

Decisions of the Environment and Climate Change Committee

21 November 2022

Members Present:-

Councillor Alan Schneiderman (Chair)

Councillor Geof Cooke (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Joshua Conway
Councillor
Rishikesh Chakraborty
Councillor Giulia Innocenti
Councillor Paul Lemon
Councillor Simon Radford

Councillor Rohit Grover
Councillor David Longstaff
Councillor Dean Cohen
Councillor Claire Farrier (Substitute for
Councillor Emma Whysall)

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Emma Whysall

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. He noted that a lot had been achieved, with community skips being reintroduced to the Borough the previous week, and £500k had been invested to double the amount of residential street cleaning being carried out. The Sustainability Action Plan was in place and would be discussed later in the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Cllr Dean Cohen back to the Committee and thanked Cllr Jajeh, who had stepped down, for all his work on the committee.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

None.

3. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None.

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)

The Chair introduced the item.

The chair noted that Mr Roger Tichborne was not in attendance for the first public question so he would forward a response following the meeting.

The Chair invited Ms Ruth Raman to ask a supplementary question to her question on air quality in Barnet. Ms Raman asked what future plans are in place for Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs), traffic calming measures, 20mph limit areas and safe spaces for cycling. The Chair responded that the administration is committed to active travel and wants to make this easier for residents; 'school streets' are already in place and the A1000 cycle lane is currently being consulted on. We are planning to update the council's Long-Term Transport Strategy, which would also be part of a revised Air Quality Action Plan.

The Chair invited Mr Samuel to the table and responded to his question: the outputs from the workshop are being analysed and will feed into the council's sustainability strategy. The hospital Trust would need to consider the idea of solar panels on hospital car parks.

The Chair invited Mr Samuel to ask a supplementary question. Mr Samuel asked whether solar panels for hospitals could be considered as part of the Sustainability Strategy. The Chair agreed that this could be considered. Ms Popat, Assistant Director, Sustainability, noted that the council has some plans which are in early development, and that she would discuss the Sustainability Strategy with the NHS Trust.

Action: Ms Popat

The Chair provided a response to Mr Joubert's question on Item 6. The Chair stated that 15 residents had responded, all objecting to that particular scheme but there had been many other responses in favour of marking out bays alongside Electric Vehicle Charging (EVC) points.

The Chair responded to the second question: some of the fee paid goes to the company providing the charging point and a proportion of income to the council is reinvested to support the installation of other charging points. The Chair offered to follow up with percentages of who receives the funds.

Action: Chair

Was parking impact assessment done before installation. Chair: no parking has been taken away; one of bays served for people to charge electric vehicles. If you don't reserve the bay people won't be able to charge vehicles as bay may be in use.

6. MEMBERS' ITEMS

1. Cllr Giulia Innocenti – Greening Our Neighbourhood

Cllr Innocenti commented that it is known that exposure to traffic grade air pollution poses a range of health risks and there is good evidence that hedge and tree planting helps to improve air quality. She suggested the 'Green Our Neighbourhood NW2' project could be replicated at other schools and around Barnet. Council help is requested to put a framework in place to support such groups in planning projects.

Ms Bridger, Assistant Director, Greenspaces and Leisure, proposed that officers consider developing a framework which could be used on a borough-wide level to support such requests.

RESOLVED that the Member's item was noted.

2. Cllr Dean Cohen – EV Charging Points

Cllr Cohen spoke to his Member's Item about consultation with residents and Ward Members on proposed changes to the public highway. He noted that Ward Members were not consulted on the EV Charging point in St George's Road which was discussed under the Public Questions item. He added that there has been no policy on EV Charging points for residential roads.

Cllr Cohen reported that no letters had been received by the council in support for the EV Charging point installed in St George's Road, where parking spaces are limited. Cllr Cohen suggested that a framework be brought to Environment and Climate Change Committee on this for approval, with details of parameters around decisions on charging point installation.

The Chair noted that a resident had requested the particular EV charging point and it was in line with the Sustainability Strategy to install them. Cllr Cohen noted that there had been no consultation with Ward Councillors on the charging point in St George's Road.

