

## Minutes

### PROPERTY, HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE

6 April 2023



Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre

	<p><b>Committee Members Present:</b> Councillors Keith Burrows (Chairman) Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana Adam Bennett Elizabeth Garelick Kamal Preet Kaur June Nelson</p> <p><b>LBH Officers Present:</b> Liam Bentley, Operations Manager for FM Repairs, Housing Maintenance and Voids Poonam Pathak, Highways Programme Manager Gary Penticost, Director of Operational Assets</p>
51.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO REPORT THE PRESENCE OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillors Alan Chapman and Peter Money, with Councillor June Nelson substituting for Councillor Peter Money.</p>
52.	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
53.	<p><b>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>It was noted that the minutes mentioned twice that Councillor Kaur arrived prior to the commencement of item five. It was agreed that the minutes would be amended to remove one of the occurrences.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting dated 09 February 2023 be agreed as a correct record with the discussed amendment.</b></p>
54.	<p><b>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED AS PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED PART 2 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items on the agenda were marked Part 1 and would therefore be held in public.</p>
55.	<p><b>VOID REFURBISHMENT PROCESS INFORMATION REPORT</b> (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>The Chairman introduced Gary Penticost, Director of Operational Assets, and Liam Bentley, Operations Manager for FM Repairs, Housing Maintenance and Voids, to</p>

provide Members with details on the void refurbishment process and its key outputs to ensure residents were provided a safe, warm, and dry environment from commencement of their tenancies. Members' attention was drawn to Appendix A to the report where, since the production of the report in front of the Committee, there had been some updates on the Voids Service's position. It was expected that, throughout the 2022/23 financial year, the service would have received 715 voids and completed 694. This represented an uptick in properties returned since 2019.

Officers confirmed that the service receives very minimal refusals and only minor issues which can be rectified easily and quickly. The Committee were informed that there were occurrences where properties were returned back into the hands of the Council in a very poor state, as evidenced in the report, which could delay the void refurbishment process, however officers were adept at bringing these voids back into good condition in a timely manner for prospective new Council tenants; this minimised the time whereby a Council property was vacant. The Committee noted that the condition that the property is in when returned by a tenant was a primary factor in determining how long the property would be empty for before being ready for a new tenant; the objective was to minimise the time that each property was empty.

The Committee commended the work of officers in what was a critical service provided by the Council. Members queried whether, given the current climate, long term tenants could expect bathroom and kitchen replacements as anticipated. It was confirmed that as an industry standard, bathrooms were replaced every 30 years and kitchens were replaced every 20 years; it was noted that there was a small backlog due to resources being focussed into fire safety and the Building Safety Strategy, however officers confirmed that when a property was returned as a void, it was linked to the Decent Homes Programme ensuring the appropriate refurbishment works were undertaken to make sure the property was up to the required standard. The Committee also noted that if kitchens and bathrooms that had reached their allotted replacement time were in good working order and serviceable, that the service would consider postponing their replacement due to it not being necessary or a priority.

Members queried whether there was a penalty for contractors who did not carry out works to an agreed standard and timeframe. Officers confirmed that they regularly met with contractors and that they were able to quickly remove work from any one contractor if needed, which was considered an indirect form of penalisation. Regarding any sort of financial penalty for sub standard work from contractors, it was confirmed that the Council did not do this but was considering the possibility as a number of other local authorities did penalise. It was reiterated that the primary target was the fast and comprehensive turnaround of void properties to a good working standard.

The Committee were encouraged by the officers' report that the voids refurbishment service was in good working order and an asset to the Council, and Borough as a whole. Members thanked the officers for their presentation.

