

Scrutiny Streets & Environment Sub-Committee

Meeting held on Tuesday, 11 July 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 Scott Roche (Cabinet Member for Streets and Environment)
Councillor Rowenna Davis (Present Virtually)

Apologies: None

PART A

16/23 Apologies for Absence

There were none.

17/23 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

18/23 Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

19/23 Urgent Business (if any)

There were no items of urgent business.

20/23 Period 1 Financial Performance Report

The Sub-Committee considered a report set out on pages 43 to 58 of the agenda that provided the Cabinet Report on Period 1 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 Director of Sustainable Communities introduced the item.

The Chair asked about the timeline for resolving issues with the ANPR camera contract, and heard that conversations were ongoing with the contractor and that it was hoped issues would be fully resolved by the end of August 2023. In response to questions from the Vice-Chair, Members heard that there had been a delay in the rollout of cameras for some School and Healthy Streets, which had lowered the forecasted income for these areas in 23/24. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that they would not be able to comment on the loss of income to the Council in the current year due to commercial sensitivity.

The Sub-Committee asked about the possible additional financial burdens that the Council might face as a result of the Environment Act 2021, noting the government funding that had been announced to assist Councils in delivering some aspects of the legislation. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that the Council would lobby government to ensure it received all available funding, and gave some examples of the possible changes the Act could bring, for example, no longer being able to charge for the collection of garden waste and the introduction of deposit return schemes. The Chair asked if there was a requirement on delivering 'Biodiversity Net Gain' in the Act, and the Director of Sustainable Communities committed to answering this question after the meeting.

Requests for Information

The Sub-Committee requested that information on the percentage Biodiversity Net Gain the Council would be asked to achieve as a result of the Environment Act 2021 be provided once available, alongside any risks to not achieving this target.

Conclusions

The Sub-Committee requested that a briefing on ANPR cameras be provided to Members once issues with the ANPR contract were resolved, and that the Chair of the Scrutiny & Overview Committee also be invited to attend.

21/23 Cabinet Report: Parking Policy Transformation Project

The Sub-Committee considered a report set out on pages 3 to 22 of the supplementary agenda, which provided the draft Parking Policy and Action Plan 2023, due for consideration at Cabinet on the 26th July 2023. The Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment introduced the item followed by some additional commentary from the Head of Highways & Parking Services.

The Sub-Committee enquired as to how the 'Key Policy Drivers' had been chosen, and the Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that these had been chosen to ensure that the policy was customer focussed and served the Mayor's Business Plan whilst delivering efficiencies where possible. The Chair asked how this policy would fit into Croydon's wider transport policy, which it was noted would be coming up for renewal soon. The Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that the Parking Policy Project Board had been attended by Strategic Transport officers so that they could feed into its development and ensure it aligned with their own work.

The Vice-Chair asked about delivery milestones and how the success of the Policy would be measured. The Sub-Committee heard that a more defined Action Plan would be developed once the consultation on the policy had concluded, and that this would include a timeline for achieving each action.

Members raised concerns about the resources available to deliver a new Parking Policy. The Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that this sat under the Council's Transformation Programme, and had been allocated transformation funding of £200,000 for the development and implementation of the Policy. External resources had been brought in where specialist work would need to be undertaken, for example on designing kerbside controls, and someone was already in post for this; specialist consultants had supported the development and initial delivery of the consultation on the Policy. The Sub-Committee heard that data would be used in a more effective way going forward, and that the 38 Civil Enforcement Officers currently employed by the Council would be deployed in a more targeted way. The Council had an established Parking Design team, which sat in within Highways, and would be responsible for delivering changes that resulted from the new Policy. The Sub-Committee asked about the timeline for implementation of the new Policy, and heard that it was expected that the Policy would go out to public consultation for six weeks in summer 2023, with delivery of the full Policy expected to be implemented by the end of the 24/25 financial year.

