



London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Community Safety, Environment and Residents Services Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes

Tuesday 4 November 2014

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Iain Cassidy, Larry Culhane (Chair), Steve Hamilton, Sharon Holder and Harry Phibbs

Other Councillors: Cllr Sue Fennimore and Cllr Wesley Harcourt

Officers: Chris Bainbridge (Head of Transport Policy & Network Management), Paul Baker (Senior Environmental Policy & Projects Officer), Craig Bowdery (Scrutiny Manager), Sue Harris (Bi-Borough Director for Cleaner, Greener & Cultural Services), Kathy May (Bi-Borough Head of Waste & Street Enforcement) and Peter Smith (Head of Policy & Strategy).

22. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd September 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Hamilton declared a personal interest in relation to item 5 as he was employed by Fujitsu, which was working with HS2.

25. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chair invited members of the public to make any comments in relation to issues on the agenda as part of that item.

In light of the large number of residents in attendance for item 8, it was agreed that the 'Establishment of a working group to assess Heathrow Airport expansion' would be taken as the first substantive item.

26. TFL CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED NEW OVERGROUND STATION AT OLD OAK COMMON

The Committee received a presentation from Peter Moth from Transport for London (TfL) on the proposals for a new overground railway station at Old Oak Common. Mr Moth explained that there were three options being consulted upon by TfL, and urged members of the public and community organisations to respond with their views on the plans.

It was asked whether TfL had consulted the Friends of Wormwood Scrubs on the proposals and Mr Moth explained that there had been constructive engagement for around a year now with at least quarterly meetings. The Friends were opposed to option A as this involved building new rail infrastructure over some of the Scrubs land. Chris Bainbridge, the Council's Head of Transport Policy & Network Management, reported that the Council supports the building of the station as it would be necessary to make the most of HS2. However like the Friends, the Council was opposed to option A due to the detrimental effect on the Scrubs. It was also acknowledged that the issues caused by option B that would require trains to reverse were not ideal. The Council was therefore likely to support option C, although even this option was not ideal as it would require a double station with the HS2 interchange being 650m away. However option C did appear to represent the best value for money. Members of the opposition on the Committee explained that they would also support option C, and suggested that the Committee should formally recommend that the Council support option C.

Andy Slaughter MP argued that there was a healthy consensus locally opposed to option B and supporting option C, and that option A should not be entertained due to its environmental impact. He asked whether the views of the West London Rail User Group had been considered, as their preference was to have a stacked station with interchanges for HS2, Crossrail and the overground on top of each other on the same site. Mr Moth reported that the West London User Group was involved in the early stages of planning. However the stacked station was not developed further as it would significantly increase the risk of HS2 not being delivered on time and in budget. It was also representative of the TfL, the Department for Transport (DfT) and HS2 all working separately, with DfT only willing to work on one major project at a time.

Members asked if early consultation responses had indicated a preference from any of the options. Mr Moth explained that there was not a clear consensus yet, although option B was generally regarded as being the least preferred. He described that statutory bodies, including the Council, usually only responded at the very end of consultations.

RESOLVED –

That the Committee recommends that the Council's response to the consultation supports option C.

27. RECYCLING IN HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

The Committee received a report and brief presentation from Kathy May, Bi-Borough Head of Waste and Street Enforcement and Sue Harris Director for Cleaner, Greener & Cultural Services, outlining current recycling arrangements and options for the future.

The Committee noted that recycling rates were a concern and that targets were not being met. It was suggested that the Council could explore implementing an incentive scheme similar to that used in Windsor & Maidenhead to encourage people to recycle more of their waste, although it was accepted that such an approach was easier with boroughs where wheeled bins were part of the collection regime. It was also argued that the Council's communications needed to include information on the financial cost of not recycling, alongside the environmental reasons. If people knew their actions had a direct impact on Council Tax levels, it was suggested that they would be more responsible with their waste.

It was asked whether there were any trends regarding which sort of households were better or worse at recycling. Officers explained that they had mapped this sort of information, and it was the estates and areas with a high level of transient population which tended to have lower recycling rates and higher levels of contaminated waste. As such the Council would be focussing resources to investigate and address the issues and complications involved in recycling on the estates. Members asked whether contaminated waste sacks were the result of user-error or laziness and officers explained that it varied. When waste was analysed at the MRF (Material Recycling Facility), it was sometimes apparent that people had tried to separate out recyclable waste and made mistakes, while others just used the free recycling sacks for all general waste.

