

Minutes

RESIDENTS' SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

15 March 2023



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Wayne Bridges (Chairman), Colleen Sullivan (Vice-Chairman), Scott Farley (Opposition Lead), Janet Gardner, Ekta Gohil, Sital Punja and Peter Smallwood</p> <p>Others Present: Joanna Allen (Climate Action Manager), Inspector Dan Lipinski (Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)), Neil O'Connor (Community Engagement Project Officer), Perry Scott (Corporate Director of Place), Adam Stitson (Team Leader - ASB and Environmental Protection), Stephanie Waterford (Head of Public Protection and Enforcement), Helena Webster (Community Engagement & Town Improvements Manager) and Nikki O'Halloran (Democratic Services Manager)</p>
61.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>
62.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest in matters coming before this meeting.</p>
63.	<p>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2023 be agreed as a correct record.</p>
64.	<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>
65.	<p>A REVIEW OF ALLEY GATING IN HILLINGDON: WITNESS SESSION 2 (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>Ms Helena Webster, the Council's Community Engagement and Town Improvement Manager, advised that the Council had made grant funding available to residents in Hillingdon to secure alleys and mitigate levels of fly tipping and burglary in the area. At its meeting on 15 February 2023, Members received evidence from residents about their experiences. Officers had subsequently attended a site visit and identified the need for repairs to just one gate which was being followed up by the team through the new existing gate refurbishment initiative.</p>

Mr Adam Stitson, the Council's Team Leader for Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and Environmental Protection, advised that alleygating schemes had reduced levels of certain crimes in the Borough, and complaints about fly tipping and similar issues tended to reduce following the installation of alley gates. However, the effectiveness of the alley gates depended on the compliance of residents in using them appropriately. Residents needed to understand how the alley gates should be used and that they needed to be kept locked when not in use and that keys should be kept safe.

Insofar as hotspots were concerned, Mr Stitson advised that there were no geographical hotspots for alley gates being broken or left unlocked and resulting in ASB. Residents' buy-in addressed this issue so it was imperative that, to maintain the effectiveness of the scheme, new residents moving into the area needed to have a handover. The longer a scheme had been installed, the more likely it was that the system would break down as those residents coordinating things like keys locally may have moved away. The Council's Community Engagement Team was currently looking into this issue to come up with a solution.

Members were advised that localities based action would be taken by the Council to address reports of ASB in an area and that, if this action was successful, there would potentially be no need to install an alley gating scheme. Evidence was needed to be able to tackle instances of fly tipping and other crimes and identify the perpetrators. In these situations, the Council could write to all households in the area but these generic communications tended to have limited effectiveness as they were impersonal and easy to ignore.

Inspector Dan Lipinski, Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), advised that the police interaction with the Council's ASB team was limited as the team appeared to be largely autonomous. However, the MPS worked with the ASB and Community Engagement teams when needed and undertook intelligence led patrols and the MPS' Design Out Crime team had significant expertise in identifying preventative measures that could be taken to address crime. **The Democratic Services Manager would circulate the Police Crime Prevention Initiatives Guide to Alley Gating to Members of the Committee.**

Inspector Lipinski had contacted Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) officers to garner their thoughts on the alley gating schemes and had received a number of testimonials. These SNT officers were wholly supportive of alley gating and noted that the schemes had reduced fly tipping and worked well if the gates were kept locked when not in use.

Mr Neil O'Connor, the Council's Community Engagement Project Officer, advised that the last six alley gating schemes had been installed to address issues of fly tipping, burglary, drugs and loitering. Prior to the installation of an alley gating scheme, the Council always contacted the MPS through the relevant Safer Neighbourhood Team to determine whether or not the police had any concerns.

Members queried whether the OWL network could help to identify residents that would be prepared to act as coordinators for the keys or as a point of contact for particular schemes. Inspector Lipinski chaired the OWL Steering Group for the West Area and noted that there were sometimes issues with things like bank accounts.

