

Minutes

RESIDENTS' AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

26 March 2013



Meeting held at Committee Room 4 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Susan O'Brien (Chairman) Mary O'Connor (Vice-Chairman) Lynne Allen Kuldeep Lakhmana Carol Melvin David Payne Michael White David Yarrow</p> <p>Witnesses Present: Councillor Janet Gardner, Dawley Housing Group David Brough, Hayes Town Partnership Les Drussel, Ruislip Manor Chamber of Commerce Sinead Lee, Paradigm Housing Group</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Nigel Dicker, Deputy Director, Residents Services James Rodger, Head of Planning, Sports and Green Spaces Ed Shaylor, Community Safety and ASB Service Manager Nadia Williams, Democratic Services Officer</p>	
68.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>There were no apologies notified for this meeting.</p>	
69.	<p>DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interests notified.</p>	
70.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT ALL ITEMS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT ANY ITEMS MARKED PART 2 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items on the agenda marked as Part 1 would be considered in public.</p>	
71.	<p>TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 FEBRUARY 2013 (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2013 were agreed as an accurate record.</p>	

72.	<p>REVIEW 2: A REVIEW OF LOCAL PEST CONTROL SERVICES AND THE IMPACT OF WASTE MANAGEMENT PROCESSES ON THESE - WITNESS SESSION 3 (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>The Chairman welcomed David Brough – Chairman of Hayes Town Partnership, Les Drussel – Chairman of Ruislip Manor Chamber of Commerce, Councillor Janet Gardner – Chairman of Dawley Housing Co-operative and Sinead Lee – Paradigm Housing Group to the final witness session on the review of Local Pest Control Services and the Impact of Waste Management Processes on these.</p> <p>Cllr Gardner suggested that there should be a condition requiring developers to address pest control issues arising as a result of new developments. Currently, residents had to pay to address problems of rats going into their gardens that had been disturbed as a result of the new developments. In addition, residents living close to canals were finding the rat problem further exacerbated by rats living in the canal and constantly having to pay to address infestation in their back gardens.</p> <p>David Brough added that residents questioned why they should have to pay for the burden of developers who were causing the problem in their locality.</p> <p>Also highlighted was the problems caused by the storage of rubbish in houses of multiple occupation, where rubbish was left outside, well before collection day; this tended to attract foxes and thus, opened rubbish bags encouraged rats.</p> <p>Mr Brough welcomed that the Committee was taking a broader view by looking a pest control, waste management and anti-social behaviour. Commenting on the figures circulated on pest control jobs, he highlighted that looking at the figures for Hayes Town; Botwell appeared to have increased from 40 in 2005/2006 to 100 in 2009/2010. Once charges for pest control were introduced, demand was drastically reduced, as people stopped using Council services and anecdotal evidence suggested that the problem of pest infestation was real. Members were informed that Hayes Town was working towards dealing with the issue by encouraging prevention through education, while accepting the important role of enforcement.</p> <p>Work in Hayes was said to be around raising the profile of a cleaner and greener Hayes, through the Hayes Project in collaboration with the Hayes Community Engagement Group. The project involved working with Botwell House, Dr Triplets school and Minet Junior School in raising awareness by getting the children to conduct surveys of bags and litter left in the streets, as well as producing a poster showing the children and the slogan “Hayes school children say make Hayes Town cleaner and greener – Help keep our Town clean”. A litter collection was also undertaken with the 3 schools. These initiatives impacted on the traders, as well as members of the public. Shop keepers were asked to put the posters in their shops. Mr Brough stated that there was clear evidence that these initiatives changed the attitudes of traders and the children became the advocates to the adults.</p>	Action by
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It was suggested to the Committee that the problem was about changing behaviour and not about the collection of rubbish, because the Council collected rubbish bags quite quickly. Members were advised that the focus must be on giving people clear messages in plain language and pictorially. An example was given where a trader had placed a poster of a drawing showing a black bag of rubbish and a large cross in red and £80 fine written on the poster. The problem of dumped rubbish in that particular area stopped.

Another approach suggested was the workshop approach, which had been used in Hayes to improve poor food hygiene and encourage compliance with regulations. This was done by staff from public health talking face-to-face with traders; particularly some of the traders with poor "scores on doors" rating and critically having a Somali speaking and Asian speaking gentleman present to assist with interpretation. Included in the presentation were issues about rats and mice, as well as a short brief on the management of trade waste.

Mr Brough added that Hayes Town Business Forum would be happy to work with the Council to set up similar workshops to get the message through.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the challenging problem of people living above shops and the high turnover of renting in the area; meriting the need to have some leaflets to ensure that people were made aware of which day refuse was collected. It was suggested to Members that more pictures should be used to get the message across and the Council could get a sponsor to produce a calendar that could be placed in kitchens, giving information about waste and recycling.

Sinead Lee added that Paradigm Housing as landlord would remedy breaches on tenancy agreements and highlighted that, as with many other organisations, Paradigm Housing also had to deal with issues of stretched resources.

With regard to what the Council would expect of Social Landlords in tackling the issue of pest control, the following was suggested:

- The provision of refuse containers for better waste management.
- A more rigorous approach to enforcing tenancy agreements.
- When designing buildings to take account of refuse storage.
- Planting schemes that did not encourage harbourage for rodents.
- Provision of locking refuse bins, which would assist in easier identification of residents living in flats in regard to anti-social behaviour.
- Undertake inspections and enforcement against tenants who did not manage their waste properly.

