



MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES AND PUBLIC REALM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Thursday 12 March 2020 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT: **Councillor Kelcher (Chair) and Councillors S Choudhary, Gbjumo, Kabir, Mashari, Nerva and Stephens**

In attendance: Councillor McLennan (Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Resources)
Councillor Tatler (Lead Member for Regeneration, Property & Planning)
Councillor Tom Miller (Lead Member for Community Safety and Engagement)
Councillor Krupa Sheth (Lead Cabinet Member for Environment)

1. Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members

Councillor Kansagra, Councillor Aden and Councillor Thakkar

2. Declarations of interests

Councillor Nerva declared a personal interest that in relation to agenda Item 8 as he was a member of an Advisory Transport consultative body.

3. Deputations (if any)

None

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 January 2020 be approved as a correct record.

5. Matters arising (if any)

The Chair noted that clarification for the response to the Motorcycling Parking Permit, from the Budget Scrutiny report would be received for April's meeting and that the Policy and Capital Strategy would include data around money on how much rent the council received from charities where it was the client.

6. Chair's Report

The Chair introduced his report and provided background commentary on the topics being considered at the meeting, as well as relevant issues outside of the public meetings.

7. **Violence Against Women Task Group Membership**

Councillor Donnelly-Jackson presented the report that provided the Committee with an update on the new Task Group. The Committee were informed that further meetings were needed with the GLA to advance the report and noted that Michael Carr, (Senior Policy and Scrutiny Officer), had built and continued to enhance relationships with various partnerships, namely Children's' Social Services, Adult Social Services, the Safer Brent Partnership, the police and the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC).

The Committee were asked to nominate members who would sit on the Task Group to include male membership, but it had not been possible to find anyone who was interested and able to participate at this time. Following discussions, the Committee welcomed the suggestion to include male members in the process.

RESOLVED: That the following members be appointed to the Violence Against Women Scrutiny Task Group established on 29th January 2020:

- Councillor Fleur Donnelly Jackson (Chair)
- Councillor Sandra Kabir
- Councillor Roxanne Mashari
- Councillor Anita Thakkar.

8. **Brent Cycling Strategy**

The Committee considered a report that provided an update on how the Council was progressing with the implementation of the Brent Cycling Strategy (2016 – 2021), including an overview of the strategy and measures to deliver cycle improvements. The strategy was due to be reviewed in its entirety every five years, that next being 2021.

The Chair invited Mr David Arditti from the Brent Cycling Campaign to address the Committee on the cycling strategy.

Mr David Arditti noted that cycling in Brent could be improved, but that the funding provided by the Mayor of London, had been significant. David Arditti felt that the standards set out in the report needed to be retained and that the Cycling Strategy required more detail with measurable and credible targets. The Committee heard that the proposed designed Cycle Route map had shown some vehicle roads as being cycle routes.

The Committee thanked David Arditti for his address.

Members went on to discuss issues that had been implemented to relieve fears about the dangers in cycling. Councillor Tatler, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Property & Planning, informed the Committee that cycling training had been advertised on social media and in schools. A school program had been discussed that focused on cycling strategies and prioritised routes, with 2 schools having piloted the School Streets off Road program. It was believed that due to generational cultures, people were more comfortable to drive or be driven, but

Members heard that the infrastructure created, including Lime Bikes had made cycling more accessible.

Members commented that focus had been made on schools and wondered what support had been explored for employees who wished to cycle to work. Councillor Tatler explained that the information would be shared with the Committee once gathered. A Member commented that engagement with businesses and residents must be more consistent to ensure that strategies were applied.

Discussions continued with the participation of Councillor Johnson, Councillor Nerva and Councillor Kabir, during which several key points, including the following, were noted:

- The elements of cycling to the tube rather than driving needed to be reviewed, in terms of, infrastructure and cycling ports provisions.
- That there were many bike repair shops in the Borough but having more repair and second hand-shops would be desirable.
- The current price that Lime charged for parking bicycles was the same across all Boroughs.
- That the interest shown by other companies in supplying bikes for Brent at competitive charges were being explored.
- The Chair commented that he was pleased to have hangers in place. There had been a long waiting list for residents as the demand for hangers had exceeded supply. Councillor Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Environment, reminded members that she was the contact for residents who wanted to be on the waiting list.
- Developing relationships with TFL had continued. The Chair noting, he was concerned that TFL may not understand the message on infrastructure as lifts being funded by them had still been a concern.

