

Scrutiny Streets & Environment Sub-Committee

Meeting held on Wednesday, 1 November 2023 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall,
Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Councillor Ria Patel (Chair), Councillor Louis Carserides (Vice-Chair), Danielle Denton, Gayle Gander, Stella Nabukeera, Ellily Ponnuthurai and Luke Shortland

Also Present: Councillor Jeet Bains (Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration)
Councillor Scott Roche (Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment)
Councillor Rowenna Davis (Virtually)

Apologies: None

PART A

25/23 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

26/23 Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

27/23 Urgent Business (if any)

There were no items of urgent business.

28/23 Period 4 Financial Performance Report

The Sub-Committee considered a report set out on pages 21 to 56 of the agenda that provided the Cabinet Report on Period 4 Financial Performance for Members to ascertain whether they are reassured about the delivery of the 2022-23 Sustainable Communities, Regeneration & Economic Recovery (SCRER) Budget. The Corporate Director of SCRER introduced the item.

The Sub-Committee highlighted the predicted underachievement of income for parking, parking enforcement and moving traffic offences, and asked what steps were being taken to rectify this. The Corporate Director of SCRER explained that this covered a number of income streams, and that these were being constantly monitored against behavioural changes, and that there was ongoing work with utility companies on charges for street works. The consultation on the revised Parking Policy had concluded, and the outcomes of this would be coming forward over the coming months.

The Chair highlighted comments made at Cabinet around bin charges, and asked for some additional detail. The Head of Environment Services & Sustainable Neighbourhoods explained that a proposal was being prepared for Cabinet around implementing an administration charge for refuse containers, due to the current unprecedented demand; this charge would not cover recycling containers. There was currently a six-week backlog for refuse container deliveries, and as a result, resource to deliver this had been increased.

Members asked why demand for refuse containers was at the current high level, and heard that this was a mixture of wear and tear on containers, the quality of some containers and better recycling education. The Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment explained that there were issues with the qualities of some bins, which were being investigated, and ongoing work on how the contractor was handling containers. The Sub-Committee asked if this learning would be fed into the procurement of the new Waste and Street Cleansing Contract, and heard that it would be, in combination with soft market testing, and resident and Member engagement groups.

Members asked about any risks to the Council resulting from the new Roads and Street Works Act, owing to delays and disputes with utility companies. The Corporate Director for SCRER explained that there were processes in place to escalate slow or non-payment from utility companies, and that this could include face-to-face meetings. In some areas, the Council was working through data to find agreement on the amounts that were due, and in other areas, the Council was working with the companies to try to understand why these payments had not been made or were late. There were some historical disputes that had also led to pressures on this area of the budget.

29/23 Air Quality Action Plan 2023-2028

The Sub-Committee received the presentation in the agenda supplement, concerning the Council's Air Quality Action Plan 2023-2028 to allow the Sub-Committee to provide early feedback in advance of the full report to Cabinet in December 2023. The Cabinet Members for Streets and Environment introduced the item, and the Head of Environmental Health, Trading Standards & Licensing went through the presentation found at Appendix A in the agenda. It was highlighted that the figure on the second slide should say

that air pollution 'contributed to the premature deaths of an estimated 4,000 Londoners in 2019'.

The Chair noted that some of the papers had been late for the publication of the agenda, and highlighted the importance of receiving papers in a timely manner. The Chair also noted that this paper lacked some detail. The Corporate Director for SCRER apologised for the lateness of the papers, but noted that this was not for a lack of effort on the part of officers, who always strived to meet report deadlines. Members were informed that the full paper on the Air Quality Action Plan 2023-2028 for Cabinet had been delayed to the January 2023 meeting, and that this report was a high-level update.