**RESOLVED: That the Property, Highways and Transport Select Committee noted the contents of the report.**

56. **BUILDING SAFETY UPDATE** (*Agenda Item 6*)

Gary Penticost, Director of Operational Assets, was present for this item and provided Members with details on the Building Safety Strategy for Council Owned residential dwellings including High Rise Buildings. It was noted that the Building Safety Act 2022 set out a safety requirement for landlords of high-risk residential buildings, the Act

would become enforceable from October 2023. Some of the main responsibilities that the Council would assume under the Act primarily for residential buildings at least 18m or 7 Storeys high, with 2 or more residential units included:

- Duty to provide Information about the building and its safety to residents, tenants and leaseholders.
- Duty to register high -rise residential buildings.
- Duty to carry out safety assessments.
- Duty to ensure that remedial works are carried out.
- Duty to cooperate with the Building Safety Regulator.

It was confirmed that the Council had 10 high rise blocks under their management in the Borough. It was highlighted that officers had utilised the government's fire risk assessment priority rating in assessing the 10 high rise blocks and all had received a very low risk rating. Members were also informed that 6 of the 10 blocks had sprinkler systems installed.

Officers informed the Committee of an ongoing project underway for properties to receive new fire rated fuse board units, roughly 8,700 had been fitted over three years. It was highlighted that the Council was ahead of the curve with regard to this work when compared to other local authorities as central government had only very recently pushed fire rated fuse board installation as a mandatory requirement.

The Committee congratulated officers and their team on the good work carried out under the Building Safety Strategy which held Hillingdon in good esteem. The Committee sought to ensure that all residents were aware of what to do in the event of fire and with regard to the Draft Stay Put Policy. Members were informed that all of the Council's high rise blocks had at least one form of fire escape and wayfinding signage installed across all floors; a residents fire safety information pack was in development to be distributed to all residents of high rise blocks. Officers noted that guidance would state that if the fire was in the property, residents would be advised to evacuate; if a fire was close to the property but it was safe to evacuate, then the residents should evacuate. It was also reiterated that the Council's high rise buildings had all received a very low risk rating, the Council only used third party accredited fire doors which were proven to provide a minimum of 30 minutes fire and smoke resistance, in addition to the sprinkler systems in some of the high rise blocks. It was confirmed that the blocks that did not have sprinkler systems installed were due to be demolished in the short term, however, all other fire safety measures were in place and even those buildings earmarked for demolition had been assessed for fire risk and were deemed to be very low risk.

The Chairman thanked officers for the work they did on behalf of the Council and commended the robust building safety work carried out throughout the Borough.

**RESOLVED That the Property, Highways and Transport Select Committee:**

- 1) **Noted the supporting information for Fire Safety within the body of the report; and,**
- 2) **Noted the Operational Delivery Plan.**

57.

**ELECTRIC VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW: 12 MONTH UPDATE** (*Agenda Item 7*)

The Chairman introduced the item noting that the under the Committee's previous guise, the Public Safety and Transport Select Committee, a major review into Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure and policy development in the Borough had been undertaken during the 2021/22 municipal year and that this item acted as a follow up to that review for the Committee receive information regarding the state of play when it came to the Council's EV infrastructure. Poonam Pathak, Head of Highways, was present for this item and delivered a comprehensive update to Members regarding the Borough's EV policy direction.

The Committee had received a copy of the Council's draft Electric Vehicle Strategy which had resulted in support of the 'Council Strategy 2022 – 2026', the Council's 'Strategic Climate Change Action Declaration and Plan (released in July 2021)' and 'Local Implementation Plan (LIP) 2019 - 2041 (LIP)'; in addition to the Public Safety and Transport Select Committee's review into EV infrastructure and policy development. The drafted strategy would also form part of the Council's commitment to net zero carbon emissions.

The Committee were informed of the procurement groundwork that had been undertaken in researching the needs of the Council when it came to EV charge points and infrastructure. By way of update, Members were informed that the tender process would be running until 27 April 2023 as opposed to 19 April as stated in the report, and that officers were aiming to align the procurement of an EV charge point provider for Cabinet approval in June 2023. The Committee were informed that the delivery of EV charging infrastructure from the Council would be demand led and could consist of charging provision on adopted highways, other Council owned property such as workplaces and Council owned public car parks.

