

Minutes

RESIDENTS' AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

25 February 2015



Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Michael White (Chairman), David Yarrow (Vice-Chairman), Lynne Allen, Teji Barnes, Mohinder Birah, Peter Davis, Patricia Jackson, Kuldeep Lakhmana (Labour Lead) and Carol Melvin</p> <p>Witnesses Present: Andrew Riley (Northwood Hills Residents Association and Bridleway User) Colin Acreman and Malcolm Trudgeon (Hillingdon Ramblers)</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Nikki O'Halloran (Democratic Services Manager), Paul Richards (Head of Green Spaces, Sport and Culture), Stuart Coleman (Bereavement Services Manager), John Fern and Colin Russell (Waste Division Manager)</p>
41.	<p>DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING <i>(Agenda Item 2)</i></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
42.	<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>RESOLVED: That all items of business be considered in public.</p>
43.	<p>REVIEW OF THE CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE FOR HILLINGDON'S FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS <i>(Agenda Item 5)</i></p> <p>Mr Andrew Riley, Chair of Northwood Hills Residents Association, and a regular bridleway user, gave a short presentation. During this he detailed the history of the Hillingdon Equestrian Advisory Committee (HEAC). He also highlighted the good work of HEAC undertaken with the Council which included the installation of a Pegasus Crossing on Ducks Hill Road in 2011. He noted that HEAC had undertaken a number of surveys and, at the time of the last survey in 2004, there had been 3,000 horses kept in the Borough, and an even greater number of riders. Mr Riley expressed concern about both the lack of support currently given to the organisation by the Borough and the amount of money allocated to maintaining and improving bridleways.</p> <p>In response to questions, Mr Riley explained that the condition of bridleways was generally good, but that the experience was variable. He noted that there were problems with mud in some areas, which could cause horses to lose their shoes, and said that there were also issues with the cutting back of vegetation, which could be dangerous for riders. In addition, litter caused a particular problem around Ruislip Lido, owing to the numbers of visitors, and also around Haste Hill. However, Mr Riley</p>

believed that it was unrealistic to expect the entire network to be perfect all of the time.

Mr Paul Richards accepted that the Council had not been proactive in dealing with bridleways in the 1990's. However, since then, the Council had invested both time and money in improving the Borough's bridleways. He explained that the budget for improving permissive footpaths and bridleways was now £38,000, and that planned maintenance such as strimming took place every year. Mr Richards noted that the feedback received from users was invaluable in helping to manage the bridleway network.

Mr Richards advised that the Council had stopped sending officers to HEAC meetings as the number of users attending had dropped significantly. However, he was happy to liaise with Mr Riley about the possibility of providing meeting rooms for HEAC, and also about including equestrian representatives on other fora, such as the Yeading Valley Working Party.

In response to questions, Mr Richards confirmed that three Councillors had been appointed to the Yeading Valley Working Party. He explained that a number of working parties had been set up to improve the environment, and that these groups also dealt with issues beyond the Council's responsibility, such as obstructions in watercourses, which were the responsibility of the Environment Agency.

Mr Malcolm Trudgeon explained that Ramblers groups were set up in areas where there was demand. The Hillingdon branch was now twenty five years old, which showed the continued enthusiasm for walking in the Borough. He explained that he organised the walks on Saturday mornings, which were generally within the Borough. About half of all of the Hillingdon Ramblers walks were at least partially within the Borough. Mr Trudgeon noted that there were some problems with footpaths, but that generally they were in good condition. He mentioned that significant improvements had been made to the footpaths at Iver Lane, and at the bottom of Uxbridge Golf Course. He also commended the Council's response to those issues that were reported.

Mr Colin Acreman, the Hillingdon Ramblers' footpath's officer, felt that the Council's response to issues raised was very good. The main problems were, in his view, litter in urban areas, and irresponsible disposal of dog waste. The litter issue was most prevalent on those footpaths which were short unmade cut-throughs, whilst dog waste could be found across the Borough. It was noted that the Ramblers would be undertaking a nationwide survey during 2015, the Big Path Watch, which would highlight these types of issues.

Consideration was given to the provision of more dog waste bins but it was noted that it was difficult to install new bins as residents living nearby often objected to them. There were currently more than 400 dog waste bins across the Borough which proved expensive to empty and could sometimes be subject to vandalism.

Although the Ramblers supported the scheme nationally, the local Walking for Health Scheme was managed by Hillingdon Council. Mr Acreman believed that the Scheme appeared to have led to the condition of some paths being improved.

Mr Russell explained that hard surfaced footpaths were cleaned either on a weekly, roughly monthly, or occasional/reactive basis. He noted that there was potential to regularise the monthly cleaning schedule and noted the importance of reporting problems.

Mr John Fern explained that statutory rights of way and adopted footpaths were inspected annually. There was a planned maintenance schedule for footpaths, and Blue Sky Development and Regeneration had been contracted to remove vegetation and litter pick annually.

In response to Members' questions, Mr Richards explained that a weed spraying programme existed across the Borough, but that regulations had restricted the type of chemicals which could be used. This meant that only plants which were already growing could be killed.

It was noted that, although the terms of reference had mentioned the Street Champions and Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators, this was not a suggestion, but merely a point for the Committee to discuss. It was acknowledged that the Committee felt that it would be inappropriate to ask these groups to carry out activities such as litter picking.

The Chairman thanked witnesses and officers for their contributions to the review.

RESOLVED: That the evidence given by witnesses be noted, and used in the preparation of a final report.

44. **UPDATE ON THE ENFORCEMENT OF CEMETERY REGULATIONS** (*Agenda Item 6*)

Mr Stuart Coleman, Bereavement Services Manager, advised that the new cemetery regulations were working well. A new Gurkha section had been opened at the Cherry Lane Cemetery. The regulations had been updated to reflect this, and new leaflets were being developed for distribution to funeral directors. Enforcement of the new regulations was taking place, and this had been helped by the maintenance team being run directly by the Council, as they reported potential breaches to the Bereavement Services team. Memorial Masons were now only allowed to work by permit, and this meant that their work was more closely supervised. A new type of column bearer had also been introduced which reduced weed growth. Memorial benches in the cemetery were now also planned by the Bereavement Services Team, in conjunction with families.

With regard to the problem of oversized memorials being requested at West Drayton Cemetery, Mr Coleman informed Members that requests were being refused by officers, but warned that Councillors might get complaints from residents as a result of the strict enforcement of the policy. A copy of the new guide being issued to funeral directors would be sent to Councillors in order that they could advise residents appropriately. Mr Coleman confirmed that the pictures in the guide would be updated before it was printed and that new signage had been installed giving opening times, as well as signs on the inside of gates for people who had been locked into a cemetery.

It was noted that a new policy with regard to roadside memorials. It was agreed that a briefing on the policy be considered at the Committee's next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

45. **FORWARD PLAN** (*Agenda Item 7*)

RESOLVED: That the forward plan be noted.

46.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>The Chairman explained that the Cabinet report in relation to the recent Street Champions review undertaken by the Committee had been withdrawn. An update on the matter would be considered at the next meeting.</p> <p>With regard to possible future review topics, the following issues were suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fly-tipping; • legal highs; and • the protection of war memorials. <p>RESOLVED: That the committee work programme be noted.</p>
47.	<p>TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2015 (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2015. It was agreed that the last sentence of the penultimate paragraph in minute number 33 be deleted.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That, subject to the deletion of the sentence in minute item 33 between 'It was suggested' and 'percentage increase for non-residents.', the minutes of the meeting be agreed as accurate.</p>
	<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 Ainsley Gilbert on 01895 250692. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.