The Sub-Committee asked what the Council could do to tackle pollution that originated outside of the borough. The Head of Environmental Health, Trading Standards & Licensing explained there were a number of sources of pollution external to the borough, and that the aspiration of the Plan was to reduce and control pollution where possible. In response to questions on what Croydon had done previously, it was explained that Croydon was the first to implement 'airTexts', which provided text updates on pollution to those with lung and heart conditions, and to investigate and provide enforcement (where there was non-compliance) on idling vehicles. Enforcement on idling vehicles was generally undertaken around schools, but could also include where buses were idling outside of bus garages. Croydon had been the first borough to introduce standardised construction logistics plans for all construction sites to reduce emissions.

The Chair asked how Croydon's Plan would connect with the Mayor of London's air quality programmes. The Head of Environmental Health, Trading Standards & Licensing explained that the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) had been expanded to cover Croydon in August 2023, and was a statutory requirement.

In response to how Croydon's Plan compared with neighbours, the Pollution Team Manager explained that these Plans were standardised and so were similar to neighbours, but that Croydon's Plan also focussed on specific local issues, such as improving air quality near schools (due to the high number in Croydon), and to improve air quality around construction (due to the high number of building sites in the borough). The work around standardised construction logistics plans had been used by Transport for London across the city and fed out to other boroughs. The Sub-Committee heard that Croydon undertook joint projects with other boroughs to maximise available funding, such as a current project on wood burning. Whilst Croydon did not have the most polluted air in London, it did have the third highest when ranked for population exposure; this was a new way for reporting and monitoring air pollution, and was helpful when applying for grant funding.

The Sub-Committee asked how walking and cycling routes would factor into the Plan, and the Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment explained that this featured prominently in the Mayor's Business Plan through the establishment of Healthy Neighbourhoods and School Streets. There was

ongoing work to try to get schools involved in creating walking plans with families to ensure School Streets Schemes succeeded.

Members asked if the Plan was being specifically targeted at areas with the highest air pollution. The Head of Environmental Health, Trading Standards & Licensing explained that pollution hotspots were generally around areas with the highest road traffic, and so measures would involve educating drivers, as well as encouraging walking and cycling over car journeys where feasible. There would also be measures to discourage bonfires and to instead increase the uptake garden waste recycling.

The Sub-Committee asked about tree planting, and the Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment explained that there was an ambition to plant more trees through ongoing work with Friends and Residents groups, to identify planting locations, empty tree pits, and 'tree streets'. The Corporate Director for SCRER explained that the planting season began in November, and that a strategy for this was being developed, although there was not a large resource in this area. The Chair asked if, by relying on Friends and Residents groups, the Council was not at risk of missing areas where residents were not as engaged with the Council through these organisations. The Head of Environment Services & Sustainable Neighbourhoods explained that there was some reliance on these groups, due to the lack of resources, and the need to identify appropriate planting sites; it was highlighted that areas with high pollution were often unsuitable for tree planting, which limited the effectiveness of this as a blanket solution. The Chair highlighted the need for additional greenery in the North of the borough, and the Head of Environmental Health, Trading Standards & Licensing and the Pollution Team Manager highlighted work on deploying green walls to some sites, including schools, alongside work with 'Trees for Cities'. The Chair stated that there were keen to see the Council develop a full tree planting or greening strategy for the borough.

Members asked if there was scope to implement a developer levy, like Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), to fund tree planting. The Head of Environment Services & Sustainable Neighbourhoods stated that the Council had been successful in securing external grant funding and Section 106 monies to cover tree planting and arboriculture work. The Sub-Committee heard that almost 700 trees had been planted in 2022-23.

The Sub-Committee asked if specific targeted measures would be deployed in the worst polluted areas, and what the budget would be for implementing the Plan. The Corporate Director of SCRER explained the Air Quality budget sat at less than £30,000, excluding grant funding. As a result, there needed to be careful prioritisation of actions to achieve the best outcomes with limited resource; it was noted that this was the case in Croydon for a number of areas due to its financial situation. The Corporate Director of SCRER highlighted that a number of schemes that the Council delivered contributed to improvements in air quality, such as School Streets, but that the capital spending from these simply came from other budgets.

