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Dear Ian

Delivering a Climate Strategy for Southwark – Recommendations of OSC following call-in

At the recent call in of the Cabinet Decision, “Delivering a Climate Strategy for Southwark”, the committee requested further information from me on a number of areas and asked that I reply to the committee ahead of your meeting on 2nd June. Please find my update to the committee below.

Produce a document for submission to the 2 June OSC meeting outlining additional consultation that can be carried out between now and July 2020.

Online Hub – the council has commissioned an online portal. It is being launched this week. The portal asks questions around the climate change themes that have been developed in consultation with the partnership steering group. It will remain online, and a report will be produced on the interim findings at the time of the July council report. These findings will not be able to influence that report due to the time scales, but as we embark on a fuller engagement process following the report, these early findings will help us, in consultation with the partnership steering group, to make changes to how we engage.

Partnership Steering Group – we will reconvene this to meet monthly between now and July. It will need to meet virtually due to COVID, but will enable its members to feed into the engagement approach as well as the substance of the emerging strategy. I have written to members of that group to reconvene a meeting.

Members Working Group – we have written to party whips (see below) to establish this. This group, similar to the partnership steering group, can help shape how we engage as well as the content of the strategy.

London Climate Action Week – Due to COVID this has been substantially scaled down. There will now be a three day “digital week” where various online events will take place between 1st-3rd July. In addition, a second week will be scheduled in November to coincide with the now postponed COP conference. We are exploring the holding of an online event in that week where people can share ideas and help contribute to the strategy. We will work with the PSG and the Members WG to agree the nature of this event.

Promoting Engagement – the council is now moving from response to renewal, following the COVID pandemic. As part of this renewal, there is an opportunity to not return to life in the same way as before COVID. There are huge changes in how we travel, work and live that have had very positive impacts on the environment. We want to maximise these and take the opportunity to build on these behaviour changes as we recover and rebuild as a borough, a city, a country and a world. We will promote the online portal as part of our corporate communications through this period, we will also use known groups within the council such as those that work with young people, BAME groups, interest groups, community groups and others to promote the hub and encourage engagement.

Produce a clear timetable within the next 10 working days of when the cross party working group will be established.

Officers are ready to establish the working group. The Climate Change Director wrote to the whips of both groups on 15th May to request nominations so the group can be established. Once these are received, officers will arrange the first meeting of the group.

Ensure engagement and consultation with young people through the next two months is through the setting up of a youth council to engage with young people.

At the first meeting of the partnership steering group, officers agreed to work with the young people who were there, as well as groups who have youth activists to bring together a group to advise on the best ways to engage with young people through the process. In addition, as set out in the April report, the engagement that had been planned was going to organise some focused group discussions with particular groups in the borough – one of these should be young people. With the changes that are required due to COVID, this principle should not change and officers will ensure that there are appropriate mechanisms to ensure that young people are engaged with throughout the process.

It is not possible to establish a youth council and for that council to make any meaningful contribution ahead of the July report due to the very short time frame. Instead, we plan to work with the partnership steering group and the members working group to ensure that young people are fully engaged in the process. The best way to engage young people is not necessarily through a youth council. We will consider that, but do this alongside listening to young people themselves about the most effective way to engage.

Further details of our engagement with young people will be published in the July report.

That as part of the consultation, a concerted effort be made to reach the BAME community, young and older people as sometimes with environmental issues they tend to be left out of the process and classed as hard to reach.

I agree with the committee. The engagement process as set out in the April report makes particular mention of being inclusive and reaching all parts of the community,

particularly those who are not traditionally as engaged with this issue. The council did not consider that restricting engagement to online only, during the COVID pandemic would have reached the range of people that was required for it to be inclusive. It is for this reason that we are moving the majority of our engagement beyond July when the COVID measures have been relaxed.

The July report will publish the engagement process moving forward – this will ensure that it is appropriate to reach all parts of the borough, including our BAME residents.

I hope that this letter responds to the committee's requests and its interest in this very important piece of work.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Livingstone', written in a cursive style.

Cllr Richard Livingstone
Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport and the Climate Emergency