Members asked how communication with residents would be undertaken to ensure that they were aware of what was changing with parking in Croydon and that individuals were not unfairly penalised. The Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that the Council had learnt lessons from its consultations on Healthy Neighbourhoods and School Streets schemes, and would be using a multi-channelled approach for communications, including workshops, publications on the Council website and on social media. In response to questions about whether there would be a 'bedding in period' on any Policy changes with warnings for first time offences for an initial period, Members heard the Council had already adopted this approach.

In response to questions about the budget impact of the Policy, Members heard that the policy was expected to deliver £250,000 in efficiencies under the Transformation Programme, but that currently only impacts on potential income were being modelled, as the Policy had not yet gone out for consultation. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that resident

behaviours had changed over the last few years, and that modelling this was one of the key challenges in developing a new Policy. The Sub-Committee heard that, whilst it was acknowledged that free parking in certain areas was important, the turnover of parked vehicles was central to ensuring that a balance was struck that could best support both residents and local businesses. The Director of Sustainable Communities highlighted a trial in Southend around pay and display machines, that was seeking to establish if meter feeding was taking place and explained that this would inform any future Policy changes.

The Chair asked if the Policy had been designed with the consideration of aims to increase walking and cycling journeys, increase the length of time people spent in District Centres, and reducing short distance car trips through a Public Health approach. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that this sat outside of the Parking Policy, but acknowledged it was important that the Policy was flexible enough to account for emerging policy in these areas through collaboration with Strategic Transport colleagues.

In response to questions from the Vice-Chair on the consultation process, the Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that the Communications team had been involved through the Parking Policy Project Board, and were mapping out a communication and consultation plan, accounting for the different methods and channels which could be used to engage residents. It was reiterated that the lessons learnt in consulting on previous schemes would be applied to the consultation, and that the Council website, social media and contacts from residents registered for 'My Account' would be used to target communications, as written communications to the entire borough would not be an efficient use of resource. Members heard RingGo had technology that could measure parking stress and duration of stay in specified areas, and this data would be used in developing the Policy. It was confirmed that the Policy would be a live document and would change over its lifetime to ensure it was still relevant and applicable, but that the Policy Objectives would remain fixed. The Head of Highways & Parking Services confirmed that the Parking department would be working with the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) across the Borough in shaping the Policy and identifying the needs of businesses in these areas. The Chair asked how District Centres without BIDs would be engaged with, and the Sub-Committee heard that there would be use of the Councils existing networks to identify and contact businesses, and that letter drops had been undertaken in Southend before the start of the current parking trial, which may be replicated for other areas in the future.

The Sub-Committee asked about the parking trial in South Croydon, and the Director of Sustainable Communities explained that the number of overall transactions had reduced, whilst income had increased. Members were asked not to take this information as conclusive as the scheme had not yet concluded, but that initial findings implied that there had been meter reading in this area.

Members asked if transport assessments had been undertaken in different localities across the borough to account for their differences to ensure that any policy applied would be effective. The Head of Highways & Parking Services acknowledged that kerbside policy could not be 'one size fits all' to be effective, and that currently policy varied by area; it was expected that this approach would be continued following the consultation. The Sub-Committee heard that kerbside data collection would be used to support the development of policy and that the approach to different localities would be data-led.

The Sub-Committee asked if there would be a discount to tariffs for Electric Vehicles (EVs), or if there would be emissions based tariffs. The Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that this was currently the case, but that no decisions had yet been made for the new Policy on emissions based parking. Members heard that 400 EV parking spaces had been implemented on the highway by the end of 22/23, and that it needed to be reviewed whether EV charging spaces on the highway was the right approach going forward, but that this would be a matter for the new Transport Strategy. The Chair asked if the Council's current tariffs were comparable with other London boroughs. The Head of Highways & Parking Services responded that benchmarking activities had taken place looking at tariffs and permits, and that the average EV parking permit in London sat at around £34, but was currently £6.50 in Croydon; this would be reviewed as part of the new Policy.