Members asked what grant funding was available to the Council toward implementing air quality schemes, and which grants Croydon had already applied to. The Pollution Team Manager explained that Section 106 funding was being used to fund additional air quality monitoring, and that the Council had undertaken joint bidding with other authorities; the Council had recently undertaken joint bids for Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) funding. Members highlighted that grant funding had previously been used on specific projects, and asked how the Council proposed to fund the actions in the final Plan. The Corporate Director for SCRER explained that to access funding the Council needed to have strategies and plans, and that the Council would always bid for any available funding that met its corporate and strategic aims. The Sub-Committee highlighted the importance of including budget and funding stream figures in future reports.

The Chair asked about the number of monitoring sites in the borough, and the Pollution Team Manager explained that there were four continuous monitoring sites, as well as 35 passive air diffusion tube sites, alongside around 22 lamppost monitors at School Streets sites. It was highlighted that continuous monitoring sites and lamppost monitoring installations were costly, and officers tried to use joint funding, Section 106 monies and Local Implementation Plan (LIP) funding to purchase or rent equipment. Members also heard that where monitoring was no longer needed, such as at established Healthy Neighbourhood sites, then it was moved to try to build as full a picture of air quality in the borough as possible.

Members asked if the Council had a current strategy around rolling out Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points, and whether this was covered by the Local Plan. The Head of Environmental Health, Trading Standards & Licensing explained that public EV charging points sat under Strategic Transport, but that the Council was looking at EV solutions for its own fleet and was developing a Carbon Neutral Action Plan. The Corporate Director for SCRER added that 90 charging points had been installed in Croydon in 2022/23; the Council were looking to fill vacancies for roles that would be responsible for identifying appropriate EV charging point locations. It was highlighted that there were a number of funding models available for securing EV charging points, including through the government, and that the Council needed to do some more work in this area, however, charging points were often secured as part of the Development Management process.

The Sub-Committee welcomed the Council looking at EV solutions for its own fleet, and asked what work could be done to embed ambitions for zero emissions from contractors as part of the procurement process. The Corporate Director for SCRER explained that the Council already asked contractors to explain how they would contribute to Net Zero and Carbon Neutral policies when bidding, but that costs and lead in times also had to be considered. The Chair asked how these considerations were weighted and was informed that this was dependent upon the contract.

The Chair asked what the awareness campaigns in the Plan would look like and what specific issues they would focus on. The Pollution Team Manager

explained that previously there had been an Air Quality Summit; meetings with schools, school governors and residents associations; as well as stands in libraries and at district centres. It was highlighted that there would be a consultation on the Air Quality Action Plan and that the Council would continue to listen to residents for the duration of the Plan, as well as ongoing efforts to communicate with residents. Officers highlighted the difficulty of getting residents to engage with an issue like air quality, but asked that Members get in contact with any engagement ideas they had. Members asked if there were any plans to work with GPs and pharmacies to display communications materials, and heard that this would be possible. The Council would continue to use events where possible to publicise the consultation, as well as initiatives like the 'smoothie bike' and work with the Council Comms team.

The Chair asked if there was scope to expand School Streets to nursery schools. The Corporate Director for SCRER explained that the current focus was on schools, as there were more of these in the borough, and the Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment added that there was a road safety budget that could fund some safety measures around nurseries if these were in hotspots.

The Chair asked how confident officers were that the actions in the new Plan would be achievable, and heard that officers were confident that these would be deliverable. The Corporate Director for SCRER explained that there would be fewer, but more focussed, actions aimed at a shorter period than in the previous Plan. The Plan covered a shorter period than previously so that the Council could be adaptive to change.

The Chair asked about additional plans to target idling and heard that there was proactive engagement around schools, taxi ranks and bus garages, but also reactive engagement where complaints were received. The Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment added that they were looking at what could be done to combine enforcement activity to address idling with things such as parking offences.

The Chair asked for some additional detail on plans to tackle wood burning in the borough, and the Head of Environmental Health, Trading Standards & Licensing explained that there was a possibility of extending Smoke Control Areas, encouraging the use of wood burners (which reduced particulate emission), and encouraging the use of recycling centres or garden waste collection services. The Sub-Committee asked much wood burning contributed to air pollution, and were informed that this was the second biggest source of small particulate emission in the borough.

