

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON MONDAY, 8TH APRIL, 2019, 6.30 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Eldridge Culverwell, Adam Jogee (Chair), Julia Ogiehor, Matt White and Barbara Blake.

Also Present: Ian Sygrave

63. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred Members present to agenda Item 1 as shown on the agenda in respect of filming at this meeting, and Members noted the information contained therein'.

64. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Rice and Cllr Emery.

65. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None

66. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Culverwell declared that he was a member of the Friends of Finsbury Park.

67. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None

68. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting on 11th March were agreed as a correct record.

69. BOROUGH PLAN PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK - PRIORITY DASHBOARDS

The Panel received a copy of the Borough Plan Performance Framework Priority Dashboards for noting. Officers gave an overview of the new performance framework which was being implemented as part of the Borough Plan. The Panel noted that the first progress update against the new outcomes was due in June.

RESOLVED

Noted.

70. PARKS IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

The Panel received a presentation around the future of parks and the Parks Transformation Plan. The presentation was given by Simon Farrow, Commissioning Manager Public Realm. The following was noted in discussion of the presentation:

- a. Officers commented that the development of a New Parks and Green Space Strategy was an ongoing process that would likely take around 12 months, culminating in a Cabinet report. This provided ample opportunity for the panel to get involved in the development of the service offer and officers welcomed the scrutiny panel's input.
- b. The Chair reminded the Panel that at its previous meeting it agreed that it would adopt a three pronged approach in support of this project; site visits, evidence gathering and engagement with stakeholder groups. The Panel agreed that they were happy with, and continued to endorse this approach.
- c. In response to a question around timescales for scrutiny involvement in this work, officers advised that they would welcome involvement as-and-when the Panel were able. Officers commented that consultation documents on Finsbury Park were due to go out soon, so the Panel's involvement would be timely. Officers also set out that they had put the proposals to Keep Britain Tidy, who were supportive of the collaborative approach taken.
- d. Officers set out that there had been no reduction in the budget for Parks in the MTFS agreed in by Cabinet in February. This project gave scrutiny the chance to be part of the conversation of what the future of our parks would look like. One route to achieving this was through an engagement programme that would enable officers of the Council to work with KBT, Friends' Groups, Members and local communities to help drive the new approach and helping everyone have a positive conversation around what priorities for the service could be, given the fact that budgets were limited.
- e. The Chair agreed that he would discuss dates with the clerk and would agree to set up some evidence gathering session with officers and the Cabinet Member. **(Action: Chair).**
- f. In response to a question around some of the photographic examples used in the presentation and whether they were examples of private-sector partnership arrangements, officers advised that the examples used were just to demonstrate a range of different horticultural spaces in response to Members' requests for more images at the previous Panel meeting. This was confirmed by Cllr Blake.
- g. Members present raised concerns about proposals to hold the NFL tailgate event in Bruce Castle Park and questioned why if no decision had been formally taken on the event it was included in a public document. In response, the Cabinet Member advised that no decision to hold this event had been taken and that the NFL had not yet submitted dates for the event, as it was dependent upon the fixture list being finalised.
- h. In response to a question around consultation and engagement, the Cabinet Member advised that she had held discussions with Ward Members and was

- due to meet with stakeholder groups in a couple of weeks' time. The Cabinet Member outlined that some of the key considerations were; ensuring that the event was safe and was also inclusive to all, the level of impact on the park as well as consideration of the income from the hiring of the park, given that the park was in need of improvements.
- i. The Committee sought clarification that money raised through events was ring-fenced for that particular park and suggested that this had some implication for smaller parks who could hold events. In response officers acknowledged that all events income would be ring-fenced to that particular park and also acknowledged the implications for smaller parks and green spaces. It was suggested that this was one reason for thinking through the need for a new approach to parks.
 - j. Some Members who were in attendance welcomed the Cabinet Member's reassurance that no decision had been taken on the NFL tailgate. Members outlined that Bruce Castle was a Grade One Listed Building and suggested that restoration of the park following such an event would be very difficult, especially if the event required barriers and fencing to be erected. Members sought assurances around whether organisations such as Historic England had been consulted. In response, officers advised that conversations had been held with the relevant authorities to ascertain what other authorities had done in similar circumstances. Officers reiterated that no decision had been taken on this issue but cautioned that it would be remiss of officers not to undertake some of the exploratory and feasibility work in advance of any decision being taken, as would be done with any significant decision. All formal steps required would be undertaken when the formal park hire and license applications had been submitted.
 - k. Officers and the Cabinet Member reassured the Panel that they were very much aware of the historic significance and value of Bruce Castle. Officers advised that any the proposed event would also require a License as well as planning permission before it could be held.
 - l. Members suggested that any additional income for Bruce Castle Park needed to be considered strategically, given the need for investment to Bruce Castle itself and the likely unfavourability with which the Heritage Lottery Fund would view any erection of metal railings or damage to the park.
 - m. In response to a query around the proposed route for Cycle Superhighway 2, the Panel suggested that this could be an agenda item for one of its meetings next year.

