

Minutes

RESIDENTS' SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

15 February 2023

Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre



HILLINGDON
LONDON

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Wayne Bridges (Chairman) Colleen Sullivan (Vice-Chairman) Scott Farley (Opposition Lead) Janet Gardner Ekta Gohil Sital Punja Peter Smallwood</p> <p>Witnesses Present: Jane Turnbull, Chair of Oak Farm Residents' Association (OFRA) Paulette McGowan, alley gating scheme co-ordinator Raj Jhuti, local resident</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Roy Clark, Head of Parking Services Marion Finney, Community Engagement Manager Julia Johnson, Director of Planning, Regeneration and Public Realm Neil O'Connor, Community Engagement Project Officer Liz Penny, Democratic Services Officer Helena Webster, Community Engagement & Town Improvement Manager</p>
51.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>
52.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
53.	<p>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting dated 19 January 2023 be agreed as an accurate record.</p>
54.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED AS PART I WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THOSE MARKED PART II WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items of business were marked as Part I and would be considered in public.</p>
55.	<p>A REVIEW OF ALLEY GATING IN HILLINGDON - WITNESS SESSION 1 (<i>Agenda</i></p>

Item 5)

Helena Webster, Community Engagement and Town Improvement Manager, and Neil O'Connor, Community Engagement Project Officer, were in attendance and presented the report noting that the scoping report for the review had been agreed at the previous Select Committee meeting.

Three residents were in attendance to give evidence in relation to the Committee's review of alley gating in the Borough.

Jane Turnbull, Chair of Oak Farm Residents' Association (OFRA), addressed the Committee Members noting that OFRA covered an area to the east of Long Lane. The area was unusual as a large part of the estate had been designed with vehicle access behind the houses. In some other roads there was a narrower access path for pedestrian or bicycle access. Historically the wider access had been used by refuse vehicles, but the open alleys had resulted in burglary and fly tipping. In the late 1990s and early 2000s Chrysalis funding had been made available to put in gates to be maintained by residents – burglary numbers had dropped immediately. However, no central record had been kept of the lead residents who held the maintenance account and spare keys for each alley.

Members heard that, over the years, OFRA had been approached by residents regarding damaged gates and locks being broken or replaced. They had asked for lead residents to contact OFRA in order to pass on these requests but with little response.

Two main areas of concern were behind the shops at Ryefield Parade where the locks were regularly broken or changed, or gates left open thereby compromising security. In 2022 OFRA had been requested to hold a key to the gates to the west of the shops on the north of Ryefield Parade due to a problem with access to emergency vehicles. On the other side of the Parade, the gates and lock were often damaged and fly tipping and drugs use were an issue there. On one occasion a property developer had installed his own gates thereby cutting off a pedestrian access route onto Ryefield Avenue – action had not been taken in time hence the gates could no longer be removed. The Committee was advised that OFRA would be willing to keep a separate list of email / phone contact details for lead residents in charge of keys.

Paulette McGowan, Lead Resident with responsibility for 11 sets of gates in Hillingdon East, informed the Committee that she looked after the alley gates in Denecroft Crescent, Woodcroft Crescent and Grosvenor Crescent on one side of the road and Denecroft Crescent, Grosvenor Crescent, Windsor Avenue and Burleigh Road on the other side.

Members heard that the alleyway gates at Denecroft Crescent, Woodcroft Crescent and Grosvenor Crescent had been installed in 2008 following problems with burglaries and fly tipping. Other gates including those in Windsor Avenue and Burleigh Road had been installed two years later in 2010.

Ms McGowan was now solely responsible for the maintenance of the gates as the people who had previously helped her had either moved away or had never wanted to be involved with more than the initial start-up. Maintenance issues included locks needing to be replaced having been ground off, locks being broken, and locks being removed – none of these issues had been reported by the perpetrators who were local residents in the vicinity of the alley gates in question. Other problems had included

gates which had dropped. This had all come at a cost to the maintenance fund, which was now dwindling. Moreover, the gate post at Denecroft / Woodcroft Crescent on the Denecroft Crescent side currently needed resetting as it was leaning, and the gate could not be closed – this would need to be resolved and quotes for the work were being sought.

