

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA
ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE - 23 MARCH 2022
REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY MANAGER
WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is a review of the Select Committee's activities, reports and actions during the Municipal Year 2021/22 to deliver its annual work programme.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Select Committee is invited to note the review, including the work programme for the Municipal Year in Appendix 1 and the recommendations tracker and action tracker in Appendices 3 and 4.

3 WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22

- 3.1 The meeting on 23 March 2022 is the final meeting of the Municipal Year so it is timely to review the Select Committee's work programme for the Municipal Year and the work it has done to hold the Leadership Team to account and develop policy. The review is organised on the Committee's work programme own priorities of the Local Plan, net zero, environmental management and culture.

Local Plan

- 3.2 The Local Plan has had significant discussion during the Municipal Year. At the 1 July 2021 meeting there was a report on the new Local Plan in light of the London Plan. The select Committee discussed the effectiveness and provision of Neighbourhood Plans alongside the London and Local Plans. Evidence to the select Committee was clear that the Local Plan has to be in general conformity with the London Plan, which in turn has to be in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework. The new London Plan set out particular targets around housing delivery which the boroughs were expected to deliver. The select Committee discussed the balancing of the needs for new housing, conservation, greening, carbon, net zero, socially sustainable communities and providing good transport links and the challenges that this balancing could pose especially in tall and dense developments.
- 3.3 At its 28 September 2021 meeting the Committee scrutinised the New Local Plan Review Issues and Options document, which was also out for consultation. The scope of the meeting included how the draft Local Plan would relate to the London Plan, the Government's Planning White Paper and alignment with the Council Plan 2019-23. There was a particular focus on the plan's consideration of biodiversity, trees and community gardens, and how it will help to balance housing delivery with density, design quality, conservation areas, and sustainable communities. Members scrutinised the key chapters of the issues and options document in particular the chapters focusing on Green Blue Future, Homes, and Design. At the Environment Select Committee meetings in July and September public involvement was welcomed and representatives from the Chelsea Society and Kensington Society made contributions to the meetings.

- 3.4 As a result of the discussion at the meeting, the Committee organised its own session which to enable Andrew Boff AM, chair of the Planning and Regeneration Committee at the London Assembly, to give a presentation about his Committee's recent inquiry into Covid 19, Housing Typologies and Design in London. This took place on 13 January 2022. The session was held in public and heard in more detail about the findings of the inquiry from Andrew Boff AM. This included areas such as environmental, social, and cost impacts of different typologies, including tall buildings, the costs of tall buildings, viability and affordable housing provision density, quality of design, housing and post-Covid 19.
- 3.5 In terms of wider planning policy the Committee, at its 6 December 2021 meeting, considered an update on the implementation of the recommendations from the Planning Advisory Service Peer Review which had been carried out in 2020. The meeting discussed the progress by the Planning Service in embedding the 12 recommendations from the review and their contribution to improvements.

Net Zero

- 3.6 Scrutinising net zero has been a significant area of activity. This priority in the work programme reviewed the implementation of policies to deliver net zero 2030 for the Council's operations and services and 2040 for the borough. At the Select Committee on 2 February 2022 there was a particular focus on net zero 2030 with reports on progress in reducing emissions, and the Carbon Net Zero Offset Fund. The meeting also considered the Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022-2027. A recommendation was made to the Leadership Team on 9 March 2022 from the meeting. The Select Committee made particular use of a Centre for Governance and Scrutiny document on scrutinising climate change which in particular provided clarity about the definition of net zero and zero carbon in use.
- 3.7 Visits are an important method for Select Committee members to review and scrutinise the council's objectives and priorities as part of the work programme. In early October 2021 members of the Select Committee visited Lancaster West Estate, one of the council's flagship zero-carbon housing projects. The visit reviewed the work being carried out, specifically around the heat network and energy efficiency as a carbon net zero programme and was facilitated by the Lancaster West Neighbourhood Team and Lancaster West Residents' Association. Insight from the visit has helped to shape the Select Committee's own report and findings on net zero 2030 which will be agreed at the 23 March meeting.
- 3.8 The commitment for the borough to become net zero by 2040 was scrutinised at the Committee's 1 July meeting and this was followed up on 2 February 2022. As well as reviewing progress in reducing emissions, this included plans for engaging with stakeholders, residents and community organisations because the local authority's development of partnerships and convening different stakeholders was considered important for this policy to be achieved. At the 1 July meeting there was also consideration of decarbonisation of housing provided by housing associations, the social care sector, and the private rented sector. Members also looked at the implications for conservation area issues such as heat pumps and double glazing and well as transport issues such as logistics, the impact of home working and development of the shift to electric vehicles. The steps set out in the Climate Emergency Action Plan 2022-2027 for 2040 were also considered as part of the report on 2 February 2022.