The Vice-Chair asked if there were plans to remove EV discounts in pay and display tariffs. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that this would be looked at as a part of reviewing pay and display charges, but that no decision had yet been made. The Vice-Chair asked what consultation findings would suggest that this was an action that needed to be taken, and the Director of Sustainable Communities explained that it would depend on whether residents felt the current charges were fair. The Vice-Chair asked for assurances that any changes would be done in the interests of fairness, and not for financial reasons. The Director of Sustainable Communities responded that they were clear on their responsibilities under the Transport Act to set parking charges that covered the cost of running the service, with any surplus being reinvested into transport related activity; currently all surplus from parking charges went to funding Croydon's contributions to the Freedom Pass scheme.

The Sub-Committee asked about EV tariffs in the current policy, and heard that these had been implemented to incentivise people to invest in lower emission vehicles, but it was acknowledged that this alone had probably not been a significant driver in encouraging consumers to purchase EVs. The Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment elaborated that those who could afford EVs were least likely to need the tariff discount.

In response to questions about the aims of reducing parking allocations in new developments, the Director of Sustainable Communities explained that the Policy had been developed in close collaboration with Planning Colleagues to ensure that it was complimentary to the Local Plan. Members heard that new properties could create challenges for on-street parking which

could lead to the Parking department being asked to consult on the introduction of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs), which were often unpopular with residents. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that the new Policy would seek to look at the introduction of alternatives to CPZs. The Chair asked about how CPZs were mapped across the borough, and the Director of Sustainable Communities explained that a map was available on the Council website. The Sub-Committee commented that the map was of poor quality and required improvement.

The Chair asked how the Policy would be made to fit for individual District Centres and the Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that, should the current trial in Southend be successful, then RingGo would be rolled out further, which would allow wider data collection to shape policies that accounted for local differences. The Chair asked if any additional cashless parking trials would be considered for areas of the borough with different parking pressures, and the Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that the move to cashless parking did not form a part of the Policy and had previously been agreed at Budget Council in March 2022. Once this was fully rolled out, more granular detail would be available due to the absence of cash payments, and this data could be used to better inform policy decisions.

The Sub-Committee asked how the Council would ensure that disabled bays were still in the most accessible places for Blue Badge holders, and that Croydon was following best practice to support disabled residents. The Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that the Blue Badge scheme was a national initiative that sat with the person and not a vehicle. The Sub-Committee heard that as part of the Policy, there would be a review of where Blue Badge holders could park, but that holders were not currently restricted to just parking in disabled bays, and could park on single yellow lines or in pay and display bays for an unlimited time. It was noted that some disabled bays were time limited to ensure there was good turnover in areas with higher parking pressures. The Sub-Committee asked about roadways that were inaccessible for wheelchair users due to footway parking. The Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that it was an ambition of the Policy to tackle this, but it was not yet known exactly how this would be done; footway parking would be reviewed to ensure it was not detrimental to the accessibility of other highway users.

Members asked how it would be ensured that those who genuinely needed Blue Badges were not unfairly penalised by the Blue Badge fraud initiative, and how fraud would be tackled. The Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that the Travel Services department in the Council were responsible for working with the national Blue Badge database, and that Civil Enforcement Officers had recently been given access to this information so that they could report any Blue Badges listed in the database as stolen. The Sub-Committee heard that the full action plan to tackle Blue Badge fraud was still under development.

The Vice-Chair asked that particular effort be made to engage with disabled residents, as well as disability interests groups, to ensure their views were

captured. The Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that work on this was already planned, and that the department was in contact with individuals who had previously contributed their views to past highways change schemes, as well as disability interest groups. Members highlighted that there should be joined up working with the police to tackle Blue Badge fraud that relied on the theft of permits.

Members encouraged officers to ensure that disabled bay placements were in the absolute most accessible locations for Blue Badge holders. The Vice-Chair asked about the average wait time for requested disability bays outside of residences, and it was stated that this could be provided outside of the meeting. The Sub-Committee asked about enforcement for the misuse of disabled bays, and heard that enforcement could be reactive if residents called the Council enforcement hotline or reported through the 'Love Clean Streets' app. Members asked if there was any data on how often a resident reports through the hotline or app led to an enforcement action, and the Director of Sustainable Communities said that this data could be provided outside of the meeting.