It was highlighted that the Council used to fund initiatives such as garden composting and free re-usable nappies but had stopped. Officers explained that such schemes were funded by central Government and that when the funding had ceased the Council could not afford to meet all of the costs.

The Committee discussed the implications of the borough having a large transient population with 40% of homes privately rented. As tenants appeared to not be aware of requirements for recycling, it was asked whether the Council should focus on engaging with landlords and making it their

responsibility to communicate with their tenants. Officers agreed that this approach would help, but explained that it was very labour intensive as it would require constant reinforcement. The Committee asked for officers to provide further details on what information was currently going to landlords.

Action: Kathy May / Sue Harris

Members also noted that the report described that volunteers were going door-to-door to residents in underperforming areas to remind residents of their recycling responsibilities, but that this did not include flats or estate properties. It was asked why properties identified as being significant problem areas were being avoided. Officers explained that the Western Riverside Waste Authority (WRWA) wanted the volunteers to focus on curb-side collection, but the Council wanted to focus on the estates, so members' comments were appreciated. Cllr Harcourt explained that one issue with estates that needed to be overcome was silo working with greater coordination needed with the housing department.

Recognising the transient population and high numbers of people moving into the borough, it was asked how new residents were informed of recycling practises and suggested that information should be included whenever a new Council Tax liability was established. Officers stated that this was not currently done, but they undertook to explore the feasibility of doing so.

The Committee also discussed possible enforcement action for persistent offenders. Officers explained that it was often difficult to accurately establish the source of contaminated bags of waste. For example the contaminated bags would have to be collected from within a property's curtilage to be certain of the offending resident. If identification was possible, a section 48 notice could be issued which warned the offender. Once this notice was issued, prosecution became easier if the offender persisted. Numbered waste bags were suggested, but it was acknowledged that there would be cost and labour implications.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

28. THE WASTE FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE (TEEP REGULATIONS)

The Committee received a report from the Bi-Borough Waste Action Development Manager outlining the implications of the Waste (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2012. Officers apologised for the overly technical nature of the report and explained that the Committee was required only to note the report.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

29. ESTABLISHMENT OF A WORKING GROUP TO ASSESS HEATHROW AIRPORT EXPANSION

The Committee received a report from the Head of Policy & Strategy proposing the establishment of a resident-led working group to gather evidence regarding the impacts of the proposed Heathrow Airport expansion.

Officers reported that the Airports Commission was established by Government in 2012 to consider how additional aviation capacity could be delivered for the UK. In December 2013 there were three options for expansion published – two at Heathrow and one at Gatwick. The Commission undertook to consult on the three options in the autumn of 2014, but this had not yet commenced. In order to inform the Council's response to the Commission it was proposed that a resident-led working group, chaired by Christina Smyth, would look at the evidence and report its findings to the PAC at its January 2015 meeting.

The Chair invited comments on the proposed terms of reference of the working group. A member of the public asked whether they could include reviewing the capacity of Stansted Airport. It was argued that if Crossrail was extended to Stansted and more flights were directed there, then Heathrow could be developed as a business hub without increasing the number of flights crossing the borough. Ms Smyth explained that whilst suggestions such as this would be collected and reported, the working group would need to focus on the shortlist prepared by the Airports Commission, and what the impact on Hammersmith & Fulham residents would be. In order for the working group's conclusions to have some weight, they would need to address issues such as health, noise, the economy, people and communities. Concerns regarding the capacity of local roads was also raised by members of the public and Ms Smyth confirmed that traffic increases during and post construction would be part of the investigations.

A member of the public expressed concern that increased flights over the borough would pose significant risks of an air disaster, especially as there were recent examples of near-misses. He cited incidents in June 2013 when flight BA A319 flew over the borough whilst on fire and in January 2008 when a large BA 777 flight crash-landed at Heathrow, as well as the fatal helicopter crash in Vauxhall. It was suggested that the working group might like to submit a Freedom of Information request for details of all near-misses in the area so that it could fully understand the risks. Members of the public expressed the view that a one in 100 year risk of a serious incident was too high for a heavily populated area.

Ms Smyth was asked whether the working group would include any environmental experts to fully analyse the evidence. She explained that the working group would not co-opt experts, but would be interviewing a number of them and weighing-up the evidence available. In particular, the working group would be seeking to interrogate the assertions made by the Airports Commission regarding noise levels, and comparing them against the guidelines published by Defra and the World Health Organisation. Cllr Holder informed Ms Smyth that as the Council's lead member for hospitals and health care, she would be able to help put the working group in contact with public health organisations.