Concern was expressed that, even though there was an alley gating scheme in place, there were times when fly tipping in the alleys still occurred which then fell to the residents to resolve as it was effectively on private land. It was important that residents kept the gates locked. Mr Stitson advised that reports to the Council of these instances

would be looked at and officers would engage with residents to help them to resolve these issues themselves. If this was not possible, consideration could be given to the installation of CCTV to gather evidence and identify perpetrators of large-scale fly tipping as they might be linked to other instances in the Borough.

Whilst the footage from the video doorbells of properties in the vicinity of an alley gate could be used to gather evidence in the event of a crime having taken place, it would not be possible for the Council to install a video doorbell on the gate itself as it would need access to Wi-Fi. All action taken needed to be risk and intelligence led and Inspector Lipinski confirmed that the police routinely requested footage from neighbours' video doorbells during the cocooning process.

With regard to fly tipping, Mr Stitson confirmed that officers could take the rubbish back to the depot and examine the content to see if the perpetrator could be identified but that this would not happen in every instance. There would be times when the waste collection service removed and disposed of the rubbish and it would not be examined.

Concern was expressed that fly tipping would often occur in the alley ways behind shops. There were often houses of multiple occupation (HMOs) in the vicinity and sometimes residents did not exhibit neighbourly behaviour resulting in a build-up of fly tipped waste. Mr Stitson advised that there was a balance between expecting residents to deal with issues themselves and the responsibilities of the Council. The Council was reliant on residents involved in an alley gating scheme to cooperate and make the system work. The Council would offer residents information and advice rather than intervening, unless the fly tipping was on a very large scale.

Inspector Lipinski advised that instances of crime depended on a myriad of factors. If an area appeared to be looked after and there were no broken windows, etc, it would be less likely to attract things like graffiti. The installation of alley gates gave the impression that residents in that area were aware of security and potential perpetrators of crime might therefore move onto another area.

At the start of the process to get an alley gate installed, residents received a lot of support and guidance on the process. After the gates had been installed, there could be a churn in residents with people moving out, tenants moving in and changes to the scheme. There was then sometimes very little information available to residents about the existing scheme and support needed to be put in place and residents needed to be advised that they were responsible for the scheme and that a certain behaviour was expected.

Ms Webster advised that each alley gating scheme covered between 5 and 100+ properties. All issues reported to the Council about the alley gating schemes would be responded to and residents might be signposted to another service. A review of the older schemes was being undertaken to establish if any repairs were needed or to identify other issues. A database of alley gate keyholders across the Borough had been set up and they would be contacted annually to check their contact details and establish whether or not they wanted to continue to act as the keyholder.

It was recognised that the Council had a list of the schemes that were currently in situ. Members were advised that, as the work was resident-led, no action had been taken to identify those areas across the Borough that did not currently have a scheme but which would benefit from alley gating. Although more experienced police officers were aware of the alley gating scheme, the more junior officers would not necessarily be familiar

with it. Where there was an issue, an MPS Design Out Crime Officer (DOCO) could be assigned to make crime prevention recommendations which could include alley gating. It was suggested that the MPS be provided with alley gating information to hand out and that information about the scheme be circulated to OWL subscribers and at police development days.

RESOVLED: That:

- 1. the Police Crime Prevention Initiatives Guide to Alley Gating be circulated to Members of the Committee; and**
- 2. the discussion be noted.**

66. **ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND STREET SCENE SERVICE DEVELOPMENT**
(Agenda Item 6)

Ms Stephanie Waterford, the Council's Head of Public Protection and Enforcement, advised that the restructure of the Anti-Social Behaviour and Environment Team had progressed with a proposal to split into three distinct areas, with clear lines of responsibility to allow for separation of functions and the retention of specialist competencies:

1. Street Scene Enforcement – there had been 2,933 reports of on street issues in 2022, including fly tipping. It was thought that high levels of non-compliance had been driven in part by businesses trying to cut costs and cutting corners. It was recognised that the team would need to demonstrate high levels of diplomacy when dealing with disputes such as high hedges. Each job would have a target response time based on the risk associated with the issue and the service parameters. There had been some improvements over the last twelve months since the introduction of a new post;
2. Environmental Protection Unit (EPU) – this team would be responsible for matters relating to environmental nuisances such as light, dust and emissions, and odour and smoke. It was proposed that regulatory activities be brought back in house. The EPU had a unique set of powers and responsibilities and would be able work across service areas. Although service areas might be governed by certain legislation, it would not be permissible to disregard other legislation that also affected an issue (for example, planning and licensing often crossed over); and
3. ASB Localities – this team would focus on localities-based problem solving (LBPS) to deal with ASB, community tensions and local issues within specific localities. Officers within this team would be able to work across teams, project manage an issue to its conclusion and hold service areas to account. Once this team was in place, it would be important for them to work closely with Ward Councillors.

