

## **LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW**

**CABINET – 22 JANUARY 2013**

**REFERENCE FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 18 DECEMBER 2012**

### **Draft Climate Change Action Plan and draft Delivering Warmer Homes (HECA) report**

Members received a report of the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise which set out the draft Climate Change Action Plan (Appendix D) and the draft Delivering Warmer Homes (HECA) report (Appendix I), which were reported to Cabinet on 22 November 2012. These draft strategies/plans were currently subject to public consultation and Overview and Scrutiny Committee were invited to consider and comment on the drafts. The Chair drew Members' attention to the fact that they were being invited to comment only on the two draft documents (Appendices D and I).

The officer reported that the report to Cabinet in November had provided details of progress of the existing Climate Change Strategy. Whilst there had been good progress in reducing carbon emissions, the officer gave a word of caution in that the previous winter had been particularly mild. In terms of Delivering Warmer Homes, the Council was required to submit a response to the consultation by 31 March 2013.

In considering the report, Members made comments and asked questions which included the following:

- Concern was expressed at the apparent inconsistencies between this and the previous report on the agenda (Changes in Public Realm Services), citing numerous examples, and the lack of joining up of information across the Council. The officer advised that Appendix A was the previous Action Plan which had included everything officers had thought might be required. Appendix D took a more 'broad brush' approach as it was now recognised that the previous Action Plan was too detailed. A consequence of this was that reports had had to summarise a large amount of the information received from a number of departments.
- A Member, referring to page 96 of the report, stated that the population figure was not included in the waste section of Appendix D but that somehow the waste per head and recycling figures were included without this figure. He questioned why, on page 14 of the previous report the figures differed. The officer reassured Members that Appendix D would be completed prior to its further consideration by Cabinet in March 2013 and that these figures would be checked. The figures relating to number of households and population were provided by the Environment Agency.
- There appeared to be no mention of the two main strands in relation to the Council's carbon footprint within Appendix D. In addition, carbon emissions did not appear to have been considered during the commissioning process and there was no activity that monitored the carbon impact of capital spend or

commissioning. The officer drew Members' attention to the section in the Appendix which recorded the Council's carbon footprint and stated that the carbon impact of capital spending was taken into account as part of the capital bidding process but accepted that more weight could be given to this. Another Member stated that there should be a way of ensuring that the embedded carbon effect of capital spend was monitored and recorded. The officer replied that, at present, embedded carbon was not measured and that this would be a significantly more complicated exercise. Current government regulations did not require embedded carbon to be measured.

- In response to a Member's question in relation to paragraph 2.2.2 and the bid submission for Warmer Homes, Healthy People, the officer advised that £82,000 funding had been received and that the aim was to launch the scheme in January 2013. Officers were in contact with Age UK and the Citizens Advice Bureau with a view to allocating funding. He added that Harrow had submitted a joint bid with five other West London boroughs to DECC for various energy reduction projects. If the bid was successful this project would be delivered by the end of March 2013.
- In relation to the paragraphs on Biodiversity and the Natural Environment, a Member questioned how officers were going to ensure that the Council's plans were up to date given the financial constraints. The officer advised that this information had been provided by another team and he was therefore unable to answer detailed questions on this area. The Divisional Director added that the documents were currently draft and would be updated.
- A Member asked whether a new application for Harrow to be recognised as a Fair Trade Borough had been submitted. Officers undertook to check the position.
- A Member indicated that clarity was required in relation to the reference to the NHS's Cold Weather Plan and the 27,000 excess deaths during December and March each year. She stated that the report read as if these deaths were all in Harrow. The officer clarified that this was a national figure.
- The officer clarified that AMR was an abbreviation for Automatic Meter Reading. This technology allowed the Council to monitor energy use on a half-hourly basis in schools and corporate buildings and enabled energy wastage to be more easily identified.
- In response to a Member's question on businesses and the public sector, the officer advised that it had been difficult to get a response from SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) and that the Council was looking to work with the body replacing the Primary Care Trust on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Members expressed their dissatisfaction with the inconsistencies in the report and indicated that, in the future, they would like all relevant officers who were able to answer their detailed questions to attend the meeting. It was questioned how members of the public could make an informed decision when elected Members were having difficulty in getting the information they needed and it was stressed that the Members ensured that reports were complete, correct and meaningful. The

Chair suggested that some of the issues could be raised with the Corporate Director when she attended the Committee in February 2013 and that, if possible, a further draft be provided to the Committee at that meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee's comments be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

## **FOR CONSIDERATION**

### Background Documents:

Report submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18 December 2012

Draft minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 18 December 2012

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