The Sub-Committee asked about the possibility of feedback for residents who reported parking offences, as to whether this had led to an enforcement action. The Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that these reports did go through to enforcement supervisors in real-time, but the current software did not allow for feedback to the reporting resident. Members commented that this lack of feedback could be frustrating for residents, and the Director of Sustainable Communities responded that this was something that could be looked at in future. The Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment explained that it was hoped that intelligence-led enforcement would reduce this frustration by targeting enforcement at hotspot areas, the identification of which would be informed by resident reporting.

The Chair asked if 'White Badges' were being considered for Croydon, and was informed that this was not currently being considered. In response to questions on where Croydon sat nationally for Blue Badge fraud, it was heard that this was not currently known, but it was expected that this would be similar to other London boroughs. Members asked about the number of Blue Badges in use in Croydon, and the Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that numbers were available for those issued in Croydon, but not for those issued outside of the borough but being used on Croydon streets.

Members asked about areas of persistent parking violations away from District Centres, such as outside of schools, and whether any additional enforcement resources would be directed to these. The Head of Highways & Parking Services responded that, as part of the rollout of the School Streets programme, there was a rota of where Civil Enforcement Officers were deployed to schools at drop off and pick up times. Safer Neighbourhood Teams had also been contacted so that they could engage with school communities to ensure the behaviour of parents and carers was not causing road safety incidents. The Sub-Committee explained that anecdotally they were aware of schools where this was not happening, and asked if Civil

Enforcement Officers could attend to provide a deterrent. The Director of Sustainable Communities asked that Members provided the relevant details and that this could then be looked into.

The Vice-Chair commented on parking enforcement in Croydon, and that this was poor in their view, but that they welcomed the policy on 'intelligence-led enforcement'; the Vice-Chair stated that they would like to see strong communications from the Council when new enforcement initiatives were introduced and actions taken, as they felt that this would provide a good soft deterrent. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that the Council did issue a large number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) for contravention, and that a breakdown of PCNs issued by Civil Enforcement Officers or camera could be provided if requested. The Sub-Committee heard that these were issued across Croydon, not just in the Town Centre, and information on the distribution of where PCNs were issued could also be provided. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that it was the ambition of the new Policy to 'follow the data' to make sure enforcement action was focussed where parking contraventions were taking place.

The Sub-Committee asked what would be done for residents affected by 'digital exclusion' with the removal of pay and display machines, and if any educational communications would be provided to assist residents with the transition. The Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that it was not necessarily the case that all pay and display machines would be removed, and that payments could be made by phone call or app. The Sub-Committee heard that the Council had looked at other boroughs who had moved to cashless parking, and that a number of alternative payment options were being considered, including through shops using 'PayPoint'. The Chair asked if visitor vouchers had been considered, and the Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that it had been discussed in the round.

Members asked for clarity on whether 'efficient' in the policy referred to efficient use of the roadway, or budget efficiencies. The Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that this was about making the best use of the Council's resources by best using technology, and removing duplication of work in the service. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that some processes had to be done on paper by legislation that did provide some limits on the efficiencies that could be achieved. The Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment added that it also meant efficiency through everyone paying the same tariffs, as currently those not paying through the app were charged at the highest rate; it was confirmed that those paying by phone were charged at the correct tariff when they provided their car details.

Members asked why RingGo had been chosen as the provider when there were a substantial number of negative reviews of the company. The Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that this had been chosen through a contract framework in 2022, but that work was ongoing to unify parking app experiences for parking users at a national level through the Department for Transport.

The Sub-Committee asked about communications with residents to ensure they understood the virtual permit process, and the Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that residents with access to email would receive a confirmation, and that the details of the permit would be accessible on their individual profile; a reminder email was sent to residents ahead of the permits expiry.

