

Minutes

**Residents' and Environmental Services Policy
Overview Committee
Thursday, 8 October 2009
Meeting held at Committee Room 3 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW**



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Members Present:

Councillors Michael Markham (Chairman)
Kay Willmott-Denbeigh (Vice-Chairman)
Lynne Allen
Paul Buttivant
Janet Duncan
Judy Kelly

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO REPORT THE PRESENCE OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no apologies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING

There were no declarations of interest.

3. TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. 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

It was confirmed that all items of business would be considered in public.

5. STREET LIGHTING REVIEW - VERBAL UPDATE FROM OFFICERS AND CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee received verbal update on the Street Lighting Review from officers. In considering the draft conclusions and recommendations, conclusion 4 was amended to include reasons for delays in the notification to Ward Councillors in respect of complaints received from residents.

In addition, Members noted that communication between officers and Ward Councillor was a vital link in the communication process with residents. Therefore, to this end, officers would notify Ward Councillors of any issues where complaints had

been received from residents, giving reasons or causes (if any) for any delays in repair work.

Resolved - That the summary of the Committee's draft conclusions and recommendations set out below be noted:

1. **Publicity** – the causes in the delay in repairs as well as the improvements that have been implemented needs to be better publicised to raise public awareness. Communications with members of the public could be improved via:
 - i) Hillingdon People, the Council's free monthly magazine
 - ii) Setting up a frequently asked questions section on the Council's website.
2. **Regular meetings with other London Boroughs** – officers to continue to meet regularly with other London Boroughs to share information and best practice.
3. **Improved Technology** - continue to use new technology to improve efficiency, particularly in the areas of lamp long life and energy reduction.
4. **Notify Local Ward Councillors** – ensure that local Ward Councillors are:
 - i) Kept informed when new lights are placed, particularly following requests from the Police
 - ii) Notified where issues of complaints had been receive from residents, giving reasons or causes for any delays that may have occurred in repair work.

6. SAFETY AT SPORTS GROUNDS - UPDATE

Norman Stanley, the Licensing Service Manager gave an update on the Safety at sports Grounds report. It was noted that any comments received from the Committee would be noted in the report, and the report would then be sent to the Cabinet Member for Environment for approval.

The Chairman thanked Norman Stanley for attending the meeting.

Resolved –

That the Committee noted and approved the action taken by officers in respect of the Council's responsibilities to ensure the safety of the public (as spectators) at sports grounds within the Borough during 2009, and determined the level of safety inspections which should be implemented in 2010.

7. FUTURE REVIEW TOPICS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE - SHORT PRESENTATIONS BY OFFICERS ON PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

(HOMES IN BACK GARDENS) AND TRADING STANDARDS (ILLEGALLY IMPORTED FOOD AND COSMETICS)

Planning Enforcement (homes in back gardens)

Jim Lynn, the Planning Enforcement Manager advised that this issued could be tackled by departments in the Council pooling intelligence based resources in order to avoid duplication. He added that Housing Benefits and Environment and Protection Unit (EPU) had commenced the process by setting up a protocol to deal with the issue.

The Committee agreed that the main issues for consideration would be a), how to improve the identification of the properties and the property owners that were illegally using buildings in their back gardens as homes and b), what changes to the current legal process would be needed to ensure convictions.

Following discussion, the Committee requested officers to report at the next meeting with the following information for further discussion:

- How we currently identify illegal properties and what other methods/partners might be used
- How we currently identify owners of the properties and what other methods/partners/organisations might be used
- Outline the time (and process) that it takes for enforcement action to come to fruition and what new legal processes ought to be introduced to ensure speedier convictions
- Set out proposals for consideration of a way forward

The Chairman thanked Jim Lynn for attending the meeting.

Trading Standards (illegally imported food and cosmetics)

The Chairman welcomed Sue Pollitt, Trading Standards Manager and Peggy Law, Environmental Protection Unit Manager.

Sue Pollitt gave a presentation with a focus on cosmetics and Peggy Law focused on imported foods.

Given the wide remit and extensive expanse of this area, Members agreed that it be appropriate to look at the issue of illegal cosmetics and imported foods in the following two strands:

- 1) Counterfeit cosmetics
- 2) Imported foods

The Committee indicated that it would be useful to focus on common elements such as Border Control and Manufacturers/Retailers.

Members agreed that the main focus would be on what the Council does and could do to protect residents.

Following discussion, the Committee requested officers to provide a scoping report set out in two strands as follows:

- Counterfeit Cosmetics
- Imported Foods –Border Controls and Manufacturers/Retailers

The Chairman asked officers to set the scoping reports under the following three headings:

- Where we are now?
- What Key issues are we faced with?
- Where do we want to be?

The Chairman thanked Sue Pollitt and Peggy Law for attending the meeting.

Resolved –

That two scoping reports on the following topics be presented to the next meeting for consideration as review topics:

- **Planning Enforcement (homes in back gardens)**
- **Counterfeit Cosmetics and Illegally Imported Foods**

8. 2009/2010 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee agreed to start future meetings at 6pm.

Members agreed that two scoping reports on the following topics would be reported to the meeting on 18 November 2009:

- Planning Enforcement (homes in back gardens)
- Illegally Imported Foods and Cosmetics - it was suggested that this scoping report should be headed Public Protection to encompass the two areas of Trading Standards and Environmental Protection.

Resolved – That the 2009/10 Work Programme be noted.

9. FORWARD PLAN - OCTOBER 2009 TO JANUARY 2010

The Committee considered extracts of items in the Forward Plan for the Cabinet meeting on 17 December 2009. With regard to the forthcoming decision on the Council's Budget - Medium Term Financial Forecast 2010/11 – 2013/14, Members Were keen to find out what impact or likely outturn the recent situation at Stockley Park and Uxbridge Golf courses had had on the budget.

Resolved – That items on the Forward Plan be noted.