

Minutes

RESIDENTS' AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

30 July 2014

Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



HILLINGDON
LONDON

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Michael White (Chairman), David Yarrow (Vice-Chairman), Teji Barnes, Peter Davis, Patricia Jackson, Kuldeep Lakhmana (Labour Lead), Carol Melvin, John Morse and Jas Dhot</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Steven Maiden (Democratic Services Officer), Nigel Dicker (Deputy Director of Public Safety & Environment), Helena Webster (Community Engagement & Town Centres Team Leader) and Gregory Pike (Finance Manager, Residents Services)</p>
7.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillors Allen and Birah with Councillors Morse and Dhot substituting.</p>
8.	<p>TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 JUNE 2014 (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2014 be agreed as an accurate record.</p>
9.	<p>SCOPING REPORT ON DIVERSIFYING THE STREET CHAMPIONS INITIATIVE (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>Officer provided a presentation on the proposed review which would explore diversifying and modernising the street champions initiative. The initiative was instigated in 2006 with a view to recruiting volunteers to act as the 'eyes and ears' of the Council and had grown significantly with over 4,600 volunteers. It was noted that a review of the initiative would have two main strands as set out below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Developing the communications surrounding the initiative and bringing it into the 'digital age' by diversifying the ways in which volunteers could report issues and receive information. It was noted that there was scope for issues to be reported through new digital technologies rather than exclusively through the Contact Centre in order to make the initiative as accessible to as many residents as possible.2. Exploring how the links between street champions and Neighbourhood Watch schemes could be strengthened. Officers advised that, where street champions had grown into a successful initiative, Neighbourhood Watches in the Borough were not growing and were seen to be in need of additional support. It was proposed that this aspect of the review could supplement work already underway in a pilot project to explore how stronger links between the two schemes could be strengthened.

Officers noted that the pilot projects would be starting in September and run throughout the following year. This would mean that the Committee could receive information and intelligence gathered from the carefully selected and diverse pilot areas in order to inform this review. Specifically, this would assist with assessing the success of current communications, identifying the barriers to reporting issues and exploring how street champions could be engaged in reporting low-level crime in the Borough.

The review would also have the support of an officer working with the Hillingdon Academy as a proposal had been agreed for this to be undertaken as an Academy project.

Discussion

Members noted that, when the scheme began, volunteers were provided with feedback from the Council on the issues that they had reported. This had stopped when reporting had moved to the Contact Centre. It was suggested that a review could explore whether such automatic reporting could be re-started as it had been valued by volunteers.

With regard to witnesses, Members stated that they wished for more than 1 Street Champion to present to the Committee and suggested that there should be at least 6 volunteers invited to present evidence.

In response to Members' questions, officers advised that there would be a log of issues reported by street champions held within the Contact Centre. All residents who reported issues to the Council would be logged within Onyx meaning that they would have a unique identifier assigned to them. From this, a report could be drawn on what issues had been raised by street champions. Officers also advised that issues reported by volunteers would not be dealt with as quickly as Members' Enquiries but that they would receive the same quality of service.

Members raised concerns that ward councillors were not aware either of who street champions were within their ward or what issues were being reported. It was noted that the role should not be made more onerous or bureaucratic by introducing formal reporting but that there should be a mechanism to ensure that information was passed from street champions to ward councillors. It was agreed that officers would explore whether it would be possible for ward councillors to receive a list of street champions in their wards and report back to the Committee in due course.

Officers advised that it was important that any changes to the initiative did not alienate current volunteers who may not wish to use digital technologies to report issues. Instead, the focus should be on diversifying methods of reporting to expand the demographic whilst ensuring that existing reporting mechanisms remained in place.

It was highlighted that street champions were not restricted to reporting negative issues but could also come together to bid for funding to support projects in their local areas. This would be assisted by the simplification of bidding for Chrysalis funding.

Members noted that they wished to explore whether training or inductions could be provided to volunteers and the current turnover of street champions was during the course of the review.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. Officer explore whether the details of street champions could be passed to**

	<p>ward councillors and reported back in due course;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The scoping report be amended to reflect that at least 6 street champions should be invited to provide evidence to the Committee; and 3. The scoping report be noted.
10.	<p>BUDGET PLANNING REPORT FOR RESIDENTS SERVICES 2015/16 (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>Officer provided a brief presentation on budget planning for Residents Services 2015/16 in which it was noted that this was one of two occasions for the Committee to discuss budget planning. The second opportunity to comment on more detailed budget planning would be in January 2015 following the announcement of the finance settlement in December 2014. Officers stated that up to the period to 2018/19, the Coalition's on-going deficit reduction programme will place greater pressure on the Council's finances, with cuts in excess of 8% per annum expected in core formula funding. Specific pressures and uncertainties included ongoing welfare reforms and the introduction of the Better Care Fund and the Care Bill.</p> <p>Officers noted that there was a savings requirement of £3,028k for the current financial year of which 84% (£2,551k) had been banked or was on track. A further 14% (£427k) of savings were still at early stages, with the remaining 2% representing an unachievable saving of £50k that will be substituted in-year.</p> <p>Officers noted that there was a £164k under spend reported at Month 2 for the services within the Committee's remit which would alleviate some of the pressures being faced.</p> <p>Members thanked officers for the report and presentation. However, it was noted that they wished for the report to be more detailed and stated that it should have covered more of the information set out in the presentation.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Budget Planning Report for Residents Services 2015/16 be noted.</p>
11.	<p>FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>Members expressed their concerns that the report requested at the last meeting on Byelaws for Parks would be considered on the same night as it would be by Cabinet. This would mean that it would not be possible for the Committee to provide comments prior to a decision being made.</p> <p>Officers noted these concerns but stressed that this was due to the Committee agreeing to move its scheduled meeting date to the same evening as Cabinet.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Officers request a brief outline of the changes being proposed in the Byelaws for Parks to be emailed to the Committee outside of the meeting; and 2. The Forward Plan be noted.
12.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>Officers advised that a paper had been produced and considered by the Committee on road safety around schools in 2011. If this provided Members with enough information on the matter, the report requested at the last meeting would be removed from the</p>

	<p>work programme. If more information was required, it was requested that Members provide an additional steer as to what further information was being sought.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Officers circulate the paper produced in 2011 on road safety surrounding schools;2. the Work Programme be noted.
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 5.30 pm, closed at 6.35 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Steven Maiden on Democratic Services Officer 01895 250692. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.