

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE ACTION SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON TUESDAY, 14TH MARCH, 2023

MEMBERS: Councillors: Mahmut Aksanoglu, Maria Alexandrou, Hivran Dalkaya, Peter Fallart, Joanne Laban, Nia Stevens and Eylem Yuruk

Officers: Doug Wilkinson (Director of Environment & Operational Services), Richard Eason (Healthy Streets Programme Director), Jon Sharkey (Head of Public Realm Services), Ned Johnson (Principal Officer for Health, Safety & Pollution), Nicola Lowther (Governance Manager), Harry Blake-Herbert (Governance Officer)

Also Attending: Councillor Rick Jewell, Cabinet Member for Environment, Press, and members of the public.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ozer (Chair) and Cllr James (Vice-Chair). Cllr Aksanoglu, substituting for Cllr James, nominated himself to Chair the meeting. This was seconded, and it was **AGREED** that Cllr Aksanoglu would Chair the meeting in the absence of the Chair.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 January 2023.

4. REVIEW THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL STREETS

Richard Eason, Healthy Streets Programme Director introduced some of the key points in the report, which reviewed the implementation of School Streets.

In response, members commented as follows:

1. Cllr Laban asked if a safety assessment had been completed, looking into the impact of moving from a volunteer-based scheme to using AMPR cameras. Officers responded that most schools had initially used marshals, and one still did, but that this was not sustainable for the majority of them, thus they had to adapt to use AMPR cameras. Whilst this was perhaps not as

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safe as having a physical barrier on the site, it still proved effective at reducing traffic and was far safer than having the School Streets scheme rescinded at these various locations.

2. Cllr Laban queried specifically about Worcester's School, citing that residents around the area felt they had been somewhat cut off by the School Street there; the Cllr questioned what engagement had taken place with residents, and how the diversions put in place matched with the Council's air quality objectives. Officers replied that the scheme had been met with broad support; they accepted the programme had posed some issues for a minority of residents but stressed that there was always some alternative means of access. It was pointed out that while the scheme initially imposed set blanket times; schools had now reduced these to make them more specific/ targeted, thus alleviating some of the inconvenience. Officers reiterated that each location has its own challenges and the scheme, like any other, was a balancing act between trying to extrapolate the maximum benefit whilst also aiming to reduce the inconvenience to residents. It was stressed that feedback was always monitored, and modifications could be made.

3. Cllr Yuruk asked whether Prince of Wales Primary School would be included in the scheme. Officers responded that the school was part of the STARS programme, and an expression of interest had been received, thus they met the criteria, and would be considered as a candidate in future rounds.

4. Cllr Alexandrou queried whether inset days were considered by the School Streets programme; if Wren Academy had applied; and whether more advanced signage could be placed by the School Street located off Cannon Hill. Officers replied that signage on Cannon Hill would be investigated. **ACTION** for Richard Eason. They explained that typically School Streets covered term time, as inset days were difficult to take account of, because each school does them differently; they emphasised that schools individually managed when the scheme was in operation. They confirmed Wren Academy was a part of the STARS scheme and had expressed interest in becoming a School Street, but that challenges such as it being situated on a bus route to the hospital, meant that alternatives, like improvements to pedestrian crossings, may have to be considered instead.

5. Cllr Stevens asked about the problems with the rollout at Hazelwood School and queried what lessons had been learned for the future. Officers apologised for the issues, assured members that communication had been improved and that these problems were being rectified. They explained the rollout had not gone smoothly due to a variety of factors, but that they had put systems in place to ensure this would not be repeated in the future. They said the scheme would go live at the end of the month, with residents having been made aware of this, and that permit applications were now open and ongoing.

6. Cllr Stevens queried whether at School Streets where it was more difficult to maintain volunteers/marshals, if at least the left-hand lane of the roads could be blocked with barriers. Officers responded that it may be possible in some locations, and was something they could try to encourage, but that they could not enforce it.

7. Cllr Dalkaya asked if where potential School Street locations fell on bus routes, whether bus gates could be used. Officers replied that it may be possible in some quieter locations, but would be more challenging in others,

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i.e., on principal road networks, as closing them in rush hour would have a huge impact. Ark John Keeps School was mentioned as an example that could be investigated. It was also noted that where School Streets were not possible, alternative interventions, would be looked at, like reducing speed limits.