Conclusions

The Sub-Committee welcomed that the Air Quality Action Plan 2023-2028 would look at the expansion of Smoke Control Areas in the borough and were keen to see this enacted, subject to consultation, alongside proposed

educational campaigns for residents on the health and environmental impacts of wood burning.

Request for Information

The Sub-Committee requested that it be provided with a breakdown of the funding received from the Mayor's Air Quality Fund, the DEFRA Air Quality Grant, Section 106 Funding and Local Implementation Plan (LIP) towards the development and implementation of the Air Quality Action Plan 2023-2028, alongside information on which elements of the Plan each funding stream would support.

30/23 Cleaner Croydon

The Sub-Committee considered a report set out on pages 57 to 82 of the agenda, which provided an update on the Council's work on the Mayor's priority for delivering 'Cleaner Croydon' and feedback on its recommendations concerning the Waste & Recycling Contract. The Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment and Interim Director of Streets and Environment introduced the item and went through the presentation at Appendix A.

The Sub-Committee asked about the Council's implementation of the 'Love Clean Streets' app and asked what other methods the Council was using to ensure that reporting was taking place and ensure issues were not missed. The Head of Environment Services & Sustainable Neighbourhoods explained that the 'Love Clean Streets' app was fully integrated into Council and contractor back-office systems, but that the learning from the Norbury and Pollards Hill 'blitz' was that the value of in-person engagement with stakeholders and residents could not be understated. Members heard that engagement had already begun with residents, stakeholders and Ward Councillors for Thornton Heath (the next 'blitz' area) to gain local intelligence in advance of the clean; an initial site inspection had taken place with a small group of stakeholders to gauge their concerns and priorities.

The Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment explained that the Council had employed new Client Officers who would gain local intelligence to fill in the gaps where there was underreporting through the 'Love Clean Streets' app. Members heard that the 'blitz' approach helped officers gather detail on how well reporting through the app was working, and that work on improving and streamlining the Council's implementation of the app to make it more intuitive was ongoing. The Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment stated that it was being investigated if a 'Friends and Champions' section of the app could be added to give a better indication of who was reporting what, and where.

The Chair queried whether the additional data gathered by the new Client Officers and through engagement would be used to change the areas

prioritised for the 'blitz' cleans. The Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment responded that, whilst data from the app was a good starting point and had been used to choose the priority for the initial list, it was acknowledged that some areas were underreported. The Head of Environment Services & Sustainable Neighbourhoods explained that anecdotal data from the Client Officers and contractors would be combined with app data to gain a fuller picture on which areas would most benefit from a 'blitz' approach; it was highlighted that these cleans were in addition to normal core services. It was envisaged that the 'blitz' cleans be a rolling programme that serviced all 17 of Croydon's district centres, and did not require one clean to finish before the next one started.

The Chair commented on the 'Love Clean Streets' app, and asked what lessons were being learned from the simpler implementations in other boroughs. The Head of Environment Services & Sustainable Neighbourhoods explained that in some cases the app was not integrated with back-office systems, as it was in Croydon, and required manual processing. The Chair acknowledged this but stated that the intuitiveness for residents using the app did need to be improved.

Members asked if completed jobs reported on the app were being monitored to ensure the jobs were actually being done, and what options for reporting the Council was considering for those who were impacted by 'digital exclusion'. The Head of Environment Services & Sustainable Neighbourhoods explained that the contact centre could take reports by phone, and that reports could be made directly on the Council's website for those unable to use the app. On monitoring of completed jobs, the Council was aware of some incorrect closing of tickets and it was explained that there were opportunities in the app for residents to feedback where this was the case, and that this was monitored and picked up in contract monitoring meetings. The Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment explained that there was ongoing work on the quality of responses to residents where jobs were closed down but had not been completed, and that this was also being looked at by the Deputy Cabinet Member for Contract Management. The Sub-Committee welcomed offers to engage outside of the meeting, but highlighted the importance of building robust systems so that this could be avoided and learning implemented. The Head of Environment Services & Sustainable Neighbourhoods suggested that the new Client officers could be engaged in 'sampling exercises' by taking a number of reports and spot-checking for issues.