Environmental Management

- 3.9 Street management and the environmental improvements to the borough's high streets were also considered by the Select Committee in the Municipal Year. At the meeting on 6 December 2021 Select Committee reviewed the contribution to the Council's cleaner, greener commitments of the Customer and Resident-focused Environmental Services Transformation (CREST) programme. This included how outcomes are being improved by the programme in its key areas of wardens and customer services, access and the customer journey. There was also consideration of the streetscape management of the borough's high streets.
- 3.10 Related to this area is the Business Improvement District (BID) programme in Brompton Road, Kings Road, and Kensington High Street. This discussion scheduled for the meeting on 23 March 2023 will focus on investment to help recovery from the impact of Covid 19, upgrades to the public realm, and local environment enhancements, as well as maximising the full potential of the high street offer, and promotion of the districts as cultural and visitor destinations.
- 3.11 In terms of environmental improvements at the meeting on 28 September 2021 members discussed a report based on a petition calling for the creation of a North Kensington Urban Forest and welcomed local residents to present their proposal to the Select Committee. The petition and prayer had been presented previously at a Full Council meeting on 21 July 2021. The discussion considered the proposal for planting of trees to create an urban forest in North Kensington, focused on Wornington Green, and co-design with residents.

Culture

- 3.12 Consideration of the delivery of a cultural programme has been scrutinised in-depth. At the Select Committee on 1 July 2021 there was discussion of the one-year Culture Plan, which included looking at the Creative Conversations scheme and co-working with organisations and individuals across the borough. There was discussion of the Kensington and Chelsea festival and the Triborough Music Hub. The Select Committee enquired about how the Council will be using the lessons learnt from last year's digital Notting Hill Carnival and the possibilities and potential of hybrid digital and in-person events in the future.
- 3.13 Members requested an update on the development of the Council's four-year Culture Plan 2022-2026 which is scheduled for the 23 March 2022 meeting. This will review the vision at the heart of the proposed Plan, the main priorities identified and how they will help to deliver an improved cultural offer to enable involvement by all residents and communities in the borough. Other key areas include the role of partners and partnerships to deliver the new plan, including work with major cultural institutions and organisations and delivery of cultural events such as the summer 2022 Kensington and Chelsea Festival.

FOR INFORMATION

Jacqui Hird
Scrutiny Manager

Background papers used in the preparation of this report: None other than previously published documents.

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Select Committees 2021-22

| Date of Meeting | Item | Outcomes | Source of Item | Lead Member/Officers |
|--------------------|---|---|--|--|
| 1 July 2021 | Culture Plan Update | Scrutiny of Outcomes | Annual Work Programme | Verena Cornwall, Head of Culture and Place Lead Member for Community Safety, Culture and Leisure Cllr Emma Will |
| | Development of Local Plan in Light of London Plan | Pre-scrutiny before plan is agreed by Council. | Annual Work Programme | Lead Member for Planning, Place and Environment, Cllr Johnny Thalassites Jon Wade, Head of Spatial Planning and Place |
| | Achieving RBKC 2040 Net Zero | Scrutiny of outcomes | Annual Work Programme | Lead Member for Planning, Place and Environment, Cllr Johnny Thalassites |
| | Select Committee Work Programme Report | Select Committee to review the work programme | Annual Work Programme | Jacqui Hird, Scrutiny Manager |
| 6 Dec 2021 | Borough's High Streets | Scrutiny of objectives and performance for service improvement. Policy development for repurposing borough's high streets. | Annual Work Programme | Lead Member for Planning, Place and Environment, Cllr Johnny Thalassites Sue Harris, Executive Director for Environment |
| | Planning Advisory Service Peer Review Update on Recommendations | Scrutiny of service improvement. | Environment Select Committee 6 July 2020 | Lead Member for Planning, Place and Environment, Cllr Johnny Thalassites Amanda Reid, Director Planning and Place Sue Foster, Interim Programme Director Place Shaping |
| | Select Committee Work Programme Report | Select Committee to review the work programme | Annual Work Programme | James Diamond, Scrutiny and Policy Officer Jacqui Hird, Scrutiny Manager |

