

MINUTES OF MEETING ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON TUESDAY, 17TH DECEMBER, 2019, 19:00.

PRESENT:

Councillors: Adam Jogee (Chair), Peray Ahmet, Barbara Blake, Eldridge Culverwell, Julie Davies & Scott Emery.

Also present: Ian Sygrave.

ALSO ATTENDING:

15. 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’.

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ogiehor. Apologies for lateness were received from Cllr Ahmet.

17. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In relation to agenda item 9, Cllr Culverwell advised that he was the Deputy Chair of the Friends of Finsbury Park.

19. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

The Panel received a deputation from a group of local residents in relation to what action was being taken by the Council following the declaration of a climate emergency in March 2019. The deputation party was made up of Norman Beddington, Helen Mayer and Chris Barker. The deputation party raised concerns about a perceived lack of progress by Haringey Council on appropriate measures to meet the climate emergency. The deputation party highlighted a number of progressive initiatives which were underway; such as the Haringey Pension Fund’s divestment

from fossil fuels, a new Local Planning Framework supporting the zero carbon borough aspiration and the planting of 740 new street trees.

The deputation party advised that they were aware that there was also an intention to present a stage 2 zero carbon action plan to Cabinet in February, but advised they were concerned about a lack of publicity for all of these schemes. The deputation party requested that procedures and processes be developed to strengthen the Haringey Climate Forum and that this forum be used as a key link to the voluntary and community sector. The Panel were asked to consider whether the Council was working across the organisation to develop a response and suggested Haringey People could be better utilised to communicate with residents on what was being done in response to the climate emergency. The deputation party also raised concerns about the use of glyphosate in parks and green spaces and questioned whether other suitable alternatives had been trialled instead, given the potential harmful effects of the substance.

The following was noted in response to the deputation:

- a. The Chair acknowledged the need for the Panel to consider how the Council communicated with its residents and how the Council could improve this.
- b. In response to a question around the level of engagement to date with the Cabinet Member, the deputation party advised that they were thankful for the support and engagement of the Cabinet Member and advised that Cllr Hearn had come along to meetings of the Haringey Climate Action Group. Mr Beddington advised that they would like to see the group develop greater role and influence, becoming a key community engagement tool. The deputees advised that the response to the climate emergency needed to be community based and community led.
- c. In response to comments around the Council's stated goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2050, the Panel was advised that it was important that action was taken now and that year on year progress was made in response to this issue.
- d. In response to a question around what other groups had been engaged with, the deputation party advised that there were a number of different groups such as Extinction Rebellion, Friends of the Earth and the Muswell Hill Sustainability Group. In response to a follow-up question, officers acknowledged that they had also been closely involved with Friends of Parks groups.
- e. The Panel queried what the alternatives to glyphosate were and sought their opinion about viable alternatives. In response, the deputation party advised that they would like to see a number of alternatives trailed and tested and suggested that some other authorities, such as LB Hammersmith and Fulham had already moved to alternatives.
- f. A Panel Member acknowledged the difficulties with cultivating community engagement and involvement, and suggested that she had been actively trying to elicit the support of Friends of Earth around tree planting. The Panel Member advised that greater funding sources were required around tackling the climate emergency and suggested that this work needed to be a priority for the Council.

The Cabinet Member thanked the delegation for their contribution and assured them that she was similarly concerned about the climate emergency and that she was working closely with officers to deliver schemes. The Cabinet Member advised that the Zero Carbon Plan was due to go to the climate change and sustainability

subgroup of CAB in January and then Cabinet in February. The Cabinet Member commented that this was a wide ranging and ambitious plan but that she also wanted to deliver something that was realistic. The Cabinet Member advised that she agreed with the call for greater publicity and engagement activity and advised that she was currently developing communication plans with officers across her portfolio. In response to a question, the Cabinet Member agreed to relaunching the Haringey Climate Forum in some guise and acknowledged its key role with community groups. The Cabinet Member set out that she was happy to meet with the deputation party in the new year to discuss this further.

