

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

# Climate Change and Ecology Policy and Accountability Committee

## Minutes



Tuesday 23 April 2024

### **PRESENT**

**Committee members:** Councillors Nicole Trehy (Chair), Stala Antoniadou, and Jose Afonso

**Other Councillors:** Councillors Wesley Harcourt (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology)

#### **Officers:**

Bram Kainth (Strategic Director of Environment)

Hinesh Mehta (Assistant Director Climate Change)

Phoebe Shaw Stewart (Ecology Lead, Climate Change and Transport)

Georgia Turner (Senior Engineer Healthy Streets)

Jessica Bastock (Service Manager Healthy Streets)

Mark Raisbeck (Director of Public Realm)

Amrita White (Committee Coordinator)

### 1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ross Melton & Laura Janes

### 2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### 3. **MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 were agreed as an accurate record.

### 4. **FLOOD RISK AND ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

Jessica Bastock (Service Manager Healthy Streets) and Phoebe Shaw Stewart (Ecology Lead, Climate Change and Transport) provided a presentation on flood risk and greening the grey. They showed slides which covered the following key aspects:

### Flood Risk

- The Council had a duty to manage surface water, groundwater, and ordinary water courses.
- Fluvial/tidal and surface water flood risk within the borough
- The projects and plans in place to help manage flood risk.
- The flood risk action plan, which included actions such as statutory duties, collaboration, communication, maintenance, and emergency planning.
- Guidance in place, including updating the website to make this more interactive for users.

### Greening the grey

- The aim was to reduce and adapt grey infrastructure and increase green infrastructure within the borough.
- The benefits of green infrastructure included cleaner air, reduction in flood risk, create cool spaces and adapt to the effects of changing climate.
- Green verges, contributed to creating ecological corridors and permeable surfaces.
- Green Sustainable urban Drainage System (SuDS) features were used across the borough and provided benefits such as tackling surface water flooding and improving biodiversity.
- Benefits of green roofs, trees, and tree pits (tree strategy in final stages)
- Resident involvement to encourage more greening on private land (free tree/bulb/seed giveaways)

Georgia Turner (Senior Engineer Healthy Streets) gave an overview of the current programme of works to be delivered in 2024/25. These were planned for Westville Road, King Street, Addison Gardens, Edith Road, New Kings Road, Marinefield Road, Grove Mews and Blythe Road. This would increase the amount of green infrastructure and in most cases, include SuDS features such as rain gardens and engineered tree pits on the public highway. As the year progressed this list may include further projects. Of these schemes two schemes would involve working with local schools. These were Greenside Primary School and Langford Primary School.

The Chair thanked officers for their presentations and requested additional clarification regarding the implementation of SuDS. In response Jessica Bastock explained that the objective of SuDS was to mimic natural drainage systems to manage rainwater. SuDS aimed to reduce surface water flooding and improve water quality. This would be achieved by lowering flow rates and increasing water storage capacity. With regards to hard surfaces, options being explored were block paving where water would drain between the blocks into the ground or permeable paving surfaces.

The Chair enquired about the extent of the Council's influence in ensuring that new developments implement a strategy for SuDS but also carry out necessary works. Jessica Bastock noted that the Council had significant influence on this process,

especially during the initial stages of development. She highlighted that there were ample opportunities within development sites and mentioned that as part of the Council's existing policy, drainage plans were reviewed to ensure they met the greenfield runoff rate. This would be achieved by reducing the flow of water to the sewage system and through the implementation of SuDS.

The Chair followed up with a question regarding the green investment fund and whether it would be utilised to fund schemes for SuDS across the borough. In response Georgia Turner noted that some of the schemes within this financial year were being funded by the green investment fund. Officers initially put together a bid to ensure that the schemes met the criteria of the fund. The schemes that had been secured were Westville Road, Edith Road (budget of £200k), Marinefield Road (budget of £70k) and Blythe Road (budget of £100k)

Councillor Jose Afonso enquired about the long-term maintenance plans for the newly implemented green verges along New Kings Road. In response Jessica Bastock explained that wildflower turf offered easier maintenance compared to traditional grass verges. It required only two cuts annually, allowing the remaining time for blossoming.

Councillor Jose Afonso asked a follow up question, enquiring about the quantity of council houses equipped with green roofs. Phoebe Shaw Stewart explained that currently there were not many council houses with green roofs due to the design of the traditional council buildings. However, officers were exploring options for retrofitting green roofs throughout the borough. In the construction of new council houses, incorporating green roofs was being considered from the outset during the design phase.

Councillor Jose Afonso asked how widely the scheme for free tree/bulb/seed giveaways had been promoted. Phoebe Shaw Stewart noted that this had been promoted through all of the Council's channels and groups, including the climate connect newsletter. Tree giveaways would be scheduled during the winter months, while seed giveaways would be organised during the spring and summer months at local climate change events.

Councillor Stala Antoniades, relating to the greening of Bishops Park, enquired about the disposal method for the dug-up concrete. Phoebe Shaw Stewart explained that within the procurement process, consideration would be given to the full lifecycle of the materials being excavated, whenever feasible these materials would be recycled and repurposed on site to minimise waste.