8. Cllr Laban asked for data regarding the percentage of children that walked and or cycled to schools as opposed to other means of transport. Officers advised that schools collected this data as part of the STARS programme, and that this data was not to hand, but could be followed up with. They added that even in instances where cars were being used in the school run, parents were parking further away, thus the concentration of emissions at schools were being dispersed further away.

9. Cllr Stevens queried whether an update on the Quieter Neighbourhoods scheme was available to which Officers responded this was still a work in progress.

10. The Chair asked how Raglan School Street would be implemented given the difficulties of the site. Officers explained that this location did present some challenges but that there were always things they could look at doing; the difficulty they said often came in balancing what schools wanted to see and what is practical.

11. Cllr Fallart asked if a 20mph zone around the aforementioned site could be considered as an alternative, to which Officers explained that it was one intervention they were considering at locations where School Streets were not workable.

5. WASTE RECYCLING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE

Jon Sharkey, Head of Public Realm Services gave a presentation and highlighted some of the key points and updates with regards to Waste Recycling Management Performance.

In response, members commented as follows:

1. Cllr Fallart asked what measures the Council was taking to prevent fly-tippers from targeting communal bins. Officers responded that with communal bins, it was hard to assign blame to parties who were not disposing of their waste properly, thus taking action and educating those guilty of it, was difficult. They expressed the Council were trialling new communal bin locations away from main roads where they are less likely to be targeted by fly-tippers, but that it was difficult to find such convenient locations where collection teams could still empty them regularly. Officers assured members that the Council employs Waste Enforcement Teams who are dedicated to housing, and that this and other similar issues were being monitored.

2. Cllr Yuruk queried whether the Council was still providing refuse bins to residents free of charge; what the Council's position was on collecting bins that were overfilled, and if more public bins could be added to Ordnance Road. Officers replied that bins were provided free of charge, but additional criteria had to be met for residents wanting a larger black bin. They explained that the collection of overfilled bins was at the discretion of Officers, and that while they do usually collect them, the Council website makes clear that bins

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should not be overfilled; and if this becomes a routine problem it would be recorded, and they may not be collected. Officers stressed that when refuse is not collected, due to bins being overfilled, this is not down to Officers being awkward, but instead because the mechanism on refuse collection trucks is designed for bins that are closed, and open lids could catch, thus represent a safety risk. **ACTION** for Jon Sharkey - to look at the potential for adding more bins to Ordnance Road.

3. Cllr Laban highlighted that the percentage of refuse being recycled in the borough had fallen since 2019 and questioned whether Officers felt the move to fortnightly collections had been a mistake. Officers explained that the Covid-19 pandemic had significantly impacted on residents' behaviour and meant they did not have an opportunity to embed their new practices, thus felt a straight comparison of these figures without context was unreflective. They stressed that compared to other Local Authorities, Enfield's recycling statistics were fairly good, and that they would continue to drive their waste management strategy forwards.

4. Cllr Laban asked what impact the change in contractor from Biffa to NLWA, who were more generous with their rejection threshold, would have on waste performance statistics. Officers confirmed that they hoped this would mean a greater quantity of refuse would be recognised and treated as recycling, thus reducing unnecessary waste.

5. Cllr Laban then queried whether it would be possible to get waste performance statistics on a ward-by-ward basis for comparisons. Officers responded that collection rounds were optimised according to the best routes and were not done on a ward-by-ward basis, thus it would be very difficult to separate the refuse and statistics in this way.

6. Cllr Alexandrou asked if more clothes swap events and 'fix it factory' style initiatives could be introduced. Officers replied that as part of their category 2 initiatives, they were looking at increasing the frequency of such events/facilities including a 'library of things' where residents could go to trade and make use of each other's various items.

7. Cllr Dalkaya pointed out that for many residents in the Borough, their first language was not English, and so asked if more could be done in the way of bi-lingual communication. Officers responded that work was ongoing to develop the Council's webpages to ensure its information and messages were accessible in all key languages spoken in the borough. Cllr Jewell pointed out that particular emphasis had been placed on working with schools, so that children, who he felt were very aware of and engaged by environmental issues, took these messages home and shared them with their families.

8. The Chair queried whether an update regarding the parks' recycling initiative was available, to which Officers replied that they were still analysing the data which they hoped would be available over the next few weeks, but that the initial feedback suggested this pilot scheme had been used well.

9. Cllr Stevens asked to what extent the Council was consulting with residents about the barriers to and challenges of recycling. Officers responded that they engaged with residents at libraries over mis-collections and consulted with them as and when changes were made, but that the scope for this could be widened to receive more/ better feedback. They explained that things were still gradually returning to normal following Covid and as changes come about in the new financial year, it would be a good time to engage more with the

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community. Officers said they were always welcome to suggestions and new ideas from the public.

