

## Environment and Community Engagement Scrutiny Commission

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Environment and Community Engagement Scrutiny Commission held on Tuesday 11 October 2022 at 7.01 pm at 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH

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**PRESENT:** Councillor Margy Newens (Chair)  
Councillor Graham Neale  
Councillor Ketzia Harper  
Councillor Emily Hickson  
Councillor Sarah King  
Councillor Reginald Popoola  
Councillor David Watson

**OTHER MEMBERS  
PRESENT:**

**OFFICER** Tom Buttrick, Team Leader - Planning Policy  
**SUPPORT:** Dale Foden, Head of Service - Highways, Environment and Leisure  
Anju Sidhu Head of Service for Regulatory Services, Environment and Social Regeneration  
Paul Newman, Team Leader- Environmental Protection Team, Environment and Leisure  
Elaine McLester, Head of Procurement, Finance and Governance  
Tracy Dean, Fleet & Transport Manager, Environment and Leisure  
Julie Timbrell, Project Manager, Scrutiny

**1. APOLOGIES**

Councillor Reginald Popoola gave apologies for lateness .

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

There was none.

### **3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS**

There was none.

### **4. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

### **5. DRAFT AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN 2023 - 2027**

The chair introduced the item by explaining that firstly taking the draft Air Quality Action Plan provided an opportunity for the Commission to do some pre-scrutiny of this major piece of work, prior to adoption by Cabinet in December. Secondly the Draft Air Quality Plan includes a number of themes, priorities and actions that can positively impact on delivering Sustainable Freight, one of the commissions current reviews.

Members attention was drawn to a report tracking previous Sustainable Freight recommendations arising from Air Quality scrutiny reviews conducted in 2020 and 2021.

The following officers attended to present and take questions:

- Anju Sidhu Head of Service for Regulatory Services, Environment and Social Regeneration
- Paul Newman, Team Leader- Environmental Protection Team, Environment and Leisure
- Elaine McLester, Head of Procurement, Finance and Governance (virtually)

The chair invited questions and the following points were made:

- Camberwell is air quality focus area
- The south circular road to has had air quality measurements taken before and after the implementation of ULEZ .
- There are no plans to expand the three air quality monitoring stations, but the low cost Breath London stations provide complimentary but different data .
- In response to a member question on engaging hard to reach groups officers said the consultation had a limited budget and was mainly

conducted online, as it did not have the resources to do the targeted engagement that took place on the climate change strategy. The feedback from residents included a request to provide a summary version that was easier to understand. Respondents also called for more committed language – for example rather than ‘explore’, instead ‘do’.

- Officers confirmed that there is a synergy with the expanded consultation on Low Traffic Neighbours, with officers contacting the people engaged through this process, sending out - about 7,000 emails. There were two particular cohorts who responded – residents engaged with the Walworth low emission scheme and the Dulwich Low Traffic Neighbourhood. There was always less than a third opposed and in Walworth residents supported by about 80%.
- An initiative was conducted on Tower Bridge approach road to see if better signage could impact on idling. This is difficult to measure as the bridge rarely opens and near a wide river allowing for dispersal, however there were observed behaviour change. Following this study it was decided that some of the most important places to do anti idling projects are outside schools. There are enforcement actions to compliment improved signage, with a request to stop the engine, followed by fine if the verbal request is refused, which has proved effective.
- Officer are currently involved in the ‘Worth the Weight: Making London’s deliveries greener and smarter’ study in the Old Kent Road. This is looking at moving freight onto the river, a logistics hub in Dartford, bringing in goods by electric vehicle and exploring bookable loading bays to reduce people circling looking for parking.
- The targets interact with other plans including Climate Strategy action plan and commitments.
- Officers agreed that particulate emissions from brake and tyres are considerable and greater in volume, however they added that tailpipes emission can be acidic and worse for lung damage. Much more could be done on particulates and road dust and Southwark are doing work with Lambeth looking at road dust, and there is room to do further work with GLA. Officer said this is somewhat beyond the scope of the council and Southwark’s draft Air Quality Action Plan but the council could lobby for more research from places like Imperial College to support further action.