A member of the public asked if the working group had a pre-set position on Heathrow expansion, and argued that many residents supported the plans to expand Heathrow, as shown by a recent Populus poll. Ms Smyth explained that the Council and local MPs would seek to reflect the prevailing public opinion. The working group would take an impartial approach to the evidence available to ascertain whether an expansion would have health impacts on local residents. So far evidence suggested that an expansion would be detrimental to local health, but the members of the group would be open to any evidence which suggested otherwise.

Ms Smyth explained that the comments made on the Council's website could not be used as primary evidence as they could not be verified and were not an accurate representation of the local community. However all comments were being read and used to guide the lines of inquiry for the working group by highlighting issues that require further investigation.

Ms Smyth was asked how residents would be made aware of the work and it was suggested that a leaflet should be included with Council Tax bills. It was confirmed however that the bills would be issued after the working group's work had been completed so this was not possible. The working group would be seeking to engage residents and would circulate information as widely as possible using the Council's communication channels.

The Chair invited members of the public present to share their views on the proposals, and the following points were raised:

- The targets for pollution levels along the M4 corridor were already not being met, so any expansion would only make this worse
- One member of the public explained that flights went over his house every 30-60 seconds which meant around 2,500 flights each month, starting at 4:30am each morning. The constant disturbances seriously affected the quality of his day-to-day life
- Another member of the public was moved due to ill health, but was now under the flight path. Being woken up every morning was having a serious impact on her health and she argued that the pollution had caused her daughter to develop asthma. Despite double glazing, the noise was unbearable already, so if there were more flights it would only get worse
- Claims made by the airline industry that new planes were quieter than previously needed to be interrogated as they were still extremely noisy, particularly their reverse thrusts
- Measurements of noise levels needed to take into account the weather. For example when it was overcast the noise was much greater as the clouds held the sound in
- The potential for expanded operating hours needed to be considered. Ms Smyth agreed and highlighted Heathrow's aspiration to be an international hub airport. She speculated that it was therefore possible that the airport would seek to operate 24 hours a day at some point in the future
- Given the questions surrounding the Airport Commission's noise numbers and the use of average levels per hour rather than per incidence, could the Council commission an independent study? Ms Smyth explained that this was unlikely to be possible given the timescales. Current evidence would be weighed up and its validity considered

- Ms Smyth highlighted that the working group would be a commission and not a campaign, but acknowledged the potential for the topic to become an election issue in the upcoming General Election

Andy Slaughter MP addressed the Committee and argued that the majority of local opinion was against any sort of expansion at Heathrow. He also criticised the decision to have the Airports Commission not publish its final report until after the election, highlighting that its chair, Sir Howard Davies, had conceded that it could be ready beforehand. Mr Slaughter urged all local candidates to be open about their position on airport expansion. He also argued that Mr Davies had been helpful with his interim report as it had debunked many myths such as the commercial imperative for Heathrow to become a hub airport. Mr Slaughter felt that the interim report suggested that expansion at Gatwick was now the most economically advantageous option. He also explained that there was an all-party group at Parliament opposing Heathrow expansion and that he believed the momentum was with their position. Finally he stated that not being in favour of expansion was not the same as being pro-closure of Heathrow. He acknowledged the positive impacts on the local economy and the importance of the airport to industry, and argued that these would continue without further expansion.

The Chair informed those present that the working group's final report would be received by the Committee at its meeting on 13th January, and would be available on the Council's website five working days beforehand. He thanked the members of the public for attending and sharing their views with the Committee, which would be fed into the investigations of the working group.

RESOLVED –

- i) That the CSERS PAC appoint a resident-led working group to assess the impact of Heathrow expansion, working with the Terms of Reference set out in the report; and
- ii) That the working group should report its recommendations to the PAC on 13th January which, if approved, will help form the Council's current and future policy position in relation to Heathrow expansion.

A short adjournment was agreed while some members of the public left the meeting

30. WORK PROGRAMMING

RESOLVED –

That the work programme be noted and agreed.

31. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The future meetings were agreed as follows:

- Tuesday 13th January 2015
- Tuesday 3rd February 2015

- Tuesday 21st April 2015

Meeting started: 7.00 pm

Meeting ended: 9.08 pm

Chairman

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