

Minutes

CORPORATE RESOURCES & INFRASTRUCTURE SELECT COMMITTEE

23 July 2024



Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors John Riley (Chair), Adam Bennett (Vice-Chair), Kaushik Banerjee, Farhad Choubedar, Stuart Mathers (Opposition Lead), Elizabeth Garelick and Narinder Garg</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Emma Gilbertson – Head of Corporate Communications, Poonam Pathak – Head of Highways and Anisha Teji – Senior Democratic Services Officer</p>
14.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>
15.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
16.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2024 be confirmed as an accurate record.</p>
17.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED AS PART I WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED AS PART II WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items would be heard in Part I.</p>
18.	<p>ELECTRIC VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW: 12 MONTH UPDATE (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>The Head of Highways introduced the report on Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Review: 12-month Update. An overview was provided on the implementation and condition of the Borough's EV infrastructure, including the delivery model and progress. The Council's strategy recommended the installation of 300 EVCPs on/off-highway Council-owned property located around the Borough by 2030.</p> <p>Members heard about the short-term goal to upgrade the existing infrastructure and add more charging points in some areas. Out of 46 planned charging points, 34 had been completed and the remaining 10 would be done in a few weeks. It was reported that there were also plans to install 14 ultra rapid charging points that could charge a vehicle in 15-20 minutes.</p>

The Committee was advised that the medium-term goal was to expand the on-street charging network for residents who did not have off-street parking. The Council had secured funding from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) to install 36 more sockets and had submitted a joint bid with six other boroughs for 1.2 million from the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEV) fund. Long term, the goal was to create a comprehensive and sustainable EV infrastructure that met the needs of the growing number of EV users and support the Council's climate change agenda. The Council aimed to achieve this by working with partners, engaging with stakeholders and monitoring the performance and impact of the EV network. The Head of Highways also noted the recommendations of the former select committee's major review into the Borough's EV infrastructure, which was approved by Cabinet in March 2022.

In terms of units in car parks and the availability of on street charging for people who parked cars outside their house, it was highlighted that officers were mapping out locations for EV charging units within a 5-minute walking distance for people without off-street parking. The Council was exploring on-street charging and had selected four locations for phase two to trial this.

In response to queries about value for money and being more competitive in the market, it was reported that the Council set the charging cost for electric vehicles based on the energy and maintenance cost and benchmarking with other suppliers. There was a reduced cost for residents with a Hillingdon First card.

The Committee raised questions about how long the EV units would last and how often they would need to be replaced, given the fast-changing technology. It was explained that EV units could be upgraded with software updates to keep up with the new technology, and that the hardware would not need to be changed. The Council was trying to increase the capacity of the EV units by installing higher kilowatt units in phase two, although it was noted that there were challenges with obtaining electricity supply from suppliers.

The challenges of EV charging infrastructure were highlighted and it was noted that phase one was a quick fix to meet the residents' demand, and that phase two would use 22 kilowatt units. Members were informed that grid operators were also resistant for the Council to install higher spec units as they wanted to leave that market for suppliers. It was noted that the Council was using the Oxford model for on-street parking and applications were being made for the Low Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Fund (LEVIF) to support more EV charging project. Although the Council did not want to miss the opportunity to benefit from the EV market, considerations such as grid capacity and supplier interests had to be factored in.

In terms of the progress of mapping for on-street charging infrastructure, it was explained that various councils and organisations were helping the government with data. As part of that data collection, information had been put together using the data available and any identified needs. Members heard that the development of the Council's fleet and how EV infrastructure could be used was being explored.

Although there was a ZAP map where people could see all EV units, Members considered that it would be helpful to have a dedicated section on the website to advise people where charging units were based.

The Committee requested information about monitoring and usage in future reporting.

Members thanked officers for the good, interesting and balanced approach.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the contents of the report.

19. **INTERNAL/EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE** (*Agenda Item 6*)

The Head of Corporate Communications introduced the update on internal and external communications and provided Members with a detailed overview of the report. It was reported that the Corporate Communications team aimed to produce the strategic narratives for the Council and ensure that stakeholders were well informed about resident services.

The report provided a summary about the Council's core communication functions, campaigns and marketing, publications and social media use. Members heard about key outcomes and achievements of the Corporate Communications team's work and some of the challenges faced with the decline in local press. The report highlighted the changes in the website function and the publications format to enhance the use of other corporate communications channels to reach out further to residents digitally.

In response to Member questions on how the Council evaluated the effectiveness of its communication campaigns and whether residents were well-informed about local issues, it was explained that various evaluation mechanisms were used to assess the impact of communications, such as digital analysis, media and survey responses and campaign outcomes. The Council was also exploring new methods of communication platforms such as TikTok and WhatsApp to reach different audiences and improve the connection with residents. It was acknowledged that social media could have a positive impact in spreading information.

For future reporting, Members requested a comparison table of media relations information from previous years to determine the different levels of progress made.

Members welcomed the sharing of news around law breaking residents in terms of fly tipping and breach of licensing conditions.

The Committee discussed the different uses of social media. It was noted that although the Council had more followers on Twitter than Facebook, there was more engagement with residents via Facebook. Officers advised the Committee that the higher number of followers on Twitter was due to the Council being an early adopter of the platform.

Although the maintenance of notice boards did not fall under the Corporate Communications team, Member points about them looking empty and the suggestion of stock posters would be fed back to the relevant service area.

The Committee queried how different teams within the Council coordinated with each other to spread information about the services available to residents. The recent campaign of the availability of blood pressure equipment in libraries was mentioned and it was noted that the Corporate Communications team had worked with the libraries to amplify this message to increase awareness and uptake. This was done through social media, posters, inclusion in the Hillingdon People and general promotion through the libraries team. In terms of different accounts for specific services, it was explained that there was strict process for approving and managing social media accounts for services. Accounts needed to be managed effectively with efficient resources and compliance with the Council's social media policies. It was also noted that the Corporate Communications team had a higher number of followers than most

	<p>service accounts.</p> <p>The Committee reflected on the Council’s communication with the NHS. Members asked for further information on how the Corporate Communications team worked with different departments and partners to avoid duplication which could lead to resident frustration. The Head of Corporate Communications explained that there was a good partnership model with the NHS and the police, and they shared and amplified each other's messages such as the police’s recent recruitment campaign. With the transformation activities, the team would work on highlighting the benefits of residents having an online account.</p> <p>During Member discussions it was noted that pre covid posters and leaflets were sent to GP surgeries often however there was a need to be mindful of sending excessive paper. The text messaging type communication to convey key messages was important and worked well with GP users. The possible use of digital boards was being explored in libraries and the Civic Centre to reduce the use of printed resources and make the medium more visually engaging.</p> <p>The report showed an increase in followers and engagement across different platforms, except for Nextdoor, which had a decrease due to a change in algorithm. There was reduced use in the on the platform. Members requested information on the use of paid social media campaigns, and it was confirmed that the Council had used paid social media campaigns. These had been proven to be effective as demonstrated in the Council’s recent fostering campaign.</p> <p>Members thanked the Head of Corporate Communications for the good report and found it to be interesting and helpful.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the contents of the report.</p>
20.	<p>FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan be noted.</p>
21.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.29 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Anisha Teji, Senior Democratic Services Officer on ateji@hillingdon.gov.uk or 01895 277655. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.