Members asked what provisions there were to mitigate for when things went wrong, for example if RingGo's service went down. The Head of Highways & Parking Services explained that there were service level agreements with RingGo that meant that their service needed to be available 99% of the time, with defined escalations for outages and penalties in the contract. In the instance of an outage, the Council would be contacted but not individual residents, and this data was used when residents appealed PCNs that were issued in error due to a RingGo outage.

Requests for information

The Sub-Committee requested that the results of South Croydon trial parking scheme were provided to Members once available, including what KPIs were used and the performance against these.

The Sub-Committee requested that data was provided showing the number of resident calls to the parking enforcement hotline and reports to the 'Love Clean Streets' app, and the number of enforcement actions that resulted from these reports.

The Sub-Committee requested that information on the timeline for reviewing kerbside parking be provided.

The Sub-Committee requested information on the number of active Blue Badge permits issued in Croydon.

The Sub-Committee requested that they were updated with the solutions being sought by the Council on inaccessible footways as a result of parking.

The Sub-Committee requested that the average wait-time for requested disabled parking bays outside of residences be provided.

The Sub-Committee requested information on the number of PCNs issued be provided, including a breakdown on the areas where these were issued and whether they were issued by a Civil Enforcement Officer or a camera.

Recommendations

1. The Sub-Committee recommended that 'Letter Drops', or similar targeted communications, on Parking Policy were undertaken for District Centres that had not already been engaged, or who were not

actively being engaged through Business Improvement Districts before any changes to the Parking Policy are enacted.

2. The Sub-Committee recommended that an improved parking map was developed for the Council website, which included Controlled Parking Zones and Restricted Parking Areas.
3. The Sub-Committee recommended that a Task Group was established for engaging with disabled residents and disabled-led organisations (such as Transport for All) on parking policy, to ensure that disabled parking bays were best placed on the road for users and that roads and footways were accessible, to tie in with the Policy three - 'Supporting our Disabled Residents'.
4. The Sub-Committee requested that the Council should provide follow up communication to residents who reported parking for enforcement action through the parking hotline or 'Love Clean Streets' app.
5. The Sub-Committee recommended that there was comprehensive communications with residents should areas transition from parking meters to cashless parking, including a full publicity campaign and video walk-through.

22/23 Consultation on the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

The Sub-Committee considered a report set out on pages 59 to 116 of the agenda, which provided an update the ongoing consultation with residents, local businesses, and other stakeholders on a draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Croydon. The Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment and Senior Engineer introduced the item and went through the presentation at Appendix 3.

The Chair commented on the thoroughness of the Draft Strategy, but raised concerns that quarterly meetings of the Flood Group had not taken place for a long time, and that the Flood Risk Action Plan had not been reviewed since 2021, which suggested a lack of resources. The Senior Engineer explained that the Draft Strategy had been developed to be deliverable within the available resources, and that the Action Plan would continue to be reviewed quarterly; currently the Flood Group was internal, but would invite external partners where appropriate to contribute. The last meeting of the Group had taken place recently, and the next date could be provided after the meeting.

The Sub-Committee asked how consultation results could feed into what was a complex and technical Strategy. The Senior Engineer explained that the consultation was in two parts, one looking at whether the objectives of the Strategy were correct, and the second looking to collect resident intelligence on flood risks the Council may not be aware of. The Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment explained that every effort had been made to reduce

jargon and to make the Strategy and consultation as accessible as possible. The Chair asked how residents who were at higher risk of flood would be engaged, and heard that this group would be directly targeted for their involvement. Members asked if the Council kept flooding reports, and if this data would be used to target communications. The Senior Engineer explained that there was an action in the Action Plan to make sure the information collected on flooding events was consistent through development of a template for use in the contact centre; currently data was logged on an Excel spreadsheet stored in a SharePoint and specific information from this could be provided to residents on request. The Chair asked if data was collected on the source of a flood, and whether the Flood Incident Register could be published on the website. The Senior Engineer explained that this data was collected where available, but that there were no plans to publish the Register, although information from the Register was available to residents on request. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that the statutory Section 19 flooding reports the Council produced were published on the website; the Chair stated that one had not been published since 2017, and the Senior Engineer explained the circumstances that would require a Section 19 report to be produced.

