

MAJOR REVIEW – USING OUR WATER: IMPROVING EFFICIENCY AND DEVELOPING LONG-TERM STRATEGIES – WITNESS SESSION 2

Contact Officer: Steven Maiden
Telephone: 01895 250692

REASON FOR ITEM

To enable the Committee to gather evidence as part of their Major Review into water conservation within the Borough. This session will particularly focus on the water usage on the Corporate Estate both at the Civic Centre and the Council's other buildings throughout the Borough.

OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE COMMITTEE

1. Question the witnesses
2. Highlight issues for further investigation
3. To make a note of possible recommendations for the review

INFORMATION

On 25 September 2013 Members agreed that the first Major Review of this Committee should focus on the issue of water conservation within the Borough.

For this **second witness session** Members will hear evidence from:

Name	Position
David Haygarth	Energy Manager
Emma Grigson	Head of Corporate Affairs, Affinity Water
Nic Gilbert	Water Efficiency, Affinity Water

PAPERS WITH THE REPORT

Water Conservation Review – Terms of Reference
Information on this aspect of the review

KEY LINES OF ENQUIRY

The focus of this session is on water conservation on the Council's Corporate Estate. As can be seen from the attached Terms of Reference, Members have agreed that the aim of this area of the review is to provide recommendations on how the Council could make changes to its water usage practices within its own buildings with a view to increasing efficiency and reducing water costs.

To achieve this, Members may wish to explore the following key lines of enquiry:

1. What is the current status with water metering across the corporate estate?

2. Could water usage be reduced across the estate with the introduction of technologies such as toilet “Hippos”, flow-restricting tap heads / urinal controls, etc.
3. Could the Council use greywater and rainwater collected from the corporate estate to reduce the need for mains water?
4. What is the viability of using existing water butts on the estate? Questions may include:
 - a. Are there contamination issues associated with using these butts?
 - b. Could water be treated so as to be suitable for use on the corporate estate?
 - c. What other uses could there be for harvested water in the Council’s operations?
5. Are there any issues with leakages on the estate that lead to inefficiencies and additional costs? How might these be resolved?

Additionally, Members will be able to ask questions to representatives from Affinity Water who will be able to provide context for the review and expertise on water use / conservation.

USING OUR WATER: IMPROVING EFFICIENCY AND DEVELOPING LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

Terms of Reference

General

1. To gather evidence in order to develop a broad understanding of:
 - a. The Council's current water usage practices in both its green spaces and across the corporate estate,
 - b. The scope of the Council's existing policies regarding its own water usage,
 - c. The planning requirements that the Council places on developers building in the Borough.

Water and Our Green Spaces

2. To explore possible ways in which the Council could make short-, medium- and long-term improvements to its water usage in award-winning green spaces;
3. To explore alternative water supply options and determine where the Council can get best value for money and have the best possible impact on the environment;
4. To make recommendations that produce financial savings, increased efficiency and add to the Council's reputation as an authority with an innovative and leading approach to green spaces;

Water and Our Corporate Estate

5. To explore how the Council could make cost-effective changes to its water usage practices across the corporate estate;
6. To make recommendations that improve how the Council uses water within its own buildings with a view to reducing usage and producing positive financial and environmental impacts;

Developing Our Water Strategy

7. To contribute to the development of future water requirements set out in the Local Plan Part 2;
8. In conjunction with the Environment Agency and water companies, to contribute to future plans for conserving and reducing water usage in the Borough; and
9. To make recommendations that put measures in place to ensure that the Borough's water usage is brought in line with the London average as determined by the London State of the Environment Report.

Information on this aspect of the Review:

Water and Our Corporate Estate

Similarly to the above, the issues of water supply and water usage on the Council's corporate estate have not been explored by a Policy Overview Committee to date. The Council owns and maintains a significant estate including the Civic Centre, numerous satellite buildings and social housing and there is large-scale water use throughout this estate. Officers have advised that there is scope for improvements to how water is managed on the estate and how recycled water is used throughout the Borough.

It is suggested that this aspect of the review explore the following three areas:

1. The findings of the green spaces aspect of the review could be applied to similar operations on the Council's estate. This could look at how water is used to maintain open spaces on the estate (flowerbeds, gardens, etc.) and explore how efficiencies and savings could be achieved.
2. The use of grey (waste water excluding that from toilets) and rain water could be explored to ascertain whether this could be collected and reused at our sites to reduce water usage and the associated costs. If this proved not to be possible or too expensive to implement, there would still be scope to assess whether efficiencies could be made in how water is used on the estate, e.g. through the use of "Hippos" to reduce the amount of water used in flushing the toilet.
3. The use of rainwater, grey water and water from bore holes could, if viable, be used further afield than the estate in other areas of the Council's operations. Officers have suggested that there may be scope to use this water in street cleaning operations for instance.

Impact: Depending on the findings and the evidence presented to the Committee, recommendations could lead to significant financial savings in the short-, medium- and long-terms. An additional impact could be that the reduction of water entering the Borough's sewerage systems could have a positive impact on water levels and flooding in the area and the costs associated with this.