

MAJOR REVIEW – USING OUR WATER: IMPROVING EFFICIENCY AND DEVELOPING LONG-TERM STRATEGIES – WITNESS SESSION 3

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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 developing the Council's water strategy.

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 **third witness session** Members will hear evidence from:

Name	Position
James Rodger	Head of Planning, Green Spaces and Culture
Vicky Boorman	Flood and Water Management Specialist
Ian Thynne	Principle Sustainability Officer

PAPERS WITH THE REPORT

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

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:

Developing our Water Strategy

Officers have advised that there is guidance on what the planning department ask external developers to do regarding water conservation, although it has also been noted that further work could be undertaken to clarify the Council's position. Such clarification would help to bring the area in line with comparable areas (such as renewable energy) which already have more comprehensive policies and strategies in place.

Currently the London State of the Environment report flags up the usage of LBH as higher than the London average. Using this evidence, policy has been produced in the Local Plan Part 1 Strategic Policies which ensure the requirement of water reuse in all new developments as they apply through planning. The Built Environment Policy also states that all new homes should be built to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 and has requirements for Sustainable Drainage to be used which incorporates water reuse. Additionally, the Environmental Improvement - Water Resources subsection all new development must meet the London Plan Policy 5.15 for grey water reuse.

Given the policies and guidance already in place, this aspect of the review will focus on two main areas:

1. Officers are currently working on how water conservation will be included in the Local Plan Part 2 and it has been suggested that the Committee could gather evidence on, and make a valuable contribution to, external water conservation requirements.
2. Officer have also suggested that the Committee could look at how the Council works with the Environment Agency and water companies to help manage and plan for future uses. Understanding what water companies are doing in the Borough to encourage uptake (a requirement of the 5 year water resources plans) would be a profitable area for review as it would help make the Borough more resilient and promote conservation with residents.

Impact: The development of more clear guidelines on water conservation in the Borough could lead to significant savings and efficiencies in the future. This would be achieved through internal and external developments being required to adhere to good water conservation practices. As above, this could have a positive impact on water levels and flooding in the Borough, produce savings on water costs in the short-, medium- and long- terms and have a positive impact on the local environment.