

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE ACTION SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON THURSDAY, 18TH APRIL, 2024

**MEMBERS:** Councillors: Hivran Dalkaya (Chair), Nia Stevens (Vice Chair), Maria Alexandrou, Pat Gregory, Ahmet Hasan, Stephanos Ioannou, Mohammad Islam, and Destiny Karakus.

**Officers:** Vera Vajda (Climate Action and Sustainability Lead Officer), Perry Scott (Executive Director for Environment & Communities), Rafe Bertram (Asset and Sustainability Manager), and Harry Blake-Herbert (Governance Officer).

**Also Attending:** Cllr George Savva (Cabinet Member for Social Housing), and members of the public.

## 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Darren Paul (Enfield Youth Parliament, Young Mayor), Cllr Rick Jewell, and Cllr Joanne Laban who was substituted by Cllr Stephanos Ioannou.

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received regarding any item on the agenda.

## 3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED the minutes of the previous Environment & Climate Action Scrutiny Panel meeting held on Tuesday 12 March 2024.

## 4. CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Officers introduced and highlighted the key aspects of the report, including but not limited to: the key priorities of the plan, revisions to the 2020 policy, successes of the policy since 2020, engagement on and the timeline for finalising the plan.

In response to Members' queries regarding emissions data, officers advised that they collected data from teams within the council, but there were some areas which they could not measure and for which data was not available to them. The carbon emissions review was said to be based on regional data provided by London Energy and Greenhouse Gas Inventory (LEGGI). They added that the legislation surrounding emissions from new homes was quite

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tight and so their contribution was likely to be less impactful. Officers would check and come back to Members with how emissions in Enfield compared to other nearby boroughs.

In response to Members' questions and comments relating to funding commitments, officers responded that there were various government grants available for areas such as decarbonising/ retrofitting buildings and food recycling, which they would be pursuing, and felt that nationally more needed to be made available.

In response to Members' enquiries regarding successes and future progress, officers replied that they expected improvements to become tougher, but they were constantly looking at ways of making the boroughs' assets more efficient and were investing in green technology with the funding available to them. They highlighted the financial challenges associated with more efficient green technology like air source heat pumps, but felt that there was more that individuals could still do practically and fairly easily, such as turning off lights when leaving a room. It was explained that the council was on track to be carbon neutral within its targeted timeframe, which would see emissions reduced by 72%, and the remainder offset. Officers discussed the ambiguity and alternatives as to what net zero might mean practically.

In response to Members' questions relating to electric vehicle charging points, officers advised that they would be procuring additional EV charging points to meet rising demand in the borough. There was a tender out to market to procure rapid charging points for the Town Centre, and another tender would go out shortly for lamppost charging points. The provision of EV charging points in car parks across the borough was also being looked into. There was said to be a 'Turbo' pilot scheme whereby EV charging cables were run under pavements/curbs where households didn't have driveways, but there were planning permission challenges associated with this.

In response to Members' queries relating to the heat network and heat pumps, officers responded that the Local Area Energy Plan considered all aspects of the mechanisms available and that both had their advantages/ were efficient in their own ways. The future decarbonisation of the heat network and plans to expand it where viable, had been considered by the policy. It was explained that the government approach/ understanding was that in the future 18% of homes in the country would be heated by a heat network, predominately in urban areas with heat sources, such as Lee Valley; and 82% by heat pumps, particularly in rural areas, due to relative carbon efficiencies. The Energy for Waste facility which would be online around 2026/27 would be 'game changing' in decarbonising the heat networks transition away from gas. Officers would confirm and come back to members as to whether potential future reductions in the price of heat pumps had been considered as part of the plan.

In response to Members' questions and comments regarding potholes, officers replied that the highways team were best placed to discuss their investment plans. There was £4m budgeted for potholes, but as was the case

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nationally, multiple times this was likely needed. The council monitored potholes in the borough and programmed when to repair them and reconstruct roads; but technology had not advanced largely on this issue with regards to materials etc. Cllr Savva and officers highlighted that the increased weight of electric vehicles was not the only factor behind the increase in potholes, with heavier vehicles like lorries, and extreme variances in weather conditions also mentioned.

The Panel AGREED to note the report which provided an overview of the revised Enfield Climate Action Plan 2024-2030.

### **5. PILOTS RETROFITTING COUNCIL HOUSING FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

Rafe Bertram, Asset and Sustainability Manager, introduced and highlighted the key aspects of the report, including but not limited to: the background, work that had taken place, and partners the council had worked with; as well as the phases, successes, costs, challenges to, and future aims of the scheme.

Cllr Savva added his thanks to officers and the Deputy Leader of the Council, Cllr Ergin Erbil, for all the good work they had done as part of this project which made Enfield a better and greener place for residents.

In response to Members' enquiries relating to skill shortages, officers advised that they felt finances represented a larger barrier than skills, and in the last few years retrofitting had become better understood and more training had been provided. The Meridian Water skills academy was said to be equipped to run green skills construction/ retrofitting courses, and they were working with potential contractors to provide such training there and employ local people on future projects in the borough.

In response to Members' questions regarding possible future locations for the scheme, officers responded that they hoped to revisit Haselbury, particularly those residents who missed out on the first round of retrofits. They were also looking around EN1 and EN3, as these properties were of the same typology and pebble dashed, which would allow them to learn at a lower cost; these homes were also low performing in terms of efficiency and away from the heat network. Ideally if the funding was made available officers would additionally like to do the project between Joyce and Snells estate and Meridian Water, as this could incorporate the heat network.

In response to Members' queries regarding internal insulation, officers replied that it was possible, and there were advantages and disadvantages to this, but external insulation was considered a cheaper, more robust technical solution and was less disruptive in that it allowed residents to continue living in their homes whilst work was being completed. In the case of heritage and conservation areas, internal insulation would be required.

In response to Members' questions and comments relating to materials and maintenance, officers advised that the insulation was plastic and around

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175mm deep. They believed the insulation was completely resistant to fire and would have a similar lifespan to brick, but would double check and come back to Members as to the details of this. Officers explained that in the first-year heat pumps had a defects liability period, so if there was an issue the company would deal with, but after this residents would come to the council; the housing team had a duty to ensure heating was maintained. Heat pumps were part of the council's maintenance team's service and knowledge regarding this would increase as they became more common.

The Panel **AGREED** to note the report outlining the pilot projects that had been undertaken to retrofit Council housing to increase its energy efficiency, reduce residents' bills and reduce carbon emissions.

### **6. WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24**

Members **NOTED** the completion of the Work Programme for 2023/24 and that the Environment & Climate Action Scrutiny Panel Work Programme for 2024/25 would be discussed at the first meeting of the new municipal year.

### **7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Members noted that the dates of future meetings would be confirmed following Annual Council on Wednesday 15 May 2024.

The Chair thanked Members and officers for their time and contributions and the meeting ended at 20:09.