Over the initial stages of the procurement process, the Council had explored three prospective routes to market including; full Council ownership of EV charge points, private concession ownership, and a shared Council/private concession option. It was agreed that the Council would pursue a shared Council/private ownership option which would allow the Council more control over the operational aspects of the public EV charge points.

The Committee highlighted that Hillingdon had fewer publicly available EV charge points when compared to inner London boroughs and queried why Hillingdon had been relatively slower on the uptake of EV charge point provision. Officers noted that the inner boroughs had significantly less availability of off-street parking where Hillingdon featured many more driveways and possibilities for at home charging rather than the on-street charging needed in the inner boroughs, often through light column charge points. It was noted that the provision of EV charging infrastructure was demand led and there had not been significant demand for on-street charging in Hillingdon as of yet. The Council's strategy would be aimed initially at destination charging in places such as car parks.

The Committee sought to highlight that the Public Safety and Transport Select Committee concluded their review into EV infrastructure in spring 2022 and wanted to clarify why the procurement process was only now getting off the ground. Officers noted that a tender exercise did take place in 2022 however the bids were not financially or commercially suitable for the Council, it was then decided that the development of the Council's EV Strategy should come first, the draft strategy was subsequently developed and the tendering process was recommenced in 2023. It was also stated that, due to the very fast movement of the EV sector, the Council would be continually assessing demand and looking at the appropriateness of facilitating new

	<p>technologies.</p> <p>Members queried whether in the long term, the Council would look to adopt potential charging destinations that may no longer be used for their original function for example, petrol stations. It was noted that the private sector would assume a large amount of the demand for EV charging and it may be the case that petrol stations are converted into ultra fast charging hubs, which had already started happening in some areas. It was not yet known how this change would manifest in real terms.</p> <p>The Committee thanked officers for their report and were encouraged by the positive moves forward with regard to EV infrastructure in the Borough. Members stated that they were looking forward seeing the implementation of the EV charging contract across Hillingdon.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the Property, Highways and Transport Select Committee noted the contents of the report and provided comments to officers as appropriate on the EV Infrastructure proposal.</b></p>
58.	<p><b>SELECT COMMITTEE REVIEW: ATTAINING BEST PRACTICE AND VALUE FOR THE COUNCIL'S HIGHWAYS RESURFACING PROGRAMME - FINDINGS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>The Committee discussed the merits of deferring this item to their next meeting due to the absence of some key Members of the Committee who had been present throughout the review, namely Councillors Chapman and Money. The Committee were in agreement that their presence would be useful when formulating ideas for recommendations arising from the review.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the Property, Highways and Transport Select Committee agreed to defer this item to their next meeting.</b></p>
59.	<p><b>CABINET FORWARD PLAN</b> (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>The Chairman introduced the Cabinet Forward Plan and the Committee discussed whether they would be minded to see any further information on any of the items listed.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the Property, Highways and Transport Select Committee noted the Cabinet Forward Plan.</b></p>
60.	<p><b>WORK PROGRAMME</b> (<i>Agenda Item 10</i>)</p> <p>The Chairman introduced the Committee Work Programme and noted that this was the final meeting of the 2022/23 municipal year, and that Membership of the Committee could be subject to change at the Council's annual general meeting in May 2023. The Chairman thanked Members for their contributions throughout the year and encouraged Members to notify the clerk to the Committee if there were any particular topics they would like to have added to the following municipal year's work programme.</p> <p>The Committee discussed their major review into highways resurfacing and noted that Members would reconvene in the new municipal year to finalise their recommendations to Cabinet, then would go on to consider the final draft of their report for submission to a subsequent Cabinet meeting.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the Property, Highways and Transport Select Committee noted</b></p>

	<b>the Committee Work Programme.</b>
	The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.26 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Democratic Services at [democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk). Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.