| Date of Meeting | Item | Outcomes | Source of Item | Lead Member/ Officers |
|------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| 2 Feb 2022 | Achieving Borough Carbon Net Zero 2040 | Post-decision review of outcomes and performance to date in delivering net zero for the borough | Annual Work Programme ESC 1 July 2021 | Lead Member for Planning, Place and Environment, Cllr Johnny Thalassites Sue Harris, Executive Director for Environment |
| | Progress Report on Achieving the Council Carbon Net Zero 2030 Commitment. | Post-decision review of outcomes and performance to date in delivering net zero for the council's services and operations | Annual Work Programme | Lead Member for Planning, Place and Environment, Cllr Johnny Thalassites Sue Harris, Executive Director for Environment |
| | Update on Select Committee Report on Carbon Net Zero RBKC Operations 2030 | Policy development delivering in 2030 net zero objective for local authority | Annual Work Programme | Lead Member for Planning, Place and Environment, Cllr Johnny Thalassites Sue Harris, Executive Director for Environment |
| | Carbon Offset Fund | Policy development | Environment Select Committee Working Group | Lead Member for Planning, Place and Environment, Cllr Johnny Thalassites Terry Oliver, Director of Cleaner, Greener Cultural Services |
| | Select Committee Work Programme Report | Select Committee to review the work programme | Annual Work Programme | James Diamond, Scrutiny and Policy Officer Jacqui Hird, Scrutiny Manager |
| 23 March 2022 | Culture Plan Update | Review of outcomes in delivering the one-year Culture Plan, and development of the Culture Strategy | Annual Work Programme ESC 1 July 2021 | Lead Member for Culture, Leisure and Community Safety Cllr Emma Will Verena Cornwall, Head of Culture and Place |
| | Business Improvement Districts | Review of outcomes | Annual Work Programme | Economy Employment and Innovation, Cllr Catherine Faulks Verena Cornwall, Head of Culture and Place |
| | Select Committee Work Programme Report | Select Committee to review the work programme | Annual Work Programme | James Diamond, Scrutiny and Policy Officer Jacqui Hird, Scrutiny Manager |

Select Committee Visits 2021/22

| Date of Visit | Item | Outcomes | Source of Item | Lead Member/Officers |
|---------------------|--|--|-----------------------|--|
| October 2021 | Lancaster West Estate carbon net zero scheme | Review the completion of carbon net zero programme | Annual Work Programme | Cllr Kim Taylor-Smith, Deputy Leader, Grenfell, Housing and Property James Caspell, Neighbourhood Director Doug Goldring, Director of Housing Management |

Select Committee Briefing etc. Sessions 2021/22

| Date | Item | Detail | Further information |
|------------------------|--|---|---|
| 13 January 2022 | Andrew Boff AM Presentation on Covid 19, Housing Typologies and Design in London Inquiry | Inquiry by the Planning and Regeneration Committee of the London Assembly, focusing on environmental, social, and cost impacts of different typologies, including tall buildings the costs of tall buildings, viability and affordable housing provision, density, the quality of design, and implications post-Covid 19. | Information on the Environment Select Committee RBKC webpage , and recording of session on RBKC YouTube channel . |

SUPPORTING THE WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Team will:

- Work with the Chair and Vice Chair to manage the annual work programme;
- Provide support for scrutiny members including providing advice on scrutiny in line with the 2019 Statutory Guidance and best practice, and producing briefing papers, background materials, key lines of enquiry, and arranging seminars or briefings for members.
- Carry out and commission qualitative and quantitative research to support topics including data gathering and analysis, case studies and examples of good practice to inform the scrutiny process;
- Source external experts to contribute information to agenda items at formal meetings and to working groups;
- Support working groups, including managing the project plan; drafting terms of reference; providing advice on virtual and remote techniques to gather evidence and engage with stakeholders during the health emergency, and drafting reports in consultation with the chair; and promote scrutiny across the council and externally including production of reports and publicity to show what has changed as a result.

Each select committee has an allocated Governance Administrator who will:

- Co-ordinate and administer agenda planning meetings with the Chair, Vice Chair, scrutiny and senior officers in advance of committee meetings. This will include advising officers and partner agencies of the information required;
- Administer the committee meetings including sending out agenda papers to councillors;
- Produce the minutes of the meeting and update the action and recommendations trackers;
- Provide governance support to working groups and conferences including arranging venues and providing administrative support; and
- Develop and manage a database of residents and other stakeholders who wish to be kept informed of scrutiny work.

As part of the implementation of the work programme in the year, the select committee will:

- Meet formally five times a year to review evidence gathered and agree recommendations in relation to scrutiny reviews they are conducting;
- Call the relevant Lead Member to attend a meeting to set out their plans, and to return at the end to be questioned on progress;
- Hold additional evidence gathering sessions and events as appropriate to the topic of each review. These will hear from a range of experts from the local area and beyond (including residents);
- Proactively promote and encourage public participation in reviews;
- Ensure that the voice of vulnerable residents is heard;
- Consider appointing co-optees (from appropriately constituted and representative relevant organisations) for specific reviews;
- Monitor, track and communicate progress in responding to scrutiny recommendations.