Mr Ian Edser, Director Highways and Transportation commented that there is a statutory consultation process to follow when changes are made to the road network and that engagement with members could be improved.

Cllr Longstaff reported that there had been no consultation with Ward Members on the installation of the EV Charging bay on Salisbury Road and that Cllr Khallick had written about his concerns over the reduction in parking spaces caused by the installation of EV charging points. He added that it is important to ensure residents agree to the installation.

Cllr Grover commented that the infrastructure surrounding the charging points is usually being installed prior to consultation, leading to a perception that the consultation would not respond to any objections. The Chair noted that this had been the case, but following the installation of the early infrastructure it had been decided to consult with residents about the impact on parking bays.

Cllr Cohen added that he did not disagree with installing EV or designated bays but Ward Members need to be involved and there should be a policy on EV charging bays to ensure that they are in the right place.

The Chair noted that it had been acknowledged that there would be more engagement with Members in relation to future EV charging points. He added that he did not think a separate policy is needed given that an EV Strategy would be developed and part of this would be on designating bays, which would involve balancing various factors including taking into account feedback received.

RESOLVED that the Member's Item was noted.

7. LETTING AGENTS ENFORCEMENT POLICY

The Chair invited Ms Karen Tillett, Trading Standards Team Leader to speak to the Committee.

Ms Tillett reported that the purpose of the policy is to set out a method of determining penalties in relation to enforcement on letting agents, requiring them to be Members of the protection scheme. Within registration to this there is a regime of penalty notices that can be served. The Environment & Climate Change Committee authorised Trading Standards to carry out some enforcement in June 2022 and this has been added to improve services further.

Cllr Longstaff noted that he had been informed by Ms Tillett that an extra member of staff would be recruited to carry this out one day per week for six months. He asked how the enforcement could continue after this time. Ms Tillett responded that external funding had been provided to Boroughs requesting this in relation to the Crime and Protection Scheme. This new process would be incorporated into the work of the team but initially there would be targeted enforcement. As notices are served and an income is received for non-compliance, legally this must be used for enforcement and other expenditure around letting agents.

RESOLVED that the Committee approved and delegates authority to the London Borough of Barnet Trading Standards to impose monetary penalties for offences in relation to breaches of the Tenants Fees Act 2019 and the Client Money Protection Schemes for Property Agents (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) Regulations 2019 and that the Committee agree to the adoption of the Lettings Enforcement Policy.

8. SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY UPDATE

The Chair invited Yogita Popat, Assistant Director for Sustainability to present her report. He noted that colleagues from TPX Impact were also in attendance.

Ms Popat presented the report which provides an update on the Sustainability Strategy and the development of the Climate Action Plan which contains 150 actions. An update on these with progress towards net zero and on the Citizens' Assembly principles and deliverables, would be brought to the January meeting.

Ms Popat noted that details on the communications and engagement plan is provided in the report, as well as specific actions taken since the last E&CC Committee meeting.

Cllr Lemon enquired about the output from the workshop including question setting. Ms Popat reported that she had met with community groups, internal staff and head teachers earlier and feedback from around 50 people is being gathered on wording for questions. It is hoped that the final wording for the questions for the consultation would be set by the end of the month.

Cllr Farrier asked how a diverse selection was recruited and how it could be known that these were representative of the Barnet population. Ms Popat reported that 10-20,000 residents would be invited to take part in the Citizens' Assembly. The 'sortition' method of selection would be used to result in 40 residents who should closely represent the Borough. This method is commonly used in creating assemblies.

Cllr Grover asked what policies are in place to accelerate the uptake of air source heat pumps – he noted that he had put a resident from his Ward in touch with the Chair given his expertise in this area. The Chair noted that the resident had been contacted by himself and Ms Popat and his expertise would be requested. Ms Popat noted that

he would also be invited to work with officers who are working with Middlesex University to understand behaviours and attitudes and any barriers to sustainable choices. There is also a Built Environment and Energy theme in the Action Plan to look at supporting people who want to make such choices.