71. WASTE AND STREET CLEANSING UPDATE: FLY TIPPING, GREEN WASTE CHARGES AND BULKY WASTE COLLECTION

The Panel received a report and presentation which outlined the Flytipping Strategy that was presented to Cabinet on 2nd April and provided an update on waste collection efficiency measures. The presentation was introduced by Ian Kershaw, Client and Commissioning Manager for Community Safety, Waste and Enforcement. The following was noted in discussion of the presentation:

- a. In response to a question around the level of income generated through green waste charges, officers advised that the income targets for year one was £375k and £750k in years two onwards.

- b. In response to a question about how to build civic pride, officers acknowledged that this was a key consideration and that it was important that residents felt a sense of community and pride in their local area. Officers commented that in order to bring about behaviour change, it was important to understand the reasons why people fly-tipped in the first place. Officers highlighted the example of the Great British Spring Clean event that took place the previous weekend.
- c. The Panel sought assurance about the cost of dealing with fly-tipping and how this could be better publicised to residents. In response, officers highlighted that there was no financial incentive to Veolia for higher levels of fly-tipping and dumped rubbish. Instead, Veolia had clear timescales to respond within and financial penalties for failing to meet those timescales. Officers set out that the cost of collecting fly-tipping and other dumped rubbish was around £3m but cautioned that it was spread across a number of waste service budgets and that if there was suddenly no fly-tipping, this would not automatically correspond to a £3m saving.
- d. The Panel commented that one of the main problems was with private landlords and HMO's and suggested that they would like to see tougher enforcement action taken, with landlords having their licence revoked for egregious breaches. In response, officers advised that they had taken significant enforcement action with landlords over the years and that lessons had been learned over the time that the HMO licensing scheme had been in operation. Officers agreed to provide details on the HMO licensing scheme and how this would help tackle rogue landlords. **(Action: Ian Kershaw)**.
- e. The Panel sought assurances about how officers were ensuring that landlords were communicating waste collection arrangements to their tenants. Officers advised that they had written to every landlord in the borough to advertise the bulky waste collection service. In addition, the Client and Commissioning Manager for Community Safety, Waste and Enforcement advised that he was due to attend the next Landlord's Forum to set out their responsibilities around waste and how to comply.
- f. In response to the enforcement taskforce set up by LB Newham, as set out in the presentation, the panel sought further information about how much the authority saved as a result of its £1m investment. Officers agreed to come back to Members. **(Action: Ian Kershaw)**.
- g. In addition to the three strands of the Flytipping Strategy set out in the presentation, the panel suggested that there should be a further strand around enablement, to provide easy and simple solutions for residents to do the right thing. The Panel queried whether current arrangements with Veolia could be seen as a disincentive to finding creative solutions due to the cost involved. In response, officers advised that a significant part of the strategy was to improve public perception, as well as tackling actual fly-tipping, and that they would be failing in public perception if they allowed flytipping to go unchallenged.
- h. Members elaborated that they were querying whether having an outsourced waste contract and the financial make-up thereof, actually provided an incentive to residents to dump rubbish as they knew that it would be collected anyway and that in many circumstances this could be the easiest way of disposing of bulky waste. Officers advised that there had been a lot of money taken out of the Veolia contract over the last four or five years and that despite this the officers maintained a very positive relationship with Veolia. In

partnership with Veolia, the Council was able to ensure a flexible and responsive approach to waste management.

- i. The Panel acknowledged that there were no easy and obvious solutions to flytipping and noted that in previous years when the Council had a free bulky waste collection service, around a third of appointments were missed as there was no financial incentive to keep them.
- j. Members suggested that a resident steering group should be set up around waste and flytipping. The Chair welcomed this suggestion and agreed to consider how to best to take this forward. **(Action: Chair).**
- k. Members enquired whether the Council could use capital funding to set up a waste enforcement task force and suggested that perhaps officers from Newham could be invited to come and talk to the Panel.

RESOLVED

- l. That the Panel noted the new strategy, associated performance measures and progress on waste transformation savings and efficiencies.