Members asked if there was a specific department responsible for flood risk, and heard that this sat in Highways, but that many departments worked together through the Flood Risk group to meet the Council's obligations. The Sub-Committee asked if the Council had the resources to deliver on the Strategy within current limited resources. The Director of Sustainable Communities responded that the consultation would be important in determining the resources needed to deliver the Strategy, and that the final report for Cabinet would take this into consideration. The Chair asked what lessons had been learned from the previous Strategy, and how these would feed into the new iteration. The Senior Engineer explained that the original Strategy had been the Council's first attempt, and that it had some issues. There had been significant efforts to simplify the Strategy, and to remove jargon, as well as making sure actions in the Action Plan were achievable and manageable. Members asked about the impact the loss of trees through development had on flood risk and whether an arborist had been consulted in its development. The Senior Engineer stated they had not, but that they would take this away as an action.

The Sub-Committee asked about the maintenance of drainage through cleaning, repair and pumping, and how often this was being conducted and whether the condition of these assets was recorded. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that not all of these systems were owned by the Council, but that there were around 25,000 road gullies on the highway that were on an annual cleaning programme; it was acknowledged that there were challenges around this with parked cars blocking access at times. The frequency of drainage cleansing in known flood risk areas was conducted quarterly, with some cleansed even more regularly. There were around 3,500 soakaways across the borough that were also on a cyclical cleaning programme. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that some of the networks were the responsibility of water authorities, particularly where

there were combined foul and surface water sewers, who the Council engaged with in its role as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). The Sub-Committee heard that one of the challenges in developing the Strategy was the lack of, or inconsistent, data, but that new technology was now being used, such as flow monitoring of rivers and deep bore ground water monitoring, which allowed the Council to react to flood risk faster. The Director of Sustainable Communities commented on the importance of providing flood prevention advice to residents who were at risk; this involved engagement at resident meetings, publicising available funding, leafleting and speaking with individuals where possible to provide advice on possible mitigations. Members heard that the Council was looking to have a more co-ordinated and efficient approach through the new Strategy, in providing advice on flood mitigations, active flood prevention and its reaction to flooding events.

Members asked if the Council had any enforcement or powers to compel utility companies where they were not providing upkeep on flood prevention assets they owned. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that this power sat with the Environment Agency, but that one of the main challenges in Croydon was understanding where all of the infrastructure was, who it was owned by, and who was responsible for maintaining it. The Sub-Committee were informed that this was why engagement with the utility companies was so important in developing the new Strategy. The Chair asked about the Council's power to issue fines to utility companies, and it was explained that the Council granted permits for utility companies to work on the highway and could issue fines where the conditions of the permit were breached.

The Chair asked about engagement with residents around flood risk prevention and the Senior Engineer explained that they attended the Caterham and Old Coulson Flood Action Group, alongside officers from other authorities, to provide support to residents through leaflets and providing information on available funding. Where individuals approached the Council directly, they would speak with them to provide advice where possible. The Senior Engineer explained that they worked directly with utility companies to resolve any issues where their assets were contributing to flooding or flood risk, but where flooding was occurring on private land the Council was not necessarily able to intervene.

The Sub-Committee asked how the Council worked with partners like landowners, such as the Corporation of London, to reduce the risk of flooding. The Senior Engineer explained that they worked with landowners, where these could be identified, to make recommendations on methods that could reduce flooding risk. The Strategy did not include flood prevention methods on private land, but the Council would always work with residents to provide advice on measures they could implement to ensure that they were meeting their responsibilities for maintaining watercourses on their own land. The Director of Sustainable Communities confirmed that the Council could take legal action against landowners who were failing to uphold their responsibility for maintaining flood prevention measures on their property.