Ms Waterford advised that officers across the whole service area would be provided with refresher training in relation to any relevant legislation. An external training provider would be brought in to provide training on legislation such as the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) and investigations. Ms Waterford's role (and the service managers' roles) would be required to keep abreast of any new legislation which would be helped by attending London, peer and officer group meetings to share knowledge and information.

The staff consultation period had closed at the start of this week so work would now be undertaken to finalise the new structure. The Street Scene Service Plan would be aligned to the new LBPS model and a review would be undertaken of the Public

Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs would be the subject of a report to the Committee's next meeting on 12 April 2023). Officers were also implementing a new digital triage and case management system across the service area.

It was noted that there was one PSPO document in force in Hillingdon which covered 15-20 restrictions including dog fouling and spitting. PSPOs were in place for three years and the one in Hillingdon was approaching the end of this term. Proposals were currently being worked up for a new PSPO once the current one had expired.

Ms Waterford advised that the Committee would be provided with an update on the restructure of the Community Safety and Vulnerability (CSV) area of the directorate in due course. It was agreed that the CSV Domestic Abuse Service be amended to Domestic Abuse and Vulnerability Service and the relevant job descriptions would be updated.

Mr Perry Scott, the Council's Corporate Director of Place, advised that, as part of the restructure, the new Director of Community Safety and Enforcement had been appointed and would start on 9 May 2023. Ms Waterford advised that, once the restructure had progressed, a communications campaign would be undertaken to ensure that residents were aware of the new structure. Training would also be available for Members to ensure that they were able to redirect residents to the right place.

Concern was expressed that there seemed to be a gap in the service provided in that there was no out of hours service available during the day at the weekends. Ms Waterford advised that there were no current plans to alter the out of hours service but that further refinements would be considered once the volume of complaints received during the day at weekends had been reviewed to determine the viability of any changes.

Some residents had experienced challenges with reporting issues using the new digital system that had been put in place at the Council as they were unable or unwilling to use this technology. **Members requested that they receive an update on the use of the digital system to report issues at a future meeting.**

Concern had been expressed regarding the increase in fees in relation bulky waste collections in Hillingdon as it had been suggested that this was a false economy. **Members were aware that this issue was being monitored by officers and requested that an update be provided at a future meeting to establish whether there was any correlation between the increase in fees and an increase in fly tipping.**

Members requested that officers work with Democratic Services to arrange a site visit with the Noise Team in the coming months as part of the ongoing front line service visits.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. the Committee receive an update on the use of digital means to report issues to the Council;**
- 2. the Committee receive an update on any correlation between the increase in fees and the number of instances of fly tipping in the Borough;**
- 3. officers work with Democratic Services to make arrangements for a visit with the Noise Team; and**
- 4. the discussion and report be noted.**

67. **CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ANNUAL UPDATE** (*Agenda Item 7*)

Ms Jo Allen, the Council's Climate Action Manager, advised that the report provided an update in relation to the objectives set out in the Strategic Climate Action Plan and the Council's aspiration to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. The Council had set out six corporate commitments covering nine key themes, along with a series of priorities for 2022/2023.

The Committee was advised that the Council had taken advantage of grant funding via a bid process with numerous successful applications made including:

1. Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme - £3,862,804
2. Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund - £1,582,432
3. Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme - £13,751,385

Mr Scott advised that the grants were advertised by central Government and officers needed to submit applications within short timeframes and, if successful, had to deliver the agreed scheme in equally short timescales. He noted that the Council had not missed many opportunities to bid for grants and had been successful in 100% of the bids that it had submitted. There were also times when the Council was able to submit joint bids in conjunction with other organisations.