Having considered the update provided, the committee agreed to the following actions being referred on to the department for consideration and progress:

1. That a review of the Brent Cycling Strategy for the development of a new Strategy post 2021, include the following considerations:
 - i. to find as many ways as possible to encourage people to cycle,
 - ii. the encouragement of groups less likely to cycle, including, women and older people,
 - iii. accessibility to the public highway and cycling transport infrastructure for people with disabilities,
 - iv. access to existing Council cycle parking facilities to the general public.
2. That the new Brent Cycling Strategy include new and ambitious and measurable targets, including shorter term objectives, as well as longer term.
3. That the development of the new strategy involve consultation with key stakeholders, including the scrutiny committees.

9. Brent Parks Strategy

Councillor Krupa Sheth, Lead Cabinet Member for Environment presented the report that provided a summary overview of the Brent Council policy, strategy, management and performance of Brent Parks for review by the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee.

Chris Whyte, Operational Director Environment Services also added clarifications.

The published Parks Strategy document was for 2010-2015.

During the detailed discussion that followed Councillors Gbajumo, Councillor Stephens, and Councillor S Choudhary made contributions highlighting the following key points:

- That the Parks Services had worked together to make parks greener and that re-wording of the Borough Plan would be regarded, for the strategy to read clearer.
- PSPO had conducted neighbourhood and motor patrols but the Committee heard there were no restrictions for parking in parks and therefore, those driving through parks on regular basis, would be investigated. Members were reminded to email hot spot locations to Councillor Krupa Sheth for patrols to be deployed.
- Some Members had raised concerns about discrete rubbish being left in green spaces as some parks no longer had designated Wardens to maintain vigilance. Only five Wardens now covered all parks. Councillor Krupa Seth reminded Members that Environment Officers continued to work to catch the culprits and a walk about in the Wards had been planned.
- Members were in agreement that parks should have designated spaces available for BBQs with permits being in place and a fine system for those that did not adhere. Councillor Krupa Sheth shared the concerns of permitting BBQs as safety had to be paramount. Barbeques could cause damage to parks, the wildlife and meadows species that had to be protected from anti-social behaviour from fires.

It was agreed that a report on barbeques would be conducted for the Committee.

- A member commented that Tower Hamlets had a therapeutic and rewarding vegetable patch and that South Kilburn had trialled this concept. Schools had also been encouraged to promote gardening clubs for children to grow fruit and vegetables.
- Committee Members were informed that the Allotment Officers post was discontinued and allotments managed by Chris Clarke. Members were reminded to share any concerns about allotments in their Ward.

Having considered the update provided, the committee agreed to the following actions being referred on to the Executive for consideration and progress:

RESOLVED to recommend to Cabinet:

1. **That a new Brent Parks Strategy encompass the green and open spaces as a whole and include measurable targets, including bespoke targets for Brent, to facilitate the use of parks and open spaces by a diversity of different people in the community and to encourage sporting activities.**
2. **To improve the data on people using the park, which could be used to inform the strategy.**
3. **That provision be made within the strategy and management of parks to allow for barbeques in designated areas, perhaps with the requirement of a permit and perhaps after a trial period to test out how this might work.**

10. **Recommendations Tracker**

Shazia Hussain, Assistant Chief Executive, introduced the report that presented the Scrutiny Recommendation Tracker table, which tracked the progress of the recommendations made by the Committee.

Appendix 1: The Scrutiny Recommendation Tracker 2019 – 2020 was included with the report and provided detailed information and a breakdown to the Committee.

Informing the Committee how recommendations were progressed, the Assistant Chief Executive noted that the Corporate Management Team (CMT) had provided summary updates for each scrutiny recommendation made. Members heard that when the Scrutiny Committee made reports and recommendations to the Cabinet and once confirmed, they were to be referred through the CMT, to the Cabinet, which was asked to agree and executive response. The issue was published on the Council's Forward Plan, which provided that date when the Cabinet considered it.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

11. **Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 8:05 pm

M KELCHER
Chair