Members asked about sustainable urban drainage on developments, and whether work was being done with Planning colleagues on including this in the Local Plan as opposed to by condition on a per application basis. The Director of Sustainable Communities confirmed that there was a good relationship with the Planning department, and that the LLFA were a statutory consultee on all major development applications. The Director of Sustainable Communities explained that they could take away the suggestions on including sustainable urban drainage in the review of the Local Plan to the relevant director.

The Chair commented on the importance of nature-based solutions for flood prevention, and the Senior Engineer explained that the plan did not contain any specific measures, but that grant funding for this was available and that the Council was investigating if it met the criteria to apply for this. The Chair asked about how 'blue corridors' would be accounted for in the Strategy, and the Director of Sustainable Communities explained that there were plans to develop this further in Croydon, and encouraged Members to feed this into the consultation.

The Vice-Chair commented on the ambitious nature of the strategy, and asked how confident the Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment was that the Strategy was deliverable. The Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment responded that the full scale of the Strategy would only be apparent once the consultation was completed, but that they were confident that the final Strategy would be deliverable. The Sub-Committee heard that they would be tracking the progress of implementing the Strategy on a weekly basis, as they did with a number of areas.

Members explained that an interest group had approach Councillors about the South Norwood Lake, and asked the Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment if there was any planned work on the site, and if there were any known risks to the lake from Climate Change. The Sub-Committee heard that the Cabinet Member for Streets & Environment had met with the group a number of times since May 2022 to discuss a number of issues.

The Sub-Committee asked if there was any additional funding streams available outside of that available from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The Director for Sustainable Communities explained that the vast majority of the funding did come from DEFRA; once the Strategy was adopted, the resource profile would be looked at to ensure it could be delivered. Members commented that the work being done to standardise the information captured on flooding events was vital, as this information was important to ensuring the Council had accurate data to meet thresholds to receive DEFRA funding.

The Sub-Committee asked how private landowners were provided with flood prevention advice, and the Director of Sustainable Communities explained that there was substantial information on the Council website as well as the Environment Agency website. Where there were known flooding issues, or flooding investigations or Section 19 reports had been written, the Council

then looked at what prevention and mitigation methods could be put in place. The Director for Sustainable Communities stated that, where residents were at risk of imminent flooding, the Council would help through the Emergency Planning process. The Sub-Committee commented that a public awareness campaign on flooding could be very useful, and were informed that winter preparedness campaigns did feature flooding but it was acknowledged that this could be expanded.

Request for information

The Sub-Committee requested that they be provided with the next meeting date of the Council's internal Flood Risk Group.

Conclusions

The Sub-Committee concluded that a briefing should be provided to Members on how the Local Flood Risk Management fed into the development of the Local Plan.

Recommendations

1. The Sub-Committee recommended that the Flood Risk Register be published on the Council's website to ensure that this was transparent and accessible to residents.
3. The Sub-Committee recommended the implementation of a publicly accessible Geographic Information System (GIS) for Croydon.
4. The Sub-Committee recommended that an the expertise of an arborist be used to feed into the Strategy, and that more thought should be put into how Blue and Green corridors can be expanded, alongside other nature based solutions, to provide additional flood prevention measures using any available grant funding available to the Council.
5. The Sub-Committee recommended that the Council implement a year-round publicity campaign on flood prevention, as it felt that beginning this in the winter was too late to be as effective as possible.

23/23 Cabinet Response to Scrutiny Recommendations

The Vice-Chair highlighted recommendation 3 in Appendix 1, and that the data on the outcomes of experimental School Streets had not been provided to this meeting as planned, due to the department having not yet had time to analyse this information. The Sub-Committee noted that a report on this had been planned for Cabinet in July 2023, but had been deferred to September 2023. The Chair requested that a briefing on this be provided to Members before the report went to Cabinet.

24/23 Scrutiny Work Programme 2023-24

The Sub-Committee noted the report.

The meeting ended at 9.08 pm

Signed:

Date:

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