72. PARKING ISSUES - DISABLED BAYS AND BLUE BADGES

The Panel received a verbal update from officers about work that was being undertaken to examine the processes involved with disabled parking bays and blue badge applications. The Cabinet Member suggested that there was a definite role for scrutiny to play in examining these processes and welcomed comments from the panel. The following was noted during the discussion of this agenda item:

- a. The Chair proposed undertaking a format of 'scrutiny in a day' over two sessions to look at this issue. Panel Members agreed this approach.
- b. The Cabinet Member advised that there were some aspects of blue badge policy that could be changed and that there were some elements that were set by central government that consequently could not be changed. One area that was suggested for discussion was around whether the Council should offer designated disabled bays.
- c. Members commented on the issue of theft of blue badges from motor vehicles and suggested that this was fairly prevalent in some parts of the Borough, particularly around the Ladders. Members set out that the process of getting a replacement blue badge was a very long and bureaucratic process. Similar concerns were expressed about getting a companion blue badge, as well as the cost involved. The Cabinet Member acknowledged these concerns and advised that the Council was limited in what it could do about the process as it was administered by the Department for Transport.
- d. Members suggested that one area to examine could be around whether the Council could administer temporary replacement blue badges.
- e. Members sought assurances that the Council monitored the validity of blue badge use and suggested that there was anecdotal evidence of potential misuse during Spurs match days. In response, officers advised that they received regular updates on blue badge misuse which were taken very seriously by officers and each case was followed up. Officers agreed to pick up the issue around match days and pass that on to the relevant officers. **(Action: David Murray).**

- f. Officers advised that they were looking into upgrading the IT system used as part of the Parking Transformation Strategy, but that this was not due to take place until April 2020.
- g. The Panel noted that Customer Services needed to be involved as part of the scrutiny process as they were responsible for the frontline administration of this service.
- h. Officers also noted that one of the issues was around the way that current systems do not help people feel that the Council is trying to support them through sometimes complex processes. Councillors emphasised the importance of blue badges and characterised them as being life-changing to some residents and officers welcomed the opportunity to improve services.
- i. The Chair agreed that he would speak to officers and the clerk to determine how best to take this scrutiny project forward. The Chair emphasised that he was looking to get this project up and running ASAP and noted the need for everyone to participate in a spirit of improvement. **(Action: Chair).**

73. CABINET MEMBER Q&A SESSION WITH CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

The Panel undertook a question and answer session with the Cabinet Member for Environment. The following arose in response to this item:

- a. The Panel requested that stakeholders had an opportunity to contribute to the Cycling and Walking Action Plan before this went to Cabinet. The Cabinet Member agreed that there would be scope for stakeholder engagement and that officers were waiting for TfL to confirm the LIP funding available. **(Action: Cllr Hearn).**
- b. The Panel sought further clarification about the NFL Tailgate event that was proposed for Bruce Castle Park and enquired, in light of the Council's Major Events Policy, whether an application in-principle had been received. In response, officers confirmed that the requisite 9-month notice period had been given and that this was designated as an application in-principle. Officers advised that they would double check and come back to Members with an update on exactly what had been received to date, from the NFL. **(Action: David Murray).**
- c. The Panel asked about whether the proposed event would be refused on the grounds that it was detrimental to the local amenity. The Panel also asked about whether there was any risk to the Council of a legal challenge if the event went ahead. Officers agreed to come back to Members on these two points. **(Action: David Murray).**
- d. The Panel questioned the Cabinet Member about whether she was satisfied with levels of cleanliness in the Borough and what reduction in fly-tipping she thought was feasible. In response, the Cabinet Member acknowledged that officers were working hard to improve cleanliness standards and that the aim set out in the Flytipping Strategy was to half the number of fly-tips.
- e. In response to a question around her biggest concern, the Cabinet Member set out that she was most concerned with the level of resident dissatisfaction with some services within her portfolio.
- f. In response to a question around her biggest achievement this year, the Cabinet Member advised that it was the Climate Change declaration.

- g. Members enquired whether a conversation had been had with NFL to offer alternative sites that did not contain Grade One listed buildings. Officers responded that their role was to manage the process for a site that had been suggested, requests to hire that site and that other sites would be considered when it was appropriate to do so.
- h. Members raised concerns around match day parking. In particular it was suggested that it was not clear how many permits were required for a match day and the time of day that they were required. In response, the Cabinet Member advised that she would pick this as part of an existing Member Enquiry that had been submitted by Cllr Brabazon and would share this response to the Panel Members. **(Action: David Murray and Cllr Hearn to circulate).**

74. WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED

The Panel noted the Work Programme and the changes contained therein.

75. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

N/A

76. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

There were no more meetings scheduled for the 2018/19 municipal year.

The Chair thanked the Panel members and officers present for their contributions this year.

CHAIR: Councillor Adam Jogee

Signed by Chair

Date