

## ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMISSION

MINUTES of the Environment Scrutiny Commission held on Monday 22 July 2024 at 7.00 pm at 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

---

**PRESENT:** Councillor Margy Newens (Chair)  
Councillor Graham Neale (Vice-Chair)  
Anna Colligan  
Simon Saville  
Councillor Hamish McCallum

**OTHER MEMBERS  
PRESENT:**

**OFFICER** & Diana Wallace, Community Learning and Engagement Officer ,  
**PARTNER** London Wildlife Trust  
**SUPPORT:** Jane Lilley, the acting Head of Learning and Engagement,  
London Wildlife Trust  
Jack McKenna, Senior Public Affairs Manager UK and Ireland,  
Lime  
Sangeeta Leahy, Director of Public Health  
Gillian Boundy, Senior Public Health Programme Manager –  
Place and Health Improvement  
Julie Timbrell, Project Manager, scrutiny

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Bethan Roberts , Sabina Emmanuel and Leo Pollak.

**2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT**

There were none.

**3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS**

There were none.

**4. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 May 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

**5. LONDON WILDLIFE TRUST: CENTRE FOR WILDLIFE GARDENING**

The chair welcomed Diana Wallace, Community Learning and Engagement Officer and Jane Lilley, the acting Head of Learning and Engagement, and invited them to present on volunteering and learning sessions at the Centre for Wildlife Gardening, base in East Dulwich, and the London wide 'Nature in Mind 'project.

Wildlife gardening

Diana Wallace, Community Learning and Engagement Officer, explained there are various session held at the Centre for Wildlife gardening in East Dulwich These include schools, as well as sessions for people with learning disabilities, and older people. There are also dedicated volunteers. Wildlife gardening is particularly special as people observe nature unfolding. People with autism in particular benefit.

'Nature in mind ' .

Jane Lilley, the acting Head of Learning and Engagement, explained this happens in Walthamstow. The project works with people on the CAMHS green list while waiting further mental health care. There are two age groups (under and over 11). The sessions

are good for life skills, using skills (practical and personal) and providing a perspective. Sessions are often not taken up by schools as wildlife is not part of the curriculum.

The chair then invited questions and the following points were made:

- A member asked how the London Wildlife Trust work with a diverse demographic? The staff explained that there are many nature reserves and there can be different barriers at each one. The London Wildlife Trust have started a paid traineeship.
- One issue can be the background of London residents and if nature has not been introduced by parents and grandparents, which can be more likely in an urban environment. This can mean that young people are less familiar with wildlife and so there is a focus on family learning. Children often go home with enthusiasm, which the Wildlife Trust hope is infectious, and it often is.
- There was a comment that green spaces are not perceived as for all. The London Wildlife Trust staff agreed and said that they reach out as stewards of this land to welcome all the community. The conduct outreach to work with mosques, the Spanish and Latin American community, and go to Children Centres. There is a lot of outreach.
- The Centre for Wildlife Garden is based in East Dulwich and was fought for by local people and now run by London Wildlife Trust as well as other sites across London, and woodlands in Southwark.
- Members asked about links with the local authority as many primary schools are still maintained. The London Wildlife Trust conduct outreach to local schools, e.g. Brunswick and family centres.
- Members asks how Southwark might have a Nature in Mind project in Southwark and the London Wildlife Trust said that the organisation would like to see them everywhere.
- There was a discussion on encouraging wildlife with its messiness and the advantages of wildlife networks. It was noted that Lambeth Council stopped spraying pesticides, and promoted interest in volunteer plants and also encouraged No Mow May, with a mown strip to indicate this is deliberate.

The London Wildlife Trust staff highlighted that this has been a disastrous year for insects. Some schools do have raised beds and are encouraging wildlife areas. Children do love finding wildlife - a slug can be a delight. Over time people are coming round as there is more understanding across generations.

- The London Wildlife Centre staff were asked how they conduct education on climate change. They explained that there is some work on this topic but there is limited time, and the additional issue of being sensitive to eco anxiety. The centre offers a stand-alone lesson, and there are also nuggets of information that are weaved in rather than the apoplectic adult conversations. Children are all very aware already.

## 6. HEALTHY WEIGHT

The chair invited Public Health officers to provide a presentation on the Healthy Weight Strategy with particular reference to active travel and green spaces, in order to support the proposed review on Environmental Health : the health and wellbeing impacts of active travel.

The following officers presented:

- Sangeeta Leahy, Director of Public Health
- Gillian Boundy, Senior Public Health Programme Manager – Place and Health Improvement

The chair invited questions and the following points were made:

- A member commented that given inactivity is so linked to income deprivation and poor housing are we tinkering round the edges and putting the cart before the horse by focusing on activities rather than tackling the causes of deprivation. Officers agreed that this is very much about deprivation, and this is why the partnership approach is about Public Health being part of housing and planning health interventions focused on those areas, including council housing and specific programmes. Public Health is very much focused on the wider determinants of health and inequality.
- There was a discussion on poverty and cultural sensitivity. Public Health spoke about delivering culturally specific activities, so for example programmes tailored to the Latin American community and older black men, which provides

tailored information on diet and exercise. Public Health are also working with black majority churches and have co designed a programme as it is recognising these are community leaders. Public Health have also worked with pregnant women. The approach is focused on keeping in mind what is suitable with different groups, for example people living with food insecurity and how to provide culturally appropriate information on diet and meal preparation. There is also work with schools.