Cllr Chakraborty asked what can be done to represent the views of those who are less engaged, for example due to language barriers. Ms Kelly McBride, Project Lead of the Citizens' Assembly at TPX Impact reported that postcode data is used to identify households with opportunities to target certain criteria as required. Ms McBride added that part of the development of the invitation letter includes a consideration for language requirements so that materials are accessible.

Cllr Chakraborty enquired about the retrofitting of housing stock as part of the Sustainability Strategy and steps to encourage participation in this, including private housing. Ms Popat responded that work had been undertaken to understand the trajectory and length of time this will require. Social housing is being prioritised but in the private sector work is also going ahead and more information would be available in January for residents and businesses.

Cllr Lemon asked what this includes, ie doors windows, insulation. Ms Popat responded that assessments are made on what is required to make houses carbon neutral including insulation, windows, cavity wall insulation, solar panels, air source heat pumps. A plan is being put in place for the council's housing stock.

Cllr Longstaff commented that the report mentions a public sector delivery scheme for schools to install heat pumps which could encourage others to install them. He asked whether the six sessions of the Citizens' Assembly would have their own theme. Ms Popat responded that each week would be tailored further to previous conversations so a series of recommendations should emerge by the end of the six sessions.

Cllr Longstaff added that it is important that the comments are specific to Barnet and not a repeat of outcomes of other Citizens' Assemblies.

RESOLVED that

- 1. The Committee noted the progress since the last Environment and Climate Change Committee.**
- 2. The Committee note the progress on delivery of a Citizen's Assembly for Climate Change and Biodiversity.**
- 3. The Committee notes the ongoing work to develop and implement initiatives to deliver reductions in carbon emissions and confirms that this work should continue.**

8. HIGHWAYS STREETSCAPE DESIGN MANUAL

Mr Ali Ataie, Interim Strategic Lead Commissioner, Highways, introduced the report.

Mr Ataie reported that the Committee had approved the Asset Management Plan and the Design Guide has been identified as requiring updating. The Design Guide performs a key role in planning the design and specification of the new infrastructure on the highway and includes best practice guidance. The aim is that any new adopted streetscape assets provide long term value for money and are affordable and sustainable. Mr Ataie added that there is a new section on town centres and heritage assets.

Cllr Innocenti asked whether hedging can be included in the design guide as she did not think it is covered in the Tree Policy. Mr Ataie would take this away to ensure that green assets within highways are covered.

Action: Mr Ataie

Cllr Grover noted that there is a commitment to levelling up the Borough but this required a commitment to providing the funding. He asked the Chair whether he is committed to improving the streetscape of the whole Borough given the cost. The Chair stated that he is committed to improvements but the guide outlines that this has to be within a budget.

Cllr Longstaff noted that the pictures on pages 18 and 35 are identical. Mr Ataie would amend this.

Action: Mr Ataie

The Chair thanked Mr Ataie for his work as he was taking up a new post elsewhere.

RESOLVED that the committee unanimously approved the 2022 LBB Streetscape Design Guide (SDG) as part of the Authority's overall Highway Infrastructure Asset Management system.

RESOLVED that the Committee delegates authority to the Director of Highways and Transportation to review and implement the Streetscape Design Guide as required, in consultation with the Chair of the Environment & Climate Change Committee.

9. Review of Tennis Courts

Ms Bridger, Assistant Director, Greenspaces and Leisure reported that a review of Barnet's tennis courts had been carried out over the past two years with input from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA). In addition a public consultation had been undertaken during August and September 2022 and a series of recommendations produced with the aim of delivering a more effective management model that would allow the council to reinvest in the tennis courts.

Cllr Cohen enquired about the outcome of the Edgwarebury Court consultation. Ms Bridger responded that the appendix included comments from the consultation.. Edgwarebury was one of four pilot sites and this had been managed by a third party operator. She would respond after the meeting as the operator had used a different booking system and more data was held with them. Officers have provided recommendations that take into account all respondents.

Action: Ms Bridger

Ms Bridger noted that a resident had raised concerns over protecting block bookings and noted that this would be protected as detailed in the report.