Councillor Stala Antoniades enquired about any incentives available for residents with private gardens to encourage the removal of concrete or de-paving of their gardens. Jessica Bastock noted that while there were currently no incentives in place, officers were exploring de-paving projects to facilitate residents. This support might include assistance with waste removal or providing small skips to aid the process.

Councillor Stala Antoniadou, followed up with a question, asking if there was any biodiversity advice available for residents interested in implementing green roofs. In response Phoebe Stewart noted that residents could access biodiversity advice by contacting the council directly. She also offered to share additional resources with the Committee after the meeting.

**ACTION: Phoebe Shaw Stewart**

A resident raised several questions: Firstly, regarding the maintenance cost of green verges in the long term. Secondly, whether allergies were being considered with the implementation of grass surfaces. Thirdly if there would be additional collection services during the autumn months due to the extra trees planted. Lastly, expressing concerns about the location of the SuDS and whether they would occupy parking space on the roads. In response Phoebe Shaw Stewart noted that the green verges would be cut twice a year, and the cost of maintenance for these was included in the current contract. Relating to the allergies, these were taken into consideration, although complete eradication was challenging. Additional feedback would be provided by the air quality team on how this issue was being managed.

**ACTION: Phoebe Stewart**

Jessica Bastock noted that the waste collection team already had extra collections scheduled for the autumn/winter months, which were also included as part of their contract. Georgia Turner highlighted that a comprehensive consultation would take place with affected residents and businesses to minimise any parking disruptions related to the location of the SuDS. Additionally concerning the Addison Gardens scheme, the concept design aimed to avoid removing any parking spaces.

The Chair requested additional clarification on the purpose of the fences in Wormholt Ward, used to protect green spaces. Phoebe Shaw Stewart clarified that most of the fences in the parks were temporary and intended to facilitate the establishment of plantings. The only permanent fences would be those for dog areas or play areas. Mark Raisbeck (Director of Public Realm) requested additional information on the location of the fences so officers could assess them, emphasising that if the fences were no longer necessary, they should be removed. Additionally, all cost implications also needed to be considered.

**ACTION: Mark Raisbeck**

Councillor Wesley Harcourt (Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology) noted that the Climate Change Supplementary Planning document which offered guidance, covered many aspects of the discussions held during the meeting. He highlighted that a new requirement for biodiversity net gain had come into place for new developments. He also pointed out some good work of green roofs in the Queen Caroline Estate. Furthermore, relating to allergies it was noted that silver birch trees had been banned due to the potential risk they posed to asthma sufferers.

A resident made several points regarding the schemes in place throughout the borough. She expressed concerns about the maintenance of these sites, questioning what measures were in place to address this. She also asked further clarification to

be provided on the Westville Road Scheme. Georgia Turner explained that the Westville Road scheme was still undergoing completion. The allocated £200k was designated for a redesign of the pedestrianised space. The next step involved conducting a consultation with the community. Jessica Bastock addressed the longer-term maintenance plan for the schemes, acknowledging that maintaining public plantings posed challenges, particularly across seasons. However the Council had a maintenance contractor in place, and many schemes were additionally supported by community maintenance efforts. Contractors would also receive training to upkeep the high-end sites effectively.

In response to a question asked by the Chair, Mark Raisbeck confirmed that Idverde received regular training, highlighting their expertise as one of the largest grounds maintenance contractors. He emphasised the significance of maintenance and noted that the Council was collaborating with Idverde to improve this area.

A resident expressed his support with the Council's ongoing initiatives and proposed an innovative idea to integrate green roofs into bicycle hangers, additionally he urged for greater attention to be given to enhance the greenery on Hammersmith Bridge.

**ACTION: Jessica Bastock**

The Chair requested additional clarification on the process for engaging with residents in receiving their ideas for enhancing spaces within the borough in the future. Mark Raisbeck noted that the Council was keen to receive recommendations from residents, highlighting their importance in shaping future opportunities, He mentioned that residents' requests would be key in this process and that an email contact point would be provided. Additionally, officers would explore options to refresh the website for easier access and engagement.

**ACTION: Jessica Bastock**

A resident raised concerns regarding the condition of play spaces within the borough and enquired about the potential for improvements for these playgrounds. In response Mark Raisbeck acknowledged that not all playgrounds meet the Council's desired standards and that officers were actively investigating ways to improve them within the scope of the investment plan.

The Chair thanked officers for their presentation and provided a brief summary of the key points discussed. She requested that the rain leaflet be made accessible via a link, the disabled community be consulted during the design phases of these schemes and an email contact be provided to enhance public engagement.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee noted and commented on the paper and presentation.

**5. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

To note the dates of future meetings:

- 25th June 2024

- 19th November 2024
- 28th January 2025
- 22nd April 2025

The Chair noted that the next PAC would take place at the beginning of London Climate Action week so presentations would include; What's on in H&F - [Home - London Climate Action Week](#), a roundup of the Climate Team's actions over the last year and a report on the groundbreaking H&F Green Investment Scheme.

Meeting started: 7:00pm  
Meeting ended: 8:30pm

Chair .....

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