

Minutes

RESIDENTS' AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

27 April 2016

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



	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Michael White (Chairman), Teji Barnes (Vice-Chairman), Mohinder Birah, Peter Davis, Patricia Jackson, Kuldeep Lakhmana (Labour Lead), Judy Kelly, Brian Stead and Lynne Allen (as substitute).</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Paul Richards (Head of Green Spaces, Sport and Culture), Adrian Batten (Green Spaces Manager), James Rodger (Head of Planning and Enforcement) and Alex Quayle (Democratic Services Officer).</p>
62.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies were received from Cllr Dhot, who was substituted by Cllr Allen.</p>
63.	<p>DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
64.	<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 matters would be heard in Part I.</p>
65.	<p>TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>Minutes of the meeting held 23 March 2016 were agreed.</p>
66.	<p>ALLOTMENTS UPDATE (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>Paul Richards, Head of Green Spaces, Sport and Culture, and Adrian Batten, Green Spaces Manager, presented the report to the Committee.</p> <p>The Allotments Team employed a full-time officer to manage and support allotments. There were two schemes for the management; Scheme A, in which administrative work and collection of rents was undertaken by the Council, and Scheme B, where a society undertakes the renting of plots (as well as maintenance costs up to an agreed financial limit) whilst retaining all of the rental income. 7 sites are fully-devolved and self-managed, though support is still provided.</p> <p>Officers reported that fees had been frozen for several years, and various concessions existed. Residents on benefits and residents over the age of 60 received a 50%</p>

discount. Allotments were free to those over the age of 65. All the fully-devolved sites were reimbursed for the plots allocated to the over 65s, and the costs went towards onsite maintenance. Not all plots were occupied, largely due to problems with drainage. There had been significant investment in recent years, including through Chrysalis funding. Some of this has been orientated towards fencing and general security.

Members commented that they were pleased that there were so few vacant plots, but several questions related to whether more could be done to increase uptake. Officers responded that vacant plots were in sites with no waiting list, and there had been trials of alternative uses, including growing Christmas trees or locating bee hives. Members and officers discussed advertising allotments to groups with low uptake, including new immigrants and the unemployed. Officers outlined numerous programmes to encourage uptake, including for schools and over 65s, as well as the Autumn Show and scarecrow contest for children. Officers agreed to investigate options to better signpost spare capacity.

Members enquired about disabled provision, and officers responded that though they had experimented with raised bed allotments using railway sleepers, there had been poor uptake, and the main barrier to uptake had instead been travel to the site. Access was considered on a case-by-case basis, and disabled users were placed by water butts for convenience where possible.

Officers noted that it was possible to keep chickens, but that they were keenly aware of animal welfare and noise problems caused by cockerels at dawn. The Council insisted on a commitment to properly keep, feed, water, and allow animals out.

Officers commented that the general profile of users was mostly the elderly, but had seen an increase in young parents and a more equal gender balance recently. A large number of different nationalities were represented, and allotments had a notable social impact for people seeing friends and helping to create a community.

For plots that were not maintained, the Council carried out limited weed control so that they do not damage other plots, and would rotavate a plot for a new occupant.

Members thanked officers for attending and answering questions, and commented that the reports indicated the Council's commitment to allotments, growing local food, healthy living and residents' wellbeing.

67. **STREET CHAMPIONS REVIEW UPDATE** (*Agenda Item 6*)

Members considered written submissions from the Community Engagement & Town Centres Team, which provided an update since the review which finished in spring 2015. It was noted that there had been an increase of 50 Street Champions since the review, and the current number stood at 714.

The Committee agreed that they would welcome a more in-depth report and attendance of officers later in the year.

68. **MAJOR REVIEW 2015/16 - MECHANISMS FOR REVIEWING MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN THE BOROUGH AND IDENTIFYING LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FOR THE PLANNING PROCESS** (*Agenda Item 7*)

James Rodger, Head of Planning and Enforcement, attended the meeting to answer member queries. Members welcomed the Review Report, and the recent changes to specify that the review did not encompass enforcement activity.

	<p>A Member of the Committee raised a concern about a conflict of interest in the case of the Licensing Chairman attending a visit to a licensed premises, though the Head of Planning stated that he believed that this would be a valuable addition and there was unlikely to be a conflict of interest.</p> <p>Subject to minor changes, Members recommended the report be submitted to cabinet for consideration.</p>
69.	<p>FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>Noted.</p>
70.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>Members discussed potential review topics to be considered at the next meeting on 16 June 2016. Members requested more information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allotments, encouraging uptake and diversification of users. • Shisha, the policy for licensing and effect on the borough • Information of weed control • An update on the street scene and street furniture review
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 5.30 pm, closed at 6.41 pm.</p>

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