Ms Allen advised that an extensive street lighting replacement programme had been undertaken and a trial had been conducted across six sites for a standalone off grid LED street lighting luminaire. The lights in the Grainges car park had also been replaced, resulting in a 38% reduction in energy consumption.

Whilst the installation of LED street lights across the whole Borough had helped the environment, it was noted that they were not as bright and therefore could make pedestrians feel unsafe in darker spots. Where issues had been identified, the situation had been assessed and, where appropriate, additional light columns had been installed. It was suggested that officers liaise with the police officers working on the Street Safe project as they would be aware of the areas where pedestrians felt unsafe.

The Council's boiler replacement programme continued and the schools screening programme was progressing (39 schools had had screens installed and 12 more were in the validation phase). Progress had also been made on the Trees for Cities tree planting programme but it was noted that saplings could take time to develop and become effective in mitigating the impact of carbon.

To maximise the effectiveness of the Council's climate aspirations, it was important that the authority worked with other groups such as the West London Climate Emergency Officers Group and the London Environment Directors Group Network to share challenges and opportunities. A progress report would be considered by Cabinet at its meeting in September 2023.

Members queried whether the new West Drayton Leisure Centre would be on track to be carbon neutral by 2030. Mr Perry Scott, the Council's Corporate Director of Place, advised that the design of the leisure centre had had to demonstrate that it met the net zero needs during the planning process so the building had been designed to that standard. He confirmed that all new housing developments, such as the Hayes regeneration schemes, would also need to conform to these standards and would need to demonstrate low energy consumption. It was suggested that initiatives such as green roofing be considered as part of the retrofitting programme for existing Council

housing stock.

It was suggested that consideration be given to the removal of the need for planning permission for things like the installation of solar panels, as the formal process could be a deterrent to some people. Members also asked if, when householders in the Borough extended their houses, it would be possible to require them to include certain green elements to their permitted development. **Mr Scott would take these two suggestions back to colleagues in the Planning Team.**

It was recognised that Heathrow Airport caused air pollution in the Borough. Officers had been working with Heathrow who were keen to engage and an open dialogue had been started to explore what could be done.

There were significant benefits with regard to open spaces and Mr Scott noted that around 17k trees had been planted in the Borough's green spaces in the last year.

An innovative approach to road construction had been taken, offering enhanced efficiencies and lower carbon production, and had been trialled in a couple of places in the Borough. The road resurfacing had provided the same quality but was already warm when it arrived so did not consume energy to heat from cold. Although the new surfaces were currently performing well, its resistance to developing potholes was yet to be determined. **Mr Scott would let Members know where these trials were being held.**

Members asked if it would be possible to include additional priorities for the future. For example, increased engagement with Transport for London (TfL) and the Greater London Authority to improve public transport options in the Borough such as more electric buses, an increase in bus routes, an extension to the tube lines, etc. Mr Scott advised that the Council's Transport team had been in regular contact with TfL and that this would continue.

It was suggested that, rather than electricity, vehicles would more likely be powered by hydrogen in the future. As such, Members queried whether the Council was looking to plan for this development with regard to its fleet. Mr Scott advised that the availability and cost of vehicles were significant factors, with new technology developing quickly and costing a lot when first introduced.

Mr Scott advised that the contract for the rapid vehicle charging points in the Borough was currently out to tender and had been included on the Cabinet Forward Plan for June 2023. **A cashback scheme had been in place in the past to replace old boilers and Members asked whether there was any chance that this would be reintroduced. Mr Scott would take this back to relevant colleagues to investigate.**

With regard to the boiler replacement programme, the report stated that further analysis on usage was currently under review and would form part of the Cabinet update in 2023. Members asked that they receive clarification from officers on what this meant.

RESOLVED: That the discussion and report be noted.

68. **FORWARD PLAN** (*Agenda Item 8*)

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.

69.	WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>) RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.
	The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.40 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Liz Penny, Democratic Services Officer on epenny@hillingdon.gov.uk. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, officers, the press and members of the public.