The Committee was informed that the Nationwide Building Society Treasurer Accounts that had been held for the alley gate maintenance funds since the start up had now been closed as they no longer supported these types of accounts. Ms McGowan was waiting for the funds to be sent to her in the form of cheques and would then need to source another Treasurer/Society account.

Ms McGowan reported that she was planning to move away from the area in the near future and did not know who would then assume responsibility for the maintenance funds and the upkeep of details relating to the alley gating schemes.

Raj Jhuti, local resident, was also in attendance and gave evidence in relation to the Parkfield Avenue alley gating scheme. He informed Members that the alley gates had been introduced to reduce burglary, fly tipping and drug use in the area. The results had been positive, and those issues had reduced significantly following installation of the gates approximately 17 or 18 years previously; however, many of the residents who had been part of the original scheme had now moved away. Members heard that the bank account for the scheme was now dormant hence residents were fixing locks at their own expense. It was no longer possible to access the funds in the maintenance account and there was no lead person with responsibility for the gates.

In response to their requests for clarification as to how the current system could be improved, the Committee Members heard that the main issues related to maintenance costs, the handling of keys when new people moved in and access to bank accounts. It was confirmed that it would be very helpful if a lead person at the Council could be identified to help residents with matters relating to the funding and maintenance of alley gates. It was also suggested that it would be beneficial if the Council could maintain an up-to-date record of the main key keepers which would be reviewed every year or so.

Members enquired how the issues relating to bank accounts could be resolved. It was confirmed that residents had paid a sum of money into a maintenance account when the schemes were originally set up; however, it was estimated that approximately 80% of current residents had no knowledge of this fund therefore took it upon themselves to get keys cut and repair locks. Funds had dwindled over the years, and, in some cases, accounts had become dormant and inaccessible. It was noted that Nationwide no longer offered Treasurer's accounts and had ceased to do so in December 2022. Other banks including Metro Bank, HSBC and Lloyds TSB continued to offer these types of accounts, but, with the exception of Lloyds TSB, meeting minutes were generally required in order to set them up. Mr Jhuti confirmed that, with regard to the aforementioned dormant account, HSBC would not release the funds to an individual and had requested copies of Residents' Association minutes etc which he was unable to provide. Any association set up would have to run for at least six months to qualify.

It was confirmed that, when a resident moved on, the keys to the gates should automatically be passed on to the new resident but this did not always happen. New residents tended to ask a neighbour for a key and then made their own copy. Over the years this had led to problems such as locks getting broken as the keys had been recut many times. There was a small charge of £5 when a new non-high security key was

requested. The process was different for high security keys.

The Community Engagement and Town Improvement Manager advised the Committee that, for older schemes such as those dating back to 2008 and 2010, a paper-based system had been in use. However nowadays officers held a central list of all new schemes together with contact addresses - the system had changed significantly over the years. Alley gating schemes ranged from 5 to over 100 households so a flexible scheme was needed to address all possible scenarios.

It was confirmed that an alley gating information pack was available on the Council's website and in hardcopy which included guidance on how to set up a scheme. It was not possible to recommend which bank to use but would be useful to review the information currently on the website. The Community Engagement and Town Improvement Manager noted that, as set out in the review scoping report, there was now a discretionary option agreed by the Cabinet Member to support the repair or refurbishment of gates where schemes had been successfully running for over 10 years. Residents could apply for this and, if agreed, funding would be allocated on a 90/10 basis - 90% Chrysalis funding with a 10% contribution from residents. This also provided an opportunity for the Council to make contact with lead residents and refresh the information currently held.

In response to questions from the Committee, it was confirmed that an overarching organisation to keep records and assist in the running of the alley gating schemes would be extremely useful and would be welcomed by the residents.

Members noted that the alley gating schemes were designed to be self-help schemes whereby residents were responsible for maintenance of the gates. It was confirmed that the schemes were dependent on residents using the gates properly and closing them appropriately; however, if there were specific issues in relation to certain schemes officers would be willing to look into these in an attempt to assist. It was confirmed that the police did not currently get involved with alley gating schemes although the previous Safer Neighbourhood Team had been very helpful.

RESOLVED: That the Residents' Services Select Committee noted the evidence heard at the witness session and sought clarification as necessary in the context of its review of alley gating in Hillingdon.

56. **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY AND S106 MONITORING - ANNUAL REPORT** (*Agenda Item 6*)

Julia Johnson - Director of Planning, Regeneration and Public Realm, introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and S106 Monitoring report which provided an update to the Committee on CIL and Section 106 income and expenditure in the 2021/22 financial year.

It was noted that CIL was a more strategic charge which was not site-specific while S106 funds were allocated more locally to the site of a development. A new monitoring system was in place which had been introduced mid-year. Members were informed that Table one in the report set out the total CIL income since adoption. In 2021/22 income had totalled some £6.8 million while expenditure had totalled approximately £1.7 million. A further breakdown was set out in Table two of the report - the strategic portion of Hillingdon's CIL had been spent on the West Drayton Leisure Centre with the neighbourhood proportion spent on the Chrysalis Programme. It was confirmed that

there was no time limit as to when CIL funds had to be spent.

In terms of S106 funds, Councillors heard that in 2021/22 some £8 million had been received and £3.4 million had been spent. It was confirmed that a balance was held, and funds were not usually spent in the same year as they were received.

Members requested a breakdown of the areas where funds had been spent noting that significant funds would have been generated following developments in Hayes Town. It was confirmed that a list of funds received by Ward could be made available. A significant portion of funds received in 2021/22 had been spent on West Drayton Leisure Centre.

In response to further questions from the Committee regarding administration fees, it was confirmed that the Council already charged the maximum fees of 4% and 5% for administration. Members were informed that there was no risk of funds not being spent on time as deadlines were tracked and monitored regularly.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted and commented on the information presented in the report.

57. **PARKING AND MODERN TECHNOLOGY - DELIVERY DRIVERS** (*Agenda Item 7*)

Roy Clark, Head of Parking Services, presented the report. Members were informed that, in 1994, parking enforcement powers in London had been transferred from the police to local authorities. Hillington Council's parking enforcement service had been outsourced in August 2003 and the current contract was with APCOA Parking Limited. There were currently 22 separate Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) deployment beats used by APCOA across the Borough - some areas were patrolled on foot and others by moped or car.

In terms of technology, the CEOs used handheld computers which recorded all the evidence and generated a ticket. The PCN ICT processing system included an option to enable the motorist to log in online and see the evidence that the CEO had collected and to then make a payment or submit an appeal. A frequently asked questions section highlighted how successful an appeal was likely to be; however, even if it was unlikely to be successful, the motorist was not restricted from submitting an appeal. The PCN ICT processing system was due to be further enhanced over the summer of 2023 with a chatbot being introduced to assist motorists. The Council had also included QR codes on the PCNs to enable motorists to access the website more efficiently.

Members were advised that the Council also used unattended CCTV cameras to undertake enforcement of some parking and moving traffic contraventions. A virtual parking permit system had been introduced which meant that a paper permit did not need to be displayed. This was a much quicker and easier process and residents could apply online. Approximately 50% of permits were currently virtual; however, a paper-based system was still available to residents who preferred not to use the online system.

It was confirmed that the hand-held computers used by CEOs included a GPS tracking system so CEOs could request help if needed - verbal and physical attacks were an issue at times. ANPR was used in private car parks for management purposes. All deployed CEOs were required to wear body worn cameras which had to be switched on during their patrols for their safety. These body worn cameras had become

instrumental to enforcement to verify complaint allegations against CEOs and provide evidence to the Police.

A cashless parking payment system or mobile phone parking system was due to be introduced across the Borough shortly. This system would be tested prior to roll out and would mean that people would no longer need to display a ticket. However, the more traditional paper ticket would still be available.

With regards to delivery drivers, Members heard that, since the pandemic, the proliferation of delivery drivers had caused parking problems across the Borough. Most delivery drivers were no longer linked to one shop and were now generally self-employed or worked for nominated delivery companies. This had resulted in large numbers of delivery drivers parking illegally whilst waiting for a delivery job to be received and numerous complaints had been received about them causing congestion and being intimidating to residents and other local visitors.

Council officers regularly targeted hotspots to try and address this. However, legislation dictated that a PCN had to be served by hand to the delivery driver directly which was problematic as the vast majority of the illegally parked delivery vehicles would move away before any parking enforcement action could legally be taken. At times the number of delivery drivers in one area was excessive and CEOs had been subjected to verbal and physical abuse while trying to enforce parking restrictions.

The Council had also undertaken joint patrols with the Police during which the CEOs undertook parking enforcement, and the Police undertook vehicle cheques to ensure the delivery vehicle was correctly licensed and insured. This had resulted in some delivery vehicles being seized. Further joint patrols would be undertaken in the future. Work was still ongoing with business owners and franchises in an attempt to get them to exercise what limited control they had over delivery companies. The Council regularly liaised with other local authorities over parking matters and kept abreast of initiatives that were being investigated or had been trialled in other areas to manage parking issues caused by delivery drivers. No effective solutions had been identified but other authorities had reported that joint patrols with the Police had been found to work well.

Members requested further clarification as to how the Council was currently working with franchises and businesses to address the issue of delivery drivers parking illegally. It was noted that residents were extremely concerned and anxious about this matter and had reported some incidences of delivery drivers acting aggressively and verbally abusing women and young people.

In response to this it was confirmed that officers were working with McDonald's in Ruislip and were considering the creation of a segregated area for parking, possibly in a section of Kingsend North car park, with separate entrance and exit points. The provision of parking bays was also being explored. However, it was noted that drivers tended to park in a specific area to enable them to take the quickest route to their destination. In response to further questions from the Committee, it was confirmed that reports of CEOs turning a blind eye to parking contraventions would be investigated and, if necessary, the appropriate disciplinary action would be taken. Officers regularly met with the Police and worked collaboratively with them in respect of parking enforcement matters.

Committee Members enquired whether big franchises could potentially work together to

share information and ban abusive or aggressive drivers. It was agreed that the Head of Parking Services would explore this further outside of the meeting and report back to Democratic Services.

In response to further questions from the Committee, Members were informed that, prior to ticketing a vehicle, there was an observation period in respect of parking contraventions to assess if someone was loading / unloading etc. If someone had parked on a footway, they would receive an instant ticket. In respect of a 'buffer' time after a ticket had expired, this would typically be 3 or 5 minutes – this was currently being reviewed with the Cabinet Member and the information would be published in due course. With regard to CEOs and Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) it was recognised that there was more of a skeleton service at weekends and on Bank Holidays. However, if a matter was reported regularly, it should be followed up on – it was agreed that Councillor Gohil would provide the Head of Parking Services with the details of the area of concern - streets around Brunel Playing Fields - to enable him to follow this up outside of the meeting.

Members enquired whether delivery drivers were licensed to work in the Borough – it was confirmed that they were not and did not need to be at present. Councillors commented that at times one delivery bike would occupy an entire car parking space which could potentially accommodate several bikes – this was a matter of concern. The Head of Parking Services confirmed that appropriate locations for parking bays were being considered in an attempt to control this.

Concerns were raised by Members regarding taxi cabs and mechanics utilising private land spaces. In response to this it was confirmed that the Council was not legally permitted to enforce parking on private land and could only encourage people to put pressure on their landowner or management agent to bring controls in.

In response to concerns raised by the Committee regarding the safety of parking enforcement officers, it was confirmed that, in problem areas, attempts were made to ensure officers did not work alone. GPS on handheld devices ensured the whereabouts of CEOs could be tracked. It was recognised that, in terms of parking enforcement, there was a gap between what residents expected and what could be done. Attempts would be made to further clarify the information online to clarify this.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Head of Parking Services investigate whether large franchises could work together to share information and ban abusive or aggressive drivers and report back to Democratic Services;**
- 2. That Councillor Gohil provide the Head of Parking Services with the details of the area of concern in terms of parking in CPZs - streets around Brunel Playing Fields - to enable him to follow this up outside of the meeting; and**
- 3. That the Residents' Services Select Committee noted and commented on the information presented in the report.**

58. POST REVIEW MONITORING - ENGAGEMENT WITH TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS (*Agenda Item 8*)

Marion Finney, Community Engagement Manager, presented the report which provided an update following a previous review of engagement with tenants and leaseholders. It was confirmed that a number of recommendations had been made which included an

	<p>Action Plan of delivery alongside three-year Strategies to cover Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement and High Risk and Complex Buildings as included in the agenda pack.</p> <p>In response to Members' requests for further clarification, it was confirmed that every Residents' Association in the Borough which the Community Engagement Team was affiliated with and which received funding from the Council, signed up to a constitution containing guidance including how funding was managed and what they could/could not spend it on. This information was also available on the website. Members heard that the funding was mainly for the day-to-day running of the Association – printing costs etc. At the end of each year, prior to reapplying for the funds, the associations were expected to complete a financial audit.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Residents' Services Select Committee noted the development of the key strategies along with the Action Plan and timescales for delivery set out and asked questions of officers.</p>
59.	<p>FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: that the Residents' Services Select Committee noted the Cabinet Forward Plan.</p>
60.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 10</i>)</p> <p>Members agreed to defer the Town Centre Regeneration and Impact of HS2 on Parking and Traffic items scheduled for the April meeting to the June meeting to even out the work programme. Members were requested to provide further details of the areas they wished to be covered in relation to these two items. It was agreed that Cllr Smallwood would write to fellow ward councillors in the areas affected by HS2 (Ruislip, South Ruislip, Ickenham and South Harefield and Harefield Village) to ask for their input.</p> <p>In relation to the Town Centre Regeneration item, Members requested that the Committee be provided with an update on progress made to support local businesses and increase footfall. Information regarding the possible use of empty shops for community projects was also requested.</p> <p>Members welcomed the addition of the Battle of Britain Bunker to the proposed list of site visits. It was confirmed that a visit with the weed killing contractor was likely to take place in Spring. Members requested site visits to leisure centres in the near future and proposed one to see the current construction phase of West Drayton Leisure Centre and one to Uxbridge Leisure Centre.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Town Centre Regeneration and Impact of HS2 on Parking and Traffic items scheduled for the April meeting be deferred to the June meeting; 2. That Cllr Smallwood write to fellow ward councillors in the areas affected by HS2 to ask for their input regarding the Impact of HS2 on parking and traffic item on the Work Programme; 3. That, in relation to the Town Centre Regeneration item, the Committee be provided with an update on progress made to support local businesses

	<p>and increase footfall together with information regarding the possible use of empty shops for community projects;</p> <p>4. That site visits to leisure centres be arranged by Democratic Services in the near future to see the current construction phase of West Drayton Leisure Centre and to see Uxbridge Leisure Centre; and</p> <p>5. That the Residents' Services Select Committee considered the Work Programme and agreed any amendments.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.45 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Liz Penny, Democratic Services Officer at epenny@hillingdon.gov.uk. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.