

Subject: Environment Committee Work Programme

Report to: Environment Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 7 December 2017

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report notes and updates the Committee's work programme for the 2017/18 London Assembly year. The programme was originally agreed at the June 2017 meeting, and is updated monthly.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the committee notes its current and recent work, detailed in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.3, and its agreed future work programme, as set out in paragraphs 4.4 to 4.10.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The work programme for the Assembly year 2017/18 was originally agreed in June 2017, at the first meeting of the Assembly year.
- 3.2 A similar report will be submitted to each subsequent meeting to track the committee's work and propose any changes, including confirming dates and adding topics as required.

4. Issues for Consideration

Waste Management

- 4.1 Having discussed waste reduction and the circular economy in July, and recycling collections in November, at this meeting the Committee is concluding its discussions on waste management with a session on waste-to-energy incineration. Incineration with energy recovery has environmental advantages over landfill, as it uses less land and delivers energy that might otherwise come from fossil fuels. However, as incineration destroys materials, recycling is to be preferred wherever possible. With goals to eliminate landfill, increase recycling and reduce overall waste, there is a strategic question as to how much incineration capacity should be part of London's overall waste management system. A covering report on this topic can be found at **Agenda Item 6**.

- 4.2 The Committee published a short report of its findings on the circular economy, and is planning a similar publication relating to recycling collections. It may publish a further short findings report after this meeting, and a final report with recommendations from the waste investigation overall.

Particulate air pollution

- 4.3 One of the most harmful forms of air pollution is particulate matter – tiny toxic particles carried in the air deep into Londoners’ lungs and entering the body. The health effects are believed to occur at any concentration of particles in the air, and to increase in proportion to the concentration, which is typically higher in urban air. The Mayor has proposed adopting as targets guideline levels from the World Health Organisation that are more stringent than the current UK legal limits for particles in the air. Current Mayoral policies, directed especially at reducing exhaust emissions from road vehicles, may not be enough to achieve these more ambitious targets. Other sources of particulates include the wear of vehicle brakes and tyres, construction and demolition activity, and fuel burning in buildings, including solid fuels. A covering report on this topic can be found at **Agenda Item 7**.

Work programme for the rest of 2017/18

- 4.4 The table below sets out the allocated dates for the Environment Committee for the rest of 2017/18 Assembly year, with suggested dates:

Meeting Date	Proposed topic
17 January 2018	Committee meeting Electric vehicle charging networks London Plan (date to be confirmed)
21 February 2018	Committee meeting Thames Water
15 March 2018	Committee meeting Mid-term progress update

- 4.5 The work programme is subject to change in future as the Committee develops proposals for its work. Dates may be used for formal committee meetings, informal meetings, site visits or other activities for the Committee. The work programme also provides for the committee to respond to any matters that arise during the year.

Airport National Policy Statement

- 4.6 The Government on 24 October 2017 re-opened consultation on the Airport National Policy Statement, in the light of revised information on the air pollution and noise impacts of expanding Heathrow Airport, and changes to Government policy. The deadline for further responses is 19 December 2017. The Committee has previously responded to consultations on this issue, but has delegated authority to the Chair in consultation with party Group Lead members to agree an updated submission in the light of new information.

Electric Vehicles

- 4.7 The rise of electric vehicles offers benefits to urban air quality and potentially to carbon emissions, but there is a long way to go to secure the right charging infrastructure to support electric taxis, minicabs, buses and a large fleet of private electric cars. The Committee may select a particular type of vehicle or charging infrastructure to focus on – Committee Members are currently considering options informally. It is planned to discuss this at the January 2018 meeting.

London Plan Issues

- 4.8 The Mayor's policy lever for many actions on environmental issues is the London Plan. These issues include sustainable drainage, the Urban Greening Factor, the zero-carbon standard for homes, any replacement for the Code for Sustainable Homes in London, support for solar installations, energy efficiency retrofit, district heating, and other forms of infrastructure. The Committee may wish to invite Greater London Authority planning officers and perhaps the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills, Jules Pipe, to a meeting early in 2018, within the consultation window on the draft London Plan. The Committee's views could be fed into the Planning Committee, for the Assembly's formal response to the Draft London Plan.

Water Issues

- 4.9 The Committee has met with Thames Water (TW) already this year, discussing issues of water management. The Committee has further agreed to invite TW and potentially other guests to its February 2018 meeting to discuss water issues, potentially including:
- TW's strategic review of its trunk mains network, following the spate of major bursts causing flooding and disruption to homes, businesses and main roads in winter 2016-17;
 - TW's Water Resources Management Plan, and the need to balance London's water supply and the demand for water from its growing population;
 - 'Fatbergs' and TW's efforts to keep London's drains clear of obstructions caused by inappropriate material such as fats and so-called flushable wipes being put into drains; and/or
 - The Thames Tideway Tunnel, especially environmental impacts of its construction.

Mayoral Mid-term Progress

- 4.10 The end of the 2017-18 year marks the mid-point of the 2016-20 Mayoral term. As environmental issues have been so prominent in the Mayor's agenda, they form a significant part of any evaluation of his progress so far. The Committee hopes to meet with the Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy to round off the Environment Committee's work for this year and help contribute to an Assembly-wide mid-term report.

Items Potentially to be Dropped or Deferred to 2018/19

- 4.11 The above topics largely fill the Committee's work programme for the remainder of 2017/18. The following other topics, having been previously considered for the 2017/18 work programme, can be looked at again for the following year. However, going into a new year for the London Assembly, with potentially new Committee membership and/or chairing, there is to be a new process of generating and gathering ideas, and selecting priorities, involving members cross-party.

Air Pollution

- 4.12 Further air pollution issues could include:
- River traffic emissions;
 - Building emissions (potentially including wood and solid fuel burning);
 - Emissions from secondary engines (such as diesel generators powering refrigeration units on chilled lorries); or
 - Alternative fuels for combustion engines (such as liquefied petroleum gas)

Commercial Waste

- 4.13 Much of London's business waste is collected by commercial providers, not within the scope of the waste investigation's topic on municipal recycling and waste collections. Subject to further scoping and work planning, the Committee may investigate how commercial waste collections support recycling and other environmental goals.

Major Projects

- 4.14 The Committee will continue to scrutinise major ongoing and proposed projects (such as the expansion of Heathrow Airport, and High Speed Two).

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in the report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

List of appendices to this report:

None

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers: None
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