

Minutes

RESIDENTS' SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

19 February 2025



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Wayne Bridges (Chair), Peter Smallwood (Vice-Chair), Darran Davies, Ekta Gohil, Scott Farley (Opposition Lead), Janet Gardner and Kamal Preet Kaur</p> <p>Others Present: Freddie Mohammed, Parking Representations and Appeals Manager Liz Penny, Democratic Services Officer Stephanie Waterford, Head of Public Protection and Enforcement Richard Webb, Director Community Safety & Enforcement</p>
50.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>
51.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
52.	<p>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting dated 14 January 2025 be agreed as an accurate record.</p>
53.	<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 1 and would be considered in public.</p>
54.	<p>FUN FAIRS - REGULATIONS AND HIRING ARRANGEMENTS (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>Stephanie Waterford, Head of Public Protection and Enforcement was in attendance to answer Members' questions in relation to the report as set out in the agenda pack.</p> <p>Members asked about the amount of charges given to companies that erected funfairs in parks and how the revenue compared to that of other boroughs. In response, it was confirmed that the charges were managed by the Green Spaces team. Members heard that Hillingdon had a disproportionate amount of green space compared to other London areas. It was agreed that this question would be taken back to the Green Spaces team for clarification.</p> <p>Councillors sought further clarification as to how noise from funfairs was managed, noting that complaints from residents were sometimes received. It was explained that</p>

officers responded to service requests when noise was considered unbearable or unreasonable. It was confirmed that residents could log a service request; officers would then assess the situation and decide on the appropriate course of action. An out of hours service was also available.

The Committee Members enquired whