

Minutes

RESIDENTS' AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

26 March 2014

Meeting held at Committee Room 3 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



HILLINGDON
LONDON

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Michael White (Chairman), David Yarrow (Vice-Chairman), Lynne Allen, Shirley Harper-O'Neill, Patricia Jackson, Kuldeep Lakhmana (Labour Lead), Carol Melvin and David Payne</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Nigel Dicker (Deputy Director of Public Safety & Environment), Steven Maiden (Democratic Services Officer), James Rodger (Head of Planning, Green Spaces and Culture), John Fern, Ed Shaylor (Residents Services - ASB & Investigations Team), John Purcell (Bereavement Services Manager) and Stuart Coleman (Deputy Bereavement Services Manager)</p>
49.	<p>TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 FEBRUARY 2014 <i>(Agenda Item 4)</i></p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting dated 26 February 2014 were agreed as an accurate record.</p>
50.	<p>REPORT ON THE CLEARING OF GULLIES AND DITCHES IN THE BOROUGH <i>(Agenda Item 5)</i></p> <p>Officers provided a presentation on the cleaning and drainage of the Borough's ditches and gullies and the related flooding problems. It was noted that the Borough had roughly 37,000 road gullies across the road network which were designed to take surface water away from the carriageway. Maintenance of the gullies was undertaken by 2 machines on an annual cleaning cycle of all highways and Council Housing land.</p> <p>With regard to the recent national floods, officers advised that the Borough had not been badly affected with the minor flooding problems that had occurred being largely due to the rising water table. This had led to problems with the soakaways to which gullies were connected not being able to release water into the ground at a quick enough rate. It was noted that most flooding problems had been in the south of the Borough due to the fact that it was slightly lower than the north.</p> <p>Officers advised that some of the issues with flooding in the Borough were the responsibility of Thames Water rather than the Council itself. Work was currently being progressed to resolve these issues.</p> <p>Responding to Members' questions, it was clarified that the issue of which agency had responsibility for flooding was complex and unclear. In short, each agency was responsible only for water that drained from its own land irrespective of where flooding took place. Officers were currently reviewing the Council's and other bodies' responses to flooding and would be producing a report to clarify the issue. This would be</p>

	<p>circulated to officers and Members and considered by this Committee in due course.</p> <p>With regards to the identification of the Borough's ditches, it was noted that inspections would take place alongside use of the Geographical Information System (GIS). Members suggested that residents' associations be approached to offer their knowledge on where ditches were in their local areas.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An update on the review into the Council's and other bodies' responses to flooding be considered by the Committee in due course; 2. The possibility of consulting residents' associations in the review be passed to the Council's Flood & Water Management Specialist; and 3. The report be noted.
51.	<p>UPDATE ON THE ENFORCEMENT OF CEMETERY REGULATIONS (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>Officers provided a presentation on the enforcement of the Borough's new Cemetery Regulations in which it was noted that there had been no major issues at the cemeteries since implementation. Where there had been problems, they had been due to a small number of persistent offenders who had now moved from the Borough. However, it was noted that summer tended to be a more problematic time due to barbeques and parties that were sometimes held in memory of those who had passed away.</p> <p>Officers had also reviewed the funeral procedure and, as a result of this, had produced a plain-English booklet to be provided to the bereaved. Booklets would be given to funeral directors to circulate and the bereaved would be asked to sign them to confirm that they have understood and will adhere to the regulations.</p> <p>It was noted that the new system of informing the bereaved as early as possible and the stronger enforcement of regulations appeared to be a success. Members suggested that one of the reasons that roadside memorials were a persistent problem in the Borough was that such early information on policies was not provided. Members proposed that a paragraph on the roadside memorial policy be included in the funeral procedures booklet with a view to informing those who might be maintaining such memorials of the policy.</p> <p>Officers advised that this suggestion would be investigated and considered in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transportation & Recycling.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Officers, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transportation & Recycling, investigate and consider the inclusion of a paragraph on roadside memorials in the funeral procedures booklet; and 2. The report be noted.
52.	<p>UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PAST REVIEWS (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>Updates on two of the Committee's reviews were updated as below:</p> <p><u>Review of Regulations and Byelaws Relating to Cemeteries and Burial Grounds in Hillingdon</u></p>

Officers advised that much of this update had been provided in the above item.

Members asked that an update be provided on the investigation into the use of machinery as a more cost effective way of breaking down clay soil used for graves.

Local Pest Control Services and the Impact of Waste Management Processes on these

Officers advised that many of the recommendations from this review had been progressed. With regard to communication, Contact Centre staff had been well briefed on pest control information and Waste Services had been putting up signs advising residents of when collection days were.

Officers noted that more robust action was now been taken against traders who persistently left waste but that there was significant resistance to this. Traders often refused to clear waste that surrounded their sites and argued that it would be too expensive for them to undertake.

It was noted that social landlords had generally been willing to pass on information to tenants about how to deal with domestic waste in order to prevent pests. However, private sector landlords had been more difficult to engage.

Members raised concerns that waste only seemed to be removed when there was a threat of fines. It was suggested that a more robust approach be taken, especially with repeat offenders.

Responding to Members' questions, officers advised that it would not be practical to pass information on pest control through estate agents due to the significant number of them operating within the Borough.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. Information on the investigation into the use of machinery as a more cost effective way of breaking down clay soil at cemeteries be provided to the Committee in due course; and**
- 2. The report be noted.**

53. **CONSIDERATION OF TOPICS FOR MAJOR REVIEWS FOR THE NEXT MUNICIPAL YEAR** (*Agenda Item 8*)

Following discussion, Members put forward the below as possible major reviews topics for next year's Committee:

- Street cleaning
- General waste
- The sale of counterfeit products within the Borough. This could either focus specifically on the sale of counterfeit alcohol and cigarettes or more widely on all counterfeit products.
- The Council's enforcement policy and how rapidly enforcement action was taken. The effectiveness and extent of the current policies were suggested as possible areas to explore.

RESOLVED: That officers relay the following suggestions for review to the Committee in the next Municipal Year:

- **Street cleaning;**
- **General waste;**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sale of counterfeit products; and • Enforcement policies.
54.	<p>FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan be noted.</p>
55.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 10</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 5.30 pm, closed at 6.35 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Steven Maiden on 01895 250692. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.