The Sub-Committee queried how enduring the effects of the 'blitz' clean in Norbury and Pollard Hill had been, and were informed that the effects so far had been lasting, and that graffiti had not so far returned. The Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment explained that other preventative measures for graffiti, such as murals, were also being considered. The Sub-Committee asked if the 1,314 reports of graffiti were unique and if the Council had data on the number of these that had been successfully dealt with. The Head of Environment Services & Sustainable Neighbourhoods responded that these were unique reports and that this data was being recorded; it was noted

that graffiti was only removed from public buildings and spaces outside of the 'blitz' clean programme.

Members asked whether there was data on the length of time reports remained open before being dealt with. The Head of Environment Services & Sustainable Neighbourhoods responded that this data was available but highlighted that where fly-tips were reported on private land that these cases would remain open, as the Council did not have the jurisdiction or resource to deal with them. Members asked if there was a timetable for 'walkabouts' with ward councillors to look at qualitative data and gain local insights, and the Head of Environment Services & Sustainable Neighbourhoods explained that currently there was not. The Sub-Committee heard that four Client Officers had been recruited and completed training; these officers would now be working in four geographical areas, getting to know ward councillors, residents and friends groups. It was expected that each officer would be in each ward they were responsible for at least once per week.

The Sub-Committee commented on the prevalence of fly tipping on private land, and asked if the Council had any plans to address this. The Head of Environment Services & Sustainable Neighbourhoods explained that ways to address this would be investigated, but a co-ordinated internal strategy would need to be developed in collaboration with other departments to make sure interventions worked long term. The Chair asked what engagement was taking place with those identified as culprits of commercial or domestic fly tipping, or with those whose land was being fly tipped on. The Head of Environment Services & Sustainable Neighbourhoods explained that it was difficult to catch commercial fly tippers for a number of reasons, and that this was an ongoing issue. Members commented on fly tipping reports on public land being closed down as being on private land, and heard that often these were in areas, such as housing estates, where the contractor could not clear it; the new Client officer team would have a roll in intervening in these cases and resolving them in a satisfactory way for residents.

The Chair commented on the length of the 'blitz' cleans, highlighting that the Norbury and Pollards Hill clean had taken four weeks. The Corporate Director of SCRER explained that these cleans were in addition to normal street cleansing, with the intention being to create a big step change and restore pride in an area, whilst generating a sustained improvement. It was highlighted that the cleans were being delivered within existing resource, which meant it could take some time to complete each area. It was expected that the full programme of 'blitz' cleans would take around 18 months to complete.

Members asked how many enforcement notices had been served as part of the Norbury and Pollard Hill clean. The Sub-Committee heard that the 'blitz' cleans had a focus on education and engagement, and there had been a conscious decision not to submit enforcement notices, but to instead to give warning notices. The Head of Environment Services & Sustainable Neighbourhoods explained that there had been lessons learned on identifying pro-active businesses who could act as conduits to promote reporting and

local pride in each area, as well as around early engagement with stakeholders before the cleans and development of a tailored communications programme. The Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment stated that the Council would be using its relationships with Resident Associations and community groups to make the 'blitz' cleans as effective as possible and to build trust with communities.

The Sub-Committee asked if the Council had developed a strategy for incentivising businesses to keep the areas around them clean, or to implement vertical planting, and to leverage existing community and litter picking groups by providing them with resources. The Head of Environment Services & Sustainable Neighbourhoods explained that there was not a written strategy, but that the Council recognised Street Champions and community groups as valuable assets and were working with these individuals to see how best to recognise their contributions to the borough and support their work.