The Chair thanked the delegation for their contribution. Cllr Blake also thanked the deputation party and extended an invitation for them to visit the work that was being done in Markfield Park around tree planting.

20. MINUTES

RESOLVED

The minutes of the meeting on 5th November were agreed as a correct record.

21. HERBICIDE USAGE ON COUNCIL LAND IN HARINGEY

The Panel received a short written briefing on the usage of herbicides on Council owned land in Haringey. The report was introduced by Simon Farrow, Highways, Parking, Parks & Open Spaces Manager as set out in the agenda pack at page 11. The following was noted in response to this item.

Clerks note – Cllr Ahmet arrived at the meeting at this point.

- a. In response to concerns, officers advised that herbicides including glyphosate were applied no more than four times a year and the Council was trying to adopt a balanced approach between herbicides and other forms of weed control. In response to a question, officers acknowledged that HfH paid extra for four applications a year, as appose to the three specified in the Veolia contract.
- b. The Panel requested a site visit to Tower Gardens in the spring, to see the pilot herbicide-free project taking place with the Friends of Tower Gardens. Action: **(Clerk/Simon Farrow)**.
- c. In response to concerns about the side effects, officers advised that the glyphosate came in pre-mixed packs to ensure that the proper formula and a specific quantity was used. The chemical itself went inert on contact with plants and weeds and did not harm cats or dogs. Officers assured the Panel that they did all they could to prevent contamination, in line with best practice.
- d. In response to further concerns, officers set out that most gardeners had stronger chemicals in their sheds and that all products used where regulated and went through a licensing process.
- e. The Panel enquired whether officers had looked at increasing the frequency of applications to prevent the weeds from seeding. In response, officers acknowledged the need to schedule applications to prevent them from seeding in the following year and advised that twice a year on shrub beds was most

effective. Officers advised that they had not costed for additional spraying frequency or capacity.

RESOLVED

That the briefing was noted.

22. SINGLE USE PLASTICS

The Panel received a report which provided an update on work being done to reduce the amount of plastic used as well as the development of a policy on single use plastics. The report was introduced by Emma Williamson, AD for Planning as set out in the agenda pack at page 13. The following was noted in discussion of the report:

- a. The Panel sought further information around specific and timed actions taking place, including information around proposals to remove plastic cups from Council offices – How and what would they be replaced with? What about the Civic Centre? **(Action: Cllr Hearn/Joe Baker).**
- b. The Panel supported the idea of the Council getting its own house in order and ensuring that it led by example.
- c. The Panel expressed surprise that single use plastics were still being used in Council offices and sought further information on the timescales for the phasing out as well as any data on how much single use plastics were used, in say River Park House. In response the Cabinet Member agreed to provide further information to the Panel on the amount of single use plastic. **(Action: Cllr Hearn/Joe Baker).**
- d. The Panel sought assurances about a perceived lack of progress on implementing a single use plastics policy, following its agreement at Cabinet in March. The Cabinet Member acknowledged these concerns and commented that she shared these frustrations.
- e. The Chair requested a further update on single use plastics at the next meeting. **(Action: Clerk/Joe Baker).**

RESOLVED

That the Panel noted the contents of the update in relation to the development of a single use plastics policy.

23. SCRUTINY OF THE 2020/21 DRAFT BUDGET / 5 YEAR MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (2020/21 - 2024/25)

The Committee received a cover report, along with a copy of the five-year draft General Fund Budget (2020-21)/Medium Term Financial Strategy (2020/21-2024/25) as considered by Cabinet on 10th December 2019. A copy of the 2020 budget saving proposals and new capital schemes, for Place were also attached to the cover report for the Panel's consideration. The report and appendices were introduced by Frances Palopoli, Head of Corporate Financial Strategy & Monitoring and Stephen McDonnell Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods as set out in the agenda pack at pages 15 – 101. The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Sustainability as well as the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods were also present. The following was noted in discussion of the draft budget/MTFS and savings proposals:

- a. Officers advised that the budget had been developed with the aim of protecting frontline services and that the majority of the savings proposals put forward related to income generation.
- b. The Panel sought clarification from officers on how confident they were in achieving the savings proposed. In response, the Panel was advised that most of the savings had been assigned a RAG status of amber. The Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods advised that the service had achieved 95% of its savings from previous years.
- c. The Panel suggested that the parks budget had been cut too far, to quickly in the past as evidenced by the recent issues around Green Flags and sought assurances around how confident officers were that they could continue to protect parks as a public utility, given the prevalence of concerts and some of the disruption and damage caused. In response, officers advised that they had been able to ring-fence additional funding for parks due to the increased revenue generated from major events.
- d. The Panel raised concerns about the proposed reduction of staff in the Veolia call centre and the impact on the perception of residents using the service. The Panel also set the need to consider how to engage with residents about any changes and the change in response times.
- e. The Panel suggested that in relation to increasing permit charges for the highest emitting vehicles, this would have an undue impact on poorer residents. Furthermore, any further incentivisation of electric vehicles would only impact those who could afford them. In relation to a question on the spread of electric vehicles across the Borough, officers advised that they did not have this information. In the response the concerns raised about permit charges, officers highlighted that although less affluent, the east of the Borough also had the greatest need from significantly poorer air quality.
- f. The Panel broadly welcomed the savings proposals in relation to selective licensing and CCTV enforcement of weight restrictions but questioned the feasibility of the income levels suggested, particularly in light of a perceived failure to adequately enforce against HGV traffic on Wightman Road, despite the presence of two CCTV cameras.
- g. The Panel questioned why the selective licensing scheme wasn't being brought in sooner and whether there was scope to reduce the level of coverage so that it fell below the threshold needed for Secretary of State approval. In response officers advised that they had identified a 60% coverage need, particularly in the east of the Borough and so it wasn't anticipated that approval of the Secretary of State would be a barrier, as there was a clear need and officers were confident of receiving approval. In response to concerns about the timescales for the introduction of selective licensing, officers advised that they would like to bring it in at the earliest opportunity but there was an acknowledgement that there was a huge amount of work involved. The key factor in the proposed timescales, rather than Secretary of State approval, was the need for significant consultation work to be undertaken.
- h. In response to concerns around 1400 incidents of HGVs using Wightman Road in 2018/19 despite cameras and restrictions in place to prevent this, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods agreed to look into the issue and to come back to members with some further information. **(Action: Stephen McDonnell).**

- i. The Panel raised concerns around the proposal to lose two members of staff from the Veolia contact centre and questioned whether this was something the Council could afford to do given the income from bulky waste and green waste collections. In response officers advised that the aim was to move people online and that the saving was for 2021/22, so there was a year to implement this channel shift.
- j. In response to a question around the type of buildings in parks from which it was proposed to increase lease income, officers advised that these increases related to some inflationary increases that had been agreed in advance, such as the kiosk at Ducketts Common. There was also examples such as the building at Queens Wood, which had previously had paid no lease fees but the Council was now receiving £6k a year.
- k. In relation to outstanding parking debt recovery, officers estimated that this was probably around £4m as of September. In relation to the debt recovery saving proposal, officers advised that this related to the hiring of three additional staff members with an expectation that they would each recover £120k of debt. The net position was a £210k saving after costs. In response to a further question, officers acknowledged that there was some link between these officers and increased recovery of parking debt. However, the introduction of the new IT platform was the main driver of increasing the parking debt recovery rate. The Panel noted that the current recovery rate was around 58% and the anticipation was that this would increase to around 70%.
- l. In response to concerns raised around the saving proposal around mail volumes and postal costs, officers advised that this was about digitalisation of mail and automated printing and posting of letters.
- m. The Panel raised concerns about the redeployment of Amey staff and set out that this needed to be done in a compassionate and constructive manner.
- n. The Panel emphasised the need for clear and effective engagement with the public in relation to increasing Electric Vehicle charging points, particularly in relation loss of parking spaces. The Panel also set out that there needed to be some consideration given to their location and spread across the Borough. Officers acknowledged these concerns and suggested that local businesses were also key stakeholders as many of the charging points would be outside shop fronts etcetera.