- Where there was a high turnover of tenants, provide a welcome pack to include information about refuse, Council Services and public health issues; tenants should be required to sign to confirm their responsibilities prior to being given the keys to their homes.

Les Drussel expressed concerns about the health implications of rats going down drain pipes and some businesses in Ruislip Manor repeatedly leaving rubbish outside before collection days, with bins frequently seen full and overflowing. These incidents were said to be constantly reported to the Council.

Members commented that:

- Developers should ensure that where land was contaminated with rats, they should ensure that the land was cleared of vermin before commencing building work.
- Residents should not be required to pay to address the problem of rats coming from the canal.
- From April 2013, Public Health issues would be the responsibility of the Council and it would then be a case of making the developer aware.
- Raised concerns about the management of rats around demolished buildings and how derelict lands were being cared for to prevent fly tipping and dumping of large items such as mattresses.
- Highlighted that there should be a clear procedure for when issues were reported.

Officers responded that:

- The most appropriate way of tackling development issues would be through the Building Act (1984) rather than through planning conditions, as the legislation enables quicker resolutions (for example in dealing with defective drainage) or Prevention of Damage by Pest Act (1949).
- The onus rested with the owner or occupier to engage pest control services, if the rats were coming from another property, enforcement action could be taken against that property.
- The Building Act could enable quick remedies where appropriate.
- With regard to putting rubbish out on the wrong day and causing infestation, the Committee was advised that legislation could be amended, so that private landlords were regarded as businesses; this could then be used to encourage them to ensure that their tenants properly managed waste.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whist the land was the responsibility of the Canals Trust, it was not realistic to rid a canal of rats, and therefore, properties near a canal would need to take precautions by not leaving food waste out doors. • Pictoral signs had recently been produced by the Council and were displayed in Hayes Town Centre. • Since summer 2012, the Hayes area had been subject to prolonged inspection and enforcement by Council officers which had resulted in some improvements. <p>The Committee considered that pictoral posters would be an effective way of getting the message across, particularly in areas which experienced repeated dumping and where residents threw their rubbish from the top floor. Members considered that successful prosecution could be publicised as a way of sending out the message.</p> <p>On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked the witnesses for providing invaluable information for their review.</p>	
73.	<p>'BEDS IN SHEDS' CABINET REPORT - 21 MARCH 2013 CABINET MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>James Rodgers, Head of Planning, Sport and Green Spaces informed the Committee that the 'Beds in Sheds' in Hillingdon: Progress report was reported to the Cabinet meeting on 21 March 2013. The report set out the robust approach that the Council was taking to deal with this issue. The main objective was that Hillingdon should be seen as an authority which took the issue of beds in sheds very seriously and would take enforcement proceedings against perpetrators.</p> <p>Members were informed that Hillingdon was one of 4 Councils that had been successful (out of 9 other local authorities that were allowed to place a bid from the £790k Government Funding) in their bid to the Department for Communities and Local Government. Hillingdon had secured the £183,141, which would help to focus resources to deal with issue of beds in sheds.</p> <p>The Council was noted to have a dedicated prosecution lawyer who was supported by 2 other officers in Planning, as well as a dedicated housing officer and a Proceeds of Crime Investigator. There was now more joined-up action between Housing and Planning teams, together with the use of council tax legislation to tackle the problem. The proceeds of crime cases would also be used to help resource the work in this area. In addition, a meeting was held fortnightly with all relevant officers to progress the issue.</p> <p>Acknowledging the point raised about the growing issue of 'beds in sheds' being aggravated by the shortage of affordable homes, Members were informed that work was being done to link with immigration to stem the increase of this issue. Regular meetings were arranged with government agencies and other local authorities to share information and assess how best to deal with the issue. Furthermore,</p>	Action by

	<p>regular checks were made by officers on alley ways on a random basis to check back gardens for 'beds in sheds' developments.</p> <p>With regard to a query raised about the number of prosecutions to date, the Committee requested officers to report back to the meeting in September 2013, to give an update on this issue. The Committee also requested an update on the pilot scheme operated by Slough where landlords were repeatedly fined for not having a valid Energy Performance Certificate, which was required by law for places where people lived. This information would be circulated to Members outside of the meeting.</p> <p>The Committee commended Mr Rodger on the successful funding bid.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Requested officers to give an update at the meeting in September 2013 on the number of beds in sheds prosecutions. 2. Requested officers to provide an updated on the progress of the pilot scheme operated in Slough. This information to be circulated to Members outside of the meeting. 	James Rodger
74.	<p>FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>Having reviewed the Forward Plan, Members noted the Road Safety Programme, Traffic Congestion Mitigation Programme and School Travel Plan Programme listed on the Cabinet Member Decisions, to be taken by Keith Burrows, Cabinet Member for Planning, Transportation and Recycling in June 2013. Officers were asked to provide details of the number of schools that had taken up the scheme in the Borough.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>Requested officers to provide details of the number of schools that had taken up the School Travel Plan Scheme in the Borough.</p>	Action by David Knowles, Transport and Projects Section
75.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13 (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>Comments in respect of the summary of recommendations regarding the Committee's first Review of Regulations and Byelaws relating to Cemeteries and Burial Grounds within Hillingdon were agreed to be received by Tuesday 2 April 2013.</p> <p>Resolved</p> <p>The Committee agreed the work programme for 2012/13.</p>	Action by
<p>The meeting, which commenced at 5.30 pm, closed at 7.24 pm.</p>		

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Nadia Williams on 01895 277 655. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.