Cllr Longstaff enquired about the costsLTA grant. Ms Bridger responded that there are alternative gated technology options but this was considered the best value. Ms Bridger would provide further information on the cost to the council per gate. Cllr Longstaff asked who pays for the gates to be installed. Ms Bridger responded that it was proposed to use strategic CIL funding and an LTA grant .

Action: Ms Bridger

Cllr Longstaff asked whether professional coaches use the premises and are charged. Ms Bridger responded that there are two licensed coaches currently using the tennis courts who pay for an annual licence are able to book up to three hours' use per day. This is being reviewed to ensure that residents can access the courts.

Cllr Cohen stated that the online booking system made it difficult for OAPs and children to obtain concessionary rates. Ms Bridger noted that concessionary rates are available and that work was ongoing to make the system more user friendly.

Cllr Longstaff asked whether the council has to enter an agreement with the LTA and pay £1200k prior to receiving an answer on the grant application. Ms Bridger noted that it would not but a condition of the grant would be that the council establishes a sinking fund.

Cllr Cohen requested that Recommendations 5 and 6 be voted on separately.

The Chair moved to a vote on Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9:

For – 7
Against – 0
Abstain – 4

RESOLVED that the recommendations were approved.

The Chair moved to a vote on Recommendations 5 and 6:

For - 7
Against – 4
Abstain – 0

RESOLVED that the recommendations were approved.

10. BUSINESS PLANNING REPORT

The Chair invited Mr Asong, Head of Finance, to the table.

Cllr Cohen asked where the £500k for street cleansing had come from. Mr Asong responded that this came from the CIL fund.

Cllr Longstaff asked what the impact would be due to the £37k saving in the use of glyphosate and whether there would be alternatives. The Chair responded that work was underway to look at alternatives.

Cllr Cohen requested more detail regarding the EN5 parking savings and what changes had been made to save £1.5million. Mr Miller responded that the £1.5million constitutes income generation rather than savings.

Cllr Grover asked about stop/reduce pleasant parks initiative. Mr Miller noted that this refers to a reduction in additional resource that had been provided during the pandemic to help to clear litter in parks.

Cllr Longstaff asked where would funding would come from to deal with issues arising in parks? The Chair acknowledged that there are pressures on the budget but a proactive approach would be taken by investing in order to save where possible. Cllr Longstaff responded that he had been trying to get funding for Tudor Park for some time. The Chair responded that in March 2023 Full Council would agree the budget.

Cllr Cohen asked why £30k and £40k figures were included for the use of market experts to deal with event applications. Ms Bridger responded that a third party contractor had been appointed to provide administrative support on processing event applications. There is an up-front cost but it is expected that income from events would ensure that this cost would be returned.

The Chair moved to a vote on the officer's recommendations:

For – 7

Against – 4

CARRIED:

1. That the Environment and Climate Change Committee consider and approve the savings proposals and note the pressures that relate to the committee as set out in MTFS - Appendix and refer these recommendations on to Policy and Resources Committee. 2. That the Committee delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Chair of Environment and Climate Change Committee to make any amendments to the savings detailed in MTFS - Appendix before they are recommended to P&R Committee to form part of the overall MTFS.

11. Q2 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The report was received.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the Quarter 2 (Q2) 2022/23 performance for the contracted services delivered by Regional Enterprise (Capita) that fall under the remit of this committee. presented the Q2 performance report; any questions.

12. ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE FORECAST FINANCIAL OUTTURN MONTH 6 (SEPTEMBER 2022)

Mr Ndenko presented the report.

Cllr Grover enquired about the CPZ review. Mr Miller responded that a review of the CPZ Programme is being undertaken and would be brought to the committee for approval.

RESOLVED that the committee noted: 1. the current forecast financial outturn for 2022-23, for capital and revenue budgets. 2. the projected use of reserves as they relate to this committee's budgets.

13. COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

It was noted that the report on damage to highways as a result of construction would be added to the March 2023 agenda.

LIP Funding review would be discussed at the meeting on 25th January.

Action: Governance Officer

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan was agreed.

14. ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

None.

The meeting finished at 9.20 pm