RESOLVED

That the Panel considered the Council's 2020/21 Draft Budget/5-year Medium Term Financial strategy (MTFS) 2020/21-2024/25 proposals relating to its remit and made the following recommendations to Cabinet:

Selective Licensing and CCTV Enforcement of Weight Limits and Emissions

The Panel welcomed savings proposals PL01 and PL03 in relation to Selective Licensing and CCTV enforcement of weight limits and emissions through ANPR/DVLA check. The Panel noted the significant level of savings set out in both schemes (£239K & £642k respectively) and questioned the extent to which these net savings were achievable.

The Panel requested that further evidence of the feasibility of achieving these two net savings targets? The Panel also sought further assurance from Cabinet around the

enforcement activities that would be in place to ensure compliance and, ultimately, ensure that the stated income levels were achieved? As a specific example, the Panel commented that there were two cameras already in place at either end of Wightman Road to enforce against weight limits for vehicular traffic. However, HGVs continued to use this road regularly with over 1400 incidents in 2018 and approximately 2,000 incidents so far in 2019. How would the Council ensure that robust enforcement would be carried out in relation to PL03, if existing enforcement activities on weight limits on Wightman Road were only partially successful?

Electric Vehicle Charging points

The Panel also broadly welcomed proposals to increase the number of Electric Vehicle charging points across the Borough (PL13). In the context of recent concerns relayed to the Panel around consultation and engagement, the Panel set out the importance of clear and effective communication with residents and local businesses. The Panel requested assurances of how the additional roll out of EV charging points would be communicated across the borough, including the impact on specific locations i.e. loss of individual parking spaces for residents and business. The Panel also requested that Cabinet provide further information on the roll-out and equitable distribution of charging points across the borough. The Panel requested to know how would this would be done, what locations were proposed and the timescales involved. Furthermore, how would all of this be communicated to residents and local businesses?

Veolia Contract Centre Efficiencies

The Panel raised concerns with saving proposal PL06 in relation to the loss of two staff members from the Veolia Contact Centre. The Panel were clear that waste, recycling and cleansing services were a key area of concern for residents and questioned the necessity and impact of making this saving. The Panel noted the mitigation that management sought to channel shift customers online but were concerned about the equalities impact of this as well as a lower level of responsiveness overall. The Panel requested that Cabinet reconsider this saving proposal in light of the potential impact on the level of service to our residents and the relatively small net saving achieved as a result.

FM Transformation

In light of the proposal for FM Transformation (PL08) and the commercial exit from the incumbent FM contract and the TUPE transfer of staff back to the Council, the Panel requested that Cabinet give consideration as to what lessons could be learnt for the future. The Panel suggested that some of the staff affected had been treated poorly by the Council and the Panel would like assurance that the organisation would ensure that adequate training and support for staff was in place for those being transferred. The Panel would also like assurances that staff coming back into the organisation would be recycled into other roles, where that service was subject to staffing reductions and that in general, redeployment of staff was done in an imaginative, compassionate and constructive manner.

24. UPDATE ON CROUCH END LIVEABLE STREETS

The Panel received a verbal update on Crouch End Liveable Neighbourhoods, following the publication of feedback responses to the initial trial period on the 13th December and a meeting with ward councillors on 16th December. The update was provided by Sam Neal, Streets and Spaces Consultant and Peter Watson, Major Schemes Project Manager.

- a. Officers advised the Panel that the results of the trial had been published online and they had also met with the stakeholder forum to go through the results and consider consultation proposals for the next stage.
- b. Throughout the course of the trial 4000 people had been engaged with. The Liveable Neighbourhoods Project Board had requested that officers go back and re-engage with these people on the aims and objectives of the scheme.
- c. Officers advised that there were also going to invite stakeholders back for another meeting in January to agree the content of the public questionnaire. The questionnaire would then be released for public responses over four weeks until early February. The purpose of the questionnaire was to get a better understanding of which direction to take and the public's appetite for change.
- d. Once the responses to the questionnaire had been compiled and analysed, officers would develop further proposals for the next stage of the scheme and submit these to TfL for approval. A formal public consultation process would then begin in the summer.

The following was noted in discussion of this agenda item:

- a. The Panel sought clarification around which wards were represented at the ward councillor meeting. Officers advised that this involved the neighbouring boroughs of Muswell Hill, Stroud Green, Crouch End and Hornsey. In response to a question around communications activity undertaken by the Cabinet Member, Cllr Hearn advised that as well as attending the stakeholder meetings, she had also responded to a large number of emails and had recorded a couple of video updates for the website.
- b. In response to a question about whether the Cabinet Member was happy with the trial, the Panel was advised that one of the main purposes of the trial was to iron out any concerns and understand the type of issues that would arise. In that context the Cabinet Member advised that she was happy with the trial and that officers had learnt a lot as a result, particularly in terms of traffic flow and peak traffic levels. The Cabinet Member advised that there was an overall reduction in traffic of around 9-10% and that if this could be replicated long term that would constitute a marked success. Officers added that one of the other main aims of the trial was around raising the profile of the scheme and that this had demonstrably been achieved. Officers set out that contact details for 4000 local residents would provide an invaluable basis for further consultation and engagement work.
- c. In response to a question around whether phase 2 was going ahead, the Cabinet Member advised that it was her intention to do so but that the final decision would be taken by the project board, following the outcome of the consultation process. This would help identify possible schemes and locations for further rollout as part of phase 2.
- d. In response to a request for a ward councillor from Muswell Hill to join the Board, the Cabinet Member advised that she was still considering how best to ensure effective representation and whether, for instance, Stroud Green would

- also need to be represented. The Cabinet Member agreed to come back to the Panel on this when she had given it further consideration. **(Action: Cllr Hearn).**
- e. The Panel noted the successful implementation of a similar scheme in Waltham Forest and Cllr Culverwell urged that the Council should persevere with the scheme.
 - f. In response to a query, officers acknowledged that they had factored in the upcoming mayoral elections into the funding window and the overall timescales for the scheme.

RESOLVED

The Panel noted the verbal update in relation to Liveable Neighbourhoods.

25. CABINET MEMBER Q&A - CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Panel undertook a question and answer session with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Sustainability on her portfolio area. The following arose from the discussion of this item:

- a. In response to a question around some of the key actions undertaken recently in response to the climate emergency, the Cabinet Member advised that her key focus had been around mapping out the zero carbon strategy which was due to be considered at the CAB environment sub-Committee in February.
- b. The Panel sought reassurance about what was being done in relation to maintaining sustainable funding for parks, particularly in terms of safety and maintenance, following the issues around Green Flags. In response, the Cabinet Member advised that officers were looking into how to ensure sustainable funding in parks in the future and also advised that events were helping to provide additional funding. The Cabinet Member advised that she was hopeful of maintaining revenue levels from major events from a fewer number of concerts in Finsbury Parks.
- c. In response to a question, the Cabinet Member acknowledged that work on developing a plastic free policy had not progressed as far as she had hoped but highlighted that there was work being undertaken at a community level, particularly involving the NLWA. Officers added that the focus had been around the priority change action plan but that a graduate trainee had been brought in to work on the plastic free policy. Officers acknowledged that an update would be brought to the next meeting.
- d. In response to a request for timescales and deadlines for the plastic free policy, the AD Planning agreed to speak to colleagues and then email round details of the key dates for its implementation. **(Action: Emma Williamson).**

26. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

RESOLVED

- I. That the Panel noted its current work programme, attached at Appendix A of the report.
- II. That the Panel agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to endorse the updated work plan at its next meeting.

27. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

28. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

5th March 2020

CHAIR: Councillor Adam Jogee

Signed by Chair

Date