

Minutes

RESIDENTS' AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

7 December 2011



Meeting held at Committee Room 4 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Michael Markham (Chairman) Susan O'Brien (Vice-Chairman) Jazz Dhillon Judy Kelly David Yarrow Peter Curling</p> <p>Witnesses Present: Sirous Ordoubadi – Planning & Enforcement Wayne Greenshield – Highways Development James Rodger – Planning & Enforcement</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Natasha Dogra – Democratic Services</p>	
36.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Cllr David Payne. Apologies had also been received from Cllr June Nelson, and Cllr Peter Curling substituted.</p>	Action by
37.	<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 items on the agenda were marked Part 1 and were therefore considered in public.</p>	Action by
38.	<p>TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p>	Action by
39.	<p>REVIEW 1 - WITNESS SESSION 4 (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>The Chairman of the Committee welcomed Sirous Ordoubadi and Wayne Greenshield from the Planning and Enforcement team to the meeting. Officers explained that their roles involved opening notice under NRSWA 1991, inspection, traffic management, routine inspection and highways planning.</p> <p>Officers said applications for cabinets were usually received electronically from mobile operators e.g. Vodaphone and 3, and utility companies e.g. BT and Virgin. The applications described the exact</p>	Action by

location of the cabinet in relation to the phone mast (if applicable) and footway. The width of the cabinets was 1.5m, increasing to 2.2m when the cabinet door was open. The preferred location for a cabinet was on the grass verge; however Officers said there had been applications for cabinets to be positioned closer to the road than the grass verge. Cabinets had to be located 1.5m away from the road, with an absolute minimum distance of 1.2m. Officers relied heavily on the Council's GIS system. However, if there were unknown factors and the GIS system could not be used then site visits were undertaken. Officers said 20% of applications required a site visit.

Officers informed Members that they did negotiate with operators to ensure the most suitable position for the cabinet was chosen. Companies were usually flexible with the location of cabinets.

The Committee asked Officers about the process following the planning stage of the application. Officers said the company would now apply for works on the public highway to be undertaken. This application was processed online via software used nationally which all utilities companies were privy to. In this application the company would specify when the work would be carried out, what work was to be performed, traffic management issues, the date and time of the work and checks to be undertaken at the site. Council Officers would perform spot checks on the site within a 2 year guarantee period. During this time if there was a fault with the site the operator would be contacted to fix the fault. If the fault posed a danger to the public there was a 2 hour time limit within which the site must be accessed by the operator. For non-dangerous damage there was a 10-day time limit. For dangerous damage, a Council Officer would stay at the site until the operator reached. If the operator did not reach within the time limit they would be charged. The operator would also be charged for the make-safe actions taken on the site, officer time, traffic management issues and any other inconvenience caused.

Officers stated that approximately 250 applications were received for cabinets used in conjunction with phone masts and cabinet repairs each year. Officers stated that the 3-Officer strong team undertook over 200 site visits each year to check for site safety and cabinet maintenance.

The Committee asked Officers about the BT and Virgin broadband boxes. Officers said Planning Advisors only had an influence over the placement of a cabinet when it was being located within a conservation area. Otherwise, all applications were considered by the Highways Engineers. Officers held quarterly co-ordination meetings with utilities companies within the borough which were attended by BT and Virgin. Officers were able to control the location of cabinet boxes within reason; for example boxes would not be located at road junctions, on corners of streets or in front of houses, where possible.

When seeking to place a cabinet on a road nearby residents must be contacted by the relevant operator. If a resident complained to the company they would try to accommodate the resident's needs. Likewise if the resident complains to the Council, Officers will help

	<p>address the resident's complaint.</p> <p>Officers clarified that approximately 300 new Virgin cabinets had been erected throughout the borough. This year would see 600 new BT cabinets placed within the London Borough of Hillingdon. Officers said these cabinets would be in addition to the cabinets currently being used, as the new cabinets had to be used in conjunction with the old hardware. Members requested a map with the location of all cabinets marked on it from Officers.</p> <p>In regards to the size of the boxes Officers stated each box was 1.9m length x 0.5m width and 1.5m height. Officers informed Members that if a box was redundant companies were required to remove it. There was a high rate of cabinet vandalism, with doors and wires being stolen. Members asked for a comparison with other Local Authorities. Officer said this could be sought from the Department of Transport via a Freedom of Information request. Officers confirmed that the relevant utilities company had to pay for any maintenance and vandalism costs. These issues were faced by most Local Authorities nationwide, and were not specific to Hillingdon.</p> <p>Officers informed Members that utilities companies paid the borough in the region of £120,000 per annum for sample inspection costs. The new parliamentary legislation bought in on 29 November 2011 gave the Local Authority new powers to impose on utilities companies and required them to pay approximately £250,000 to the borough to carry out the works for cabinets.</p> <p>Members asked the Officers why the boxes were green. Officers said Virgin had agreed with the Department for Transport that all of their cabinets would be green. The Committee requested Officers to check this via an FOI request. Officers were requested to check whether the City of Westminster allowed black cabinets.</p> <p>Resolved: The Committee thanked Officers for attending and asked Officers to circulate the additional information requested.</p>	<p><i>James Rodger – Planning & Enforcement</i></p> <p><i>James Rodger – Planning & Enforcement</i></p> <p><i>James Rodger – Planning & Enforcement</i></p>
40.	<p>FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>Resolved: The Committee noted that Cabinet would be receiving an update on the Hillingdon Khat report in January 2012. The Committee noted the Forward Plan.</p>	Action by
41.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>Resolved: The Committee noted the Work Programme.</p>	Action by
<p>The meeting, which commenced at 5.30 pm, closed at 7.00 pm.</p>		

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the

resolutions please contact Natasha Dogra on 01895 277 488. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.