarise themselves with their heating systems and how to get the best out of them.
- all of the new systems had thermostat controls.
- The Capital Improvement Programme had been operating for five years. There were 52 communal heating systems and upgrades were made to three or four per year.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be agreed as the final report subject to the following addition:
 - That a further recommendation be added to the report requesting that the report back to the committee should contain an update on the positioning of thermostats and sensors and a review of the changes made during the year plus details of the number of residents with and without controls.
- 2) That the report back to the committee be scheduled for September 2016.

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SMART CITIES SCRUTINY REVIEW - SCRUTINY INITIATION DOCUMENT (SID) AND WITNESS EVIDENCE (Item B2)

The Committee received witness evidence from Lean Doody and Amanda Bailey, from Arup Consultants - an independent firm of designers, planners, engineers, consultants and technical specialists.

In the presentation and discussion the following points were made:

- Local authorities were interested in how digital technology could help them achieve their objectives.
- Technology allowed data to be collected and to connect systems together.
- Efficiencies could be made across many areas including transport, energy, waste, water and environmental efficiencies.
- Digital clusters were becoming more common and attracted investment.
- Technology impacted upon people and the impacts could be positive or negative.
- Arup had conducted a market opportunity study for the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS).
- In Westminster, smart parking had been introduced. This involved having sensors in the parking bays. Economies of scale increased when the scale of the schemes did.
- Data was produced from many organisations – e.g. councils, TfL, mobile phone companies and there were apps that assembled data from many data sources to give the user a range of relevant information e.g. how to travel from one place to another in a variety of ways.
- Some people were reluctant to spend money on Smart Cities work but cities already spent a substantial amount of money on technology e.g. transport infrastructure, energy, logistics and waste management all used technology. Often though the technology was not joined up and was duplicated. Arup had produced a smart London plan and found if organisations such as the GLA, TfL, business start-ups, universities and local authorities brought budgets together, more could be achieved and relationships could be strengthened. Councils could enable this.
- At a time when council budgets were under significant pressure, it was important to think innovatively, see what was being done currently, address any gaps, consider the work of other boroughs and the GLA and look at barriers and outcomes. Working with others made smart working more achievable and effective.
- A councillor suggested that this could mean that when a road had been dug up for roadworks, it could be economical to put parking sensors in at the same time.
- It was important to ensure that the vulnerable were not excluded.
- The Clean Islington app was an example of digital technology being used to improve services.
- The way councils procured services was important. Pre-procurement mechanisms meant councils could procure research to work with a vendor. Doing collaborative work first could result in a better brief and this way of working encouraged innovation.
- The telecommunications network and in particular a good broadband connection was important for Smart Cities.
- Many boroughs were sharing resources and back office functions.
- Having public health within local authorities created an opportunity to come to smart solutions. Arup was working with the NHS on a new towns initiative. Work would be undertaken to see the role technology could play in health outcomes for an area. It could help plan future services, identify vulnerable people and pilot projects would be taking place. Bristol was using control centre monitors to provide telecare. Technology did not replace healthcare professionals but would be an enabler.
- Some councils appointed a chief officer to work across the council looking at data and infrastructure and joining it up.

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- Examples of projects councils had been involved with across the world included:
 - Following the earthquake in Christchurch, infrastructure was reconfigured. Children were given portable sensors to monitor air and water quality. There was an open data platform and apps could be built from this. The system encouraged ownership of the area.
 - In Nigeria, there was a My Home is My Phone scheme. Many people did not have street addresses but could access services through their phones.
 - In Helsinki, there was an objective to have a car free city and so smart initiatives had been introduced. There was a bus which responded like a taxi if called and it could deviate from its route.

RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Initiation Document (SID) be agreed.

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CCTV SCRUTINY REVIEW - SCRUTINY INITIATION DOCUMENT (SID) AND WITNESS EVIDENCE (Item B3)

Garrett McEntee, Technical Services Manager, Capital Improvement Team presented the Scrutiny Initiation Document (SID).

In the discussion the following points were made:

- Alternative measures to CCTV should be considered.
- Residents should be invited to the meetings where this item was to be discussed. An officer advised that this could be done through electronic noticeboards.
- Any statistics pre and post CCTV could be considered.
- The role of the concierge should be considered.
- A visit to the CCTV at 222 Upper Street would be arranged.
- The report on a previous CCTV scrutiny would be circulated to members.

RESOLVED:

1) That the SID be agreed subject to the following amendments:

- That alternative measures to CCTV be considered.
- That any statistics pre and post CCTV be considered.
- That the role of the concierge be considered.

2) That electronic noticeboards be used to invite residents to the meetings where this item was to be discussed.

3) That a visit to the CCTV at 222 Upper Street be arranged.

4) That the report on a previous CCTV scrutiny be circulated to members.

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WORK PROGRAMME (Item B4)

A member suggested that the committee could look at the council's parking consultation.

RESOLVED:

1) That the work programme be noted.

2) That the chair would look into the plans of the reference group looking at the council's parking consultation and decide whether the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee should consider the matter too.

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm

CHAIR