Members asked if the 'blitz' clean had set any expectations that the Council would be undertaking tasks on private land, and the Head of Environment Services & Sustainable Neighbourhoods explained that business owners had been written to twice explaining what was happening and why to manage expectations and explain that businesses would be responsible for maintaining their properties following the clean. The Sub-Committee queried whether the Council would be producing any resources to support private landowners on maintaining their properties, such as a leaflet, and heard that this suggestion would be considered and that leaflets could be provided to Street Champions in future.

In response to questions about weeding, Members heard that pesticides were only used on hard standings and highways and that it was Council policy not to use pesticides for green spaces, and not during the 'blitz' programme. The Chair asked if the Council was considering the use of signage to encourage recycling and discourage fly tipping. The Head of Environment Services & Sustainable Neighbourhoods responded that this was being looked into with the Comms team, and highlighted the importance of providing as much advice and education to residents (particularly those living in flats above shops) before pursuing enforcement measures. The Chair asked what was being done to assist residents living in flats above shops with waste collection, and heard that there had been significant learning around this from the Norbury and Pollards Hill 'blitz' on providing consistent advice to these residents, and ensuring that the contractor was collecting on the correct days.

The Sub-Committee asked if the Council had made any preparations for collecting seven streams of waste, and heard that it had not as Croydon was already compliant with proposed waste legislation, and that this would be carried into the new Waste and Street Cleansing Contract.

Members asked what key improvements were expected with the commencement of the new Waste and Street Cleansing Contract. The Head of Environment Services & Sustainable Neighbourhoods explained that there

would more robust enforcement of the new contract, supported by a contract monitoring team and Client officers, and that this would be implemented over the next 18 months to ensure that this was in place when the new contract started. The Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment stated that they were seeking a more proactive approach, with contractors reporting fly tipping amongst other measures. The Head of Environment Services & Sustainable Neighbourhoods stated that the procurement strategy had used competitive dialogue to try to get maximum financial leverage through the value of the tender; it was stated that the contract would be of a higher value, but would have a significant weighting on social value.

The Sub-Committee asked how often contract management meetings with the South London Waste Partnership (SLWP) took place, including with the Cabinet Member. The Head of Environment Services & Sustainable Neighbourhoods explained that they met with SLWP colleagues on a bi-monthly basis, in addition to a monthly transformational board and a senior management group (attended by directors) quarterly. The SLWP Joint Committee met quarterly and was attended by, and currently chaired by, the Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment. The Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment explained that they had regular meetings with members of the SLWP and the contract monitoring officers based in Stubbs Mead.

Conclusions

The Sub-Committee concluded that they would like to add the 'blitz clean' programme to its work programme for 2024/25, to monitor whether the programme was successful and having a sustained impact on district centres, alongside data on the number of businesses and residents engaged during the cleans.

Request for Information

1. The Sub-Committee requested that information be provided on how the 17 areas identified for 'blitz cleans' would be prioritised, as well the timeline for when these cleans would take place.
2. The Sub-Committee requested information on the total number of reports made via the 'Love Clean Streets' app, as well as data on how long reports were taking to be actioned and completed.
3. The Sub-Committee requested further information on the enforcement powers at the disposal of the Council and an update on what consideration has been given to other forms of deterrent such as 'name and shame' campaigns and engaging with private landowners where fly-tips persist.

Recommendations

1. The Sub-Committee recommended that Members were engaged for their views on how well the 'Love Clean Streets' app was working, as well as for their input as to how the implementation of the app in Croydon could be made more accessible for residents.
2. The Sub-Committee recommended that regular walkabouts for Ward Councillors were scheduled with the new Client Officer team to identify issues and feedback local knowledge concerning street cleaning, fly tipping, weeding and graffiti.

31/23 Local Plan Review

The Sub-Committee considered a report set out on pages 83 to 94 of the agenda, which provided an update on the proposed changes to the Local Plan 2018 and the publication of the Local Plan Review for a second consultation. The Cabinet Member for Planning & Regeneration introduced the item and went through a presentation summarising the report.