## **6. SUSTAINABLE FREIGHT REVIEW: FLEET SERVICES**

The following officers presented:

- Mick Lucas, Head of Traded Services, Environment and Leisure
- Tracy Dean, Fleet & Transport Manager, Environment and Leisure

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

- Members noted the point well made in the report about the difficulties in supplying the charging infrastructure for electric vehicles given the national limitations on power generation.
- Officers said they have increased charging capacity in the depot, and protocols in to manage sickness and vehicle return.
- The fleet does not include domestic waste as that is delivered by Veolia but does include trade waste collection.
- Members welcomed the emphasis on vehicle and journey reduction and requested further information on functions and targets.
- This is a change management process within fleet services and as part of this officers are providing information to support and explain the process and overcome blockages.
- Fleet Services are considering the use of electric bikes, cargo bikes and scooters. Lambeth have started to employ smaller electric vehicles.
- Green electricity is corporately procured.
- There is no timeline in place yet to phase out the combustion engine as officers have to work out the infrastructure and powering network.

## **RESOLVED**

Officers will provide more detailed information including service function to reduce journeys and vehicles.

## **7. SUSTAINABLE FREIGHT REVIEW: HIGHWAYS**

Dale Foden, Head of Service - Highways, Environment and Leisure presented the report virtually.

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

- Members asked how much consideration had been given in current and future infrastructure for cargo bikes, particularly given the large space

needed to store. The officer said that there has been an expansion of cycle hangers and officers are now considering expanding these to incorporate cargo bikes - whether individual or shared. Funding for cargo bikes has been identified but a limiting factor is kerbside space, not only capital and administrative costs. There are waiting lists for bike hangers.

- Members commented on the preference for use of the road rather than kerbside pavement for expanding bicycle routes, parking and expanding provision for smaller e vehicles. Officer said this is the aspiration, with a pilot with electric scooters.
- Members asked if it was possible to expand bike routes to be suitable for cargo bikes. Officers said there are tensions with anti social behaviour and barriers that prevent cargo bikes using existing bike routes.
- Members asked about work to promote cargo bikes through promotion, contracting and procurement. The officer said the council is working with a large range of business and Business Improvement District (BID) to encourage take up.
- A member followed up on a request made last meeting for information on cargo delivered by big supermarkets and delivery companies such as Amazon. This is a challenging area for the council to address as not under direct control nevertheless the member said this is an important area for the commission to make recommendations on. The officer said that he is working on a response for data on delivery. He explained that there are pockets of information but not the full picture.
- The officer said that there is a bookable bay consultation with an ongoing conversation with Shakespeare Globe and a local pub, which will be followed by a formal process.
- Members asked about an information campaign on deliveries and the officer agreed this could be effective.

## **RESOLVED**

More information will be provided on work with businesses and a Business Improvement District (B) to encourage take up of cargo bikes.

**8. STREAMLINING PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR RETROFIT AND RENEWABLE ENERGY MINI REVIEW - FOLLOW UP BRIEFING**

Tom Buttrick, Team Leader, Planning Policy, presented the briefing provided in advance.

**9. STREAMLINING RETROFIT AND RENEWABLE PLANNING APPLICATIONS MINI REVIEW - HEADLINE REPORT**

The chair introduced the item by presenting draft recommendations and invited Tom Buttrick, Team Leader, Planning Policy, and commission members to comment. The following points were made:

- The officer advised that the forms are provided by central government, but officers could provide a guide to explicitly reference installing solar and insulation as presently the forms are orientated to seeking guidance and permission for building extensions and erecting sheds.
- A member asked if it would be possible to get demographic data on applicants to ensure money is going to right place and equitably distributed. The officer advised that some data is captured already, and it would be possible to capture additional information proposed by members on Protected Characteristics and geography.
- The officer was asked about support the council provide to people in other types of tenure to install renewables, for example leaseholders and council tenants. He advised that the Planning team, the Climate Change team and colleagues working on Green Buildings all had a role.

**RESOLVED**

The following revised recommendations were agreed:

1. Planning advice to be presented clearly and in plain English with any acronyms explained!
2. Online forms to be adapted to ensure that they are relevant to the given carbon saving measure(s) that are the subject of the given planning application.
3. Clear guidance to be provided to applicants as to why and whether a

Certificate of Lawful Development may be required or not, helping residents to make informed choices.

4. The planning advice services available within the council to help residents proceed with carbon saving adaptations to their homes to be promoted.
5. The council to work with other planning authorities within the borough to improve and expand uptake of carbon saving adaptations in domestic (and, where appropriate, other) contexts.
6. Feedback from applicants to be collected and collated in order to facilitate further improvements in service delivery.

#### **10. ENERGY REVIEW - CABINET RESPONSE**

Members noted the cabinet response to the scrutiny review and the opportunity to continue a dialogue with the lead cabinet member, particularly during the upcoming interview, scheduled for 20 February 2023.

#### **11. WORK PROGRAMME**

##### **RESOLVED**

Councillor Catherine Rose, Cabinet Member for Leisure, Parks, Streets & Clean Air, will be invited for an interview.