- Members commented that some demographics are less likely to walk and cycle, and there can be cultural as well as practical barriers. One issue is that if people in a small flats and cannot store a bike. The Public Health director said there are lots of barriers based on gender, class, age, ethnicity etc. The approach is to work with groups over time to find out what they want. One example was that an older group of men wanted a dedicated gym class so they would not feel self-conscious.
- Public health were asked if there was a causal relationship between obesity and deprivation or are there other underlying factors. Officers referred to diagrams in the presentation and how different factors interacted. Deprivation is a strong factor , but it is possible to be wealthy and obese.
- Members asked about the School Superzones and how these can be enhanced and increased. Officers said that the Superzones is being formally evaluate by GLA, and the council expect to get feedback in terms of what is working well and not so well. Public Health also draws on national research.
- One member commented that some people are exhausted from working and in those situations cycling and walking is the last thing on their minds. Another member spoke about how active travel has the advantage of being possible to integrate in people's lives in a way that a visit to the gym or swimming cannot be.
- Public Health spoke about the importance of working with people not doing any exercise at all as these are most at risk of poor health outcomes.

**7. SCRUTINY REVIEW: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH-THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPACTS OF ACTIVE TRAVEL AND IMPROVED ACCESS TO NATURE**

The chair explained that this item will consider the proposed scrutiny review topic of 'Environmental Health: The health and wellbeing impacts of active travel and improved access to nature and how these can be extended through our borough'.

Members were invited to make any comments on the review scope, listed under item 10.

**Lime**

The chair welcomed Jack McKenna, Senior Public Affairs Manager UK and Ireland, Lime, and invited him to provide a summary of the paper circulated with the agenda.

Members were then invited to ask questions and the following points were made:

- Lime is seeing a 50% growth in routes in Southwark, and that is in large part because of the flexible street parking policy.
- The majority of journeys are by commuters and consistent users – these are early morning on office days and last mile journeys, including to train stations. Many users are using passes.
- There are two types of parking for Lime EV E-Bikes and scooters: considerate street parking (Flexible Parking Zone) and set bays (Mandatory Parking Zones). Different boroughs have different rules. In Southwark parking is on bays in high use areas but in other areas people just need to park considerately on the street. The users have to provide a photo to show how they have parked.
- Inconsiderate parking is dealt with by Lime through progressive sanctions. Lime has to comply through a Service Level Agreement with Southwark Council's conditions. Lime meet with officers to discuss performance. 92% of bikes are considerately parked.
- Members spoke about the pros and cons of street parking. The impact of bikes discarded on pavements and bad parking can mean cluttering the pavement up and reducing accessibility for the mobility impaired, buggies, and wheelchair users. However, the advantages of flexible street

parking are that women in particular feel safer being able to start and finish a journey close to home.

- Lime said that park-ability is key. Mandated bays are very expensive to provide full coverage. The problem is that an inadequate number of bays also can lead to overcrowding, and this can result in swapping one problem for another, but reduce usability. Data shows that people will not take a bike if they cannot locate one close by.
- A member spoke about e-bikes becoming a disincentive to walkers in parks or concern about danger of collisions with children. Lime said it is possible to look at limitations being imposed in certain areas via Geo Fencing. Elephant Park and Burgess Park were mentioned as problematic areas. The geo fencing technology is very flexible but must be mandated by officers. The max speed 15.8 Km / hour, and this can be reduced. Lime encouraged members to get in touch regarding concerns.
- There was a problem about hacking Lime Bikes; a hardware upgrade had addressed this. Lime work closely with the police and will hand over details and help identify people committing crimes.
- The electric source is fully renewable, and it is possible for Lime to change batteries on location which improves use.
- There was a discussion on the cost of bays and if this ought to be borne by Lime as a commercial provider or the council in pursuit of its ambition of moving more journeys out of cars and towards active travel. Lime said that the costs are very much the time and the consultation process.
- Members asked how the wealth was shared and Lime explained that they are a low margin high volume business. Lime have set up a million pound infrastructure fund to work with London Boroughs to increase use. Two competitors have exited the market. Lime said that they are looking for long term partnerships.
- Lime have offered to assist with the provision of bays using the infrastructure fund for London Boroughs and made offers to the council. Lime have offered to provide dual parking for regular bicycles and Lime e-bikes. Lime said they believe this is the best option as bike racks as easier to deliver. This is subject to ongoing discussion with officers and TFL.

- There are concerns that removing flexible on street parking without adequate bay provision will impact on usage. Paris have moved to a bay on every street though making a big commitment and considerable investment.
- The Streets for People has a target of increasing active travel journeys. This is in part about reallocating parking spaces used by cars to provide more parking, including parking bays. To provide sufficient parking bays to enable take up of shared e-bike schemes under Mandatory Parking Zones a density of 25 bays per sq. km) would need to be achieved, which would be expensive, although conceivable with significant investment in high density areas.
- Lime has teamed up with the London Cycling Campaign and Loud Mobility to launch a new £100,000 'Share the Joy' fund to increase cycling within underrepresented groups and deliver equitable access to its benefits. Lime have partnered with local organisations to increase participation amongst lower income groups including refugees and certain ethnic groups, young people plus people exiting prison.

## **8. BIODIVERSITY POLICIES PLANNING BRIEFING**

A briefing has been provided by Planning officers, to note. This was requested to provide clarity for the Biodiversity review.

## **9. SCRUTINY REVIEW: BIODIVERSITY DRAFT REPORT**

The chair explained that the first draft of the report is enclosed, with a final draft report due to come to the next meeting, in order to give adequate time to hear from the commission and officers, as it is a large report.

The chair invited members to provide comments or suggestions on how to improve the report, and the recommendations, in particular, and to send these by email.

## **10. WORK PROGRAMME**

This was noted.