

## **Environment Sub Committee**

**Tuesday, 12 November 2019**

Present: Councillor B Burdis (Chair)  
Councillors A Austin, L Bell, G Madden, J Mole,  
J Cruddas, J Harrison, P McIntyre, E Parker-Leonard and  
S Phillips

Apologies: Councillors L Bartoli and K Osborne

### **E11/19 Appointment of Substitute Members**

Pursuant to the Council's constitution the appointment of the following substitute member was reported: -

Councillor P McIntyre for Councillor L Bartoli

### **E12/19 Declaration of Interests and Dispensations**

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.

### **E13/19 Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 September 2019 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

### **E14/19 Climate Emergency**

Consideration was given to a presentation which provided an update on the action which had been taken in relation to the Authority's declaration of a climate emergency in July 2019.

It was explained that the Authority had already taken steps to reduce its carbon footprint as part of its Low Carbon Plan 2016-2027. This Plan contained a target of reducing carbon emissions by 50% by 2027. Since the climate emergency had been declared by Council the aim was for the Borough to be carbon neutral by 2050 and for the 50% target to be brought forward to 2023. It was explained that due to the changes already introduced the Authority's carbon footprint had been reduced by 45% from the position in 2011. A breakdown of the various contributors to the Authority's carbon footprint was provided for the period 2010/11 and this was compared with the position in 2018/19 to demonstrate that significant improvements made, particularly in relation to street lighting in the Borough.

Reference was also made to the 39% reduction in the carbon footprint of the Borough between 2005 and 2017. It was noted that there had been significant reductions in carbon emissions in respect of industrial and commercial purposes as well as in respect of housing.

The Sub-committee was advised that work was currently ongoing to develop an action plan to bring forward measures to address the climate emergency. It was explained that there needed to be a collective approach to resolve the issues with input from all sectors of the community, including energy and transport providers. It was also explained that a further report would be presented to the Cabinet in July 2020.

Clarification was sought on the steps being taken to ensure that all future homes were carbon neutral and making use of existing and emerging technology, such as heat pumps, solar panels and car charging points. It was explained that the Government was currently consulting on a Future Homes Standard. Officers were currently consulting with colleagues to assess the implications of the proposals contained within the consultation document and the proposals for amendments to building regulations in respect of energy efficiency measures for new homes.

Reference was also made to the need to work with partners to deliver improvements to carbon emissions in the Borough. Although the Authority had reduced its vehicle fleet by 25% this was only a very small part of the traffic using roads in the Borough. It was noted that transport would need to be incorporated into the climate emergency action plan and this would require people to make changes to the way that they travelled. It was acknowledged that work would need to be undertaken to encourage businesses and residents to take steps to reduce their carbon footprint.

The role of the Authority's procurement processes in assisting the Authority to reduce its carbon footprint was also explored.

Reference was made to the need for Central Government to give a lead in relation to carbon reduction measures and to give direction to local authorities and businesses on how they could reduce their own carbon footprint.

The Chair thanked the officers for their presentation.

It was **agreed** that (1) the presentation be noted; and (2) a report be presented to a future meeting on the strategy and action plan being developed to address the climate emergency

## **E15/19            Tackling Environmental Crime**

The Sub-committee received a presentation which set out the steps taken by the Authority to address environmental crime, such as dog fouling, littering and flytipping, within the Borough. Details of the legislative frameworks under which the service operated were outlined together with the North Tyneside Enforcement Policy.

Reference was made to the works undertaken to try to stop problems occurring in the first place. These included working with young people in schools and nurseries to discourage littering. The service also worked with groups of young people to raise awareness of the problems associated with littering and dog fouling. In addition, the service made good use of social media to share information on the problems associated with dropping litter and not correctly dealing with dog fouling. Reference was also made to the use of social media to allow residents to report incidents of littering, dog fouling or flytipping.

The service also undertook a number of different environmental campaigns and initiatives

over the course of the year. These included the “Love Your Street” campaign, big spring cleans and regular estate clean ups.

In respect of environmental enforcement, it was noted that the enforcement team worked between 6.00am and 10.00pm each day and had access to a CCTV van and several mobile cameras. There was also a new environmental hit squad who would be used to deal with specific problem areas.

Reference was made to the 151 fixed penalty notices issued by the wardens for littering, flytipping and dog fouling. It was explained that the wardens would try an educational approach in the first instance to try to get people to change their behaviour. The issue of fixed penalty notices and court action would generally be for repeat offenders, serious cases of flytipping or where advice given by wardens was ignored.

In response to questions it was explained that less than 10 of the people who had been spoken to by the environmental wardens had then gone on to be issued with a fixed penalty notice for a second offence which demonstrated that the education first approach delivered positive results. Members were advised that 67% of the fixed penalty notices issued had been for littering offences although different areas of the borough had different issues.

It was explained that the future priorities of the service were to continue to raise awareness of environmental issues, promote environmental campaigns and work with ward councillors and communities to tackle environmental issues in their localities. The service would continue to take a proactive approach to tackle hot spot areas. A review of the environmental hit squad and the warden service would be undertaken as well as a three-yearly review of Public Spaces Protection Orders.

The Chair thanked the officers for their presentation

It was **agreed** that the presentation be received, and a further update be provided to a future meeting.