10. Cllr Fallart queried whether a comparison looking at collections on different days of the week might be an option, which Officers conveyed was something they had been considering looking into.

11. Cllr Laban asked how closely the Environment Team worked with Planning, particularly with regards to new tower blocks, and whether a recycling shoot, like those already in use for general waste, could be installed in new blocks going forwards. Officers expressed that they were in constant conversation with other departments including Planning, and that talks often centred around what could be done with new developments to 'design-in' recycling facilities. They explained that these talks were ongoing, as was communication with other Local Authorities about their green ideas and initiatives, but that cost and viability restrictions often constrained what they were capable of doing.

6. AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN

Ned Johnson, Principal Officer for Health, Safety & Pollution, gave an update on some of the key points in the Air Quality Action Plan.

In response, members commented as follows:

1. Cllr Laban queried why the Council had not challenged the Mayor of London over the expansion of the Ultra-Low Emission Zone which she described; came with a cost of £250m, would hurt the poorest residents in the borough and would have a negligible impact on air quality. Cllr Laban argued the Council should instead invest in schemes like zero emission bus routes. Cllr Jewell responded that the statistics suggest the ULEZ expansion will have the desired impact on air quality, that the Council had engaged with and asked questions of the Mayor of London regarding the scheme, and that they had not opposed it because it fits with the Council's environmental objectives.

2. Cllr Laban reiterated her concerns regarding the ULEZ expansion before moving on to question the Council's approach on Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, which forced more cars onto already polluted roads. Officers replied that the objective of LTNs was to direct traffic out of residential streets and onto roads that were designed to deal with a greater volume of vehicles, in turn encouraging people to switch the modes of transport they choose to take, which is what they were seeing happen.

3. Cllr Alexandrou highlighted the increases in traffic on several roads, before moving on to query if the Council would hold another anti-idling campaign; and enquired if air quality could be measured just outside of LTNs, on busy roads and outside schools. Officers responded that the anti-idling campaign for London had ended last year but the Council were keen to continue it in the borough; in particular, they were keen for this to partner its engagement with schools, as that is where it had been most effective. They explained the monitoring of air quality could take place in more specific locations but that without previous comparisons the data would not be as useful.

4. Cllr Stevens asked about the green wall outside Bowes School, and whether something similar could be adopted along the A10 and A406. Officers

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replied that the ivy wall outside Bowes School, which had been attached with nitrogen dioxide analysers, had resulted in a 22% reduction in emissions. However, they expressed that green walls would not work everywhere, that they required a lot of maintenance, and that the A406 was only part controlled by Enfield, thus was a difficult site to do much with.

5. Cllr Stevens enquired what contribution the waste incinerator was having, to which Officers expressed they did not have these figures to hand.

6. Cllr Alexandrou asked how the Council were protecting poorer residents in the borough from the incinerator's emissions. Officers responded that the facility was one of the cleanest in Europe, with strict environmental regulations attached to its operations, which it would more than meet. They asked that members be careful with the language they use to describe the facility, so as to not cause undue concern where none need exist, and confirmed that general community funding was available to a number of eligible residents.

7. At the discretion of the Chair, members of the public asked questions about the monitoring of emissions in the Borough and Officers present responded to them accordingly.

8. Cllr Laban asked why some of the borough's environmental infrastructure/ greenbelts, such as farmland and golf courses, were being considered as areas to build new developments on. Cllr Jewell replied that the Council was doing lots of work on its environmental infrastructure including: planting trees, creating forests, introducing beavers, building wetland areas, implementing Quieter Neighbourhoods, and developing public transport etc. He explained that some areas of land, like Vicarage Farm were being reviewed as potential areas of development but that nothing had been decided or moved forward with. Officers added that there was a balance of tensions between the Council's various different objectives; and that trade-offs, like housing and the environment existed, with the Council having to consider how to obtain the best overall outcomes for residents.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

NOTED the completion of the Work Programme for 2022/23 and that the Environment & Climate Action Scrutiny Panel Work Programme for 2023/24 will be discussed at the first meeting of the new municipal year.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

NOTED the dates of future meetings for the Environment & Climate Action Scrutiny Panel will be confirmed following Annual Council on Wednesday 10 May 2023.

The Chair thanked everyone for their time and brought the meeting to a close.

The meeting ended at 9.16 pm.