The Sub-Committee asked what would happen if Croydon Area Remodelling Scheme (CARS) and Brighton Main Line Upgrade did not go ahead as planned. The Cabinet Member for Planning & Regeneration responded that the Council needed to have policies in place for the scheme should it go ahead, but that the actual funding for the scheme would come from the Department for Transport. The Head of Spatial Planning, Growth Zone and Regeneration explained that the Local Plan would set out how the scheme should be accommodated should it be funded. The Sub-Committee heard that the scheme was unfunded at this time, but including it in the Local Plan would mean that the Council was well placed should a Transport Works Act Order Inquiry come forward.

Members asked what work was being done to engage developers and partners in realising the ambitions of the Local Plan. The Cabinet Member for Planning & Regeneration explained that there were regular meetings with partners (including residents and developers). The Cabinet Member for Planning & Regeneration and the Mayor regularly meet with developers to discuss major developments, as well as pre-application discussions with officers. The Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration explained that development of the Local Plan was a regulated process that set out clear expectations on engagement to ensure all those affected by the Plan were able to contribute their views. There had been a large amount of engagement with residents and communities, as well as landowners (through previous consultations and calls for sites). The Council had a large database of partners and organisations to facilitate its engagement; this included the Greater London Authority (GLA), Transport for London (TfL), Network Rail and others. Engagement work was fundamental to the development of the

Local Plan to ensuring it was fit for purpose, and had to be demonstrated when it was submitted for examination before a planning inspector.

The Sub-Committee asked if the existing local masterplans would be changed to better align with the revised Local Plan. The Cabinet Member for Planning & Regeneration responded that there was harmonisation across the various local masterplans, and the Head of Spatial Planning, Growth Zone and Regeneration explained that unadopted masterplans would not be adopted until the Local Plan had been agreed, and that these would be checked to ensure that they were properly aligned. Members asked if neighbouring masterplans accounted for each other, and heard that this was the case.

Members asked about increases in 'build to rent' properties, and queried whether the Local Plan addressed this. The Cabinet Member for Planning & Regeneration explained that the Council could not restrict developers in this way; however, the Local Plan would look to put restrictions on large-scale co-living developments. The Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration explained the 'Homes' chapter of the Plan had been revised to account for changes over the last ten years, and stressed the importance of providing a variety of tenures of homes appropriate for different groups.

The Sub-Committee asked if anything was being done to bring large-scale empty commercial units back into use. The Cabinet Member for Planning & Regeneration explained that the Executive Mayor was proactively focussed on this issue to move things forward, and the Director of Planning & Sustainable Regeneration added that up to date policy and guidance were important to ensure that the right kind of developments for Croydon came forward.

The Chair asked for an explanation of the 'Green Grid' and the Spatial Planning Plan Making Team Leader explained that this was a network of parks and green spaces across the borough, and about recognising the linkages between these spaces. The Local Plan also addressed sustainable transport as it related to the 'Green Grid'. The Chair asked if this included 'Blue Corridors' and heard that it did.

Members acknowledged the intention to move to a 'character over density' policy approach to house building in the Local Plan, and asked how many homes the Local Plan would facilitate in delivering and whether this had led to any trade-offs in achieving targets. The Cabinet Member for Planning & Regeneration responded that housing targets would be unchanged, but the emphasis had shifted to a design and character led approach.

The Chair asked if Croydon would be adopting a tall buildings policy, and heard from the Spatial Planning Plan Making Team Leader that it would and that this was required under the London Plan.

Recommendation

The Sub-Committee welcomed the inclusion of the Green Grid and Local Green Spaces in the Local Plan Review, and recommended that Blue Corridors (watercourses and natural ponds) were explicitly referenced and considered in this area of work.

32/23 Cabinet Response to Scrutiny Recommendations

The Sub-Committee noted the report.

33/23 Scrutiny Work Programme 2023-24

The Sub-Committee commented on the possibility of adding the following to its work programme:

- Vision Zero
- Road Safety, illegal parking and 20mph
- Street Lighting

The meeting ended at 9.29 p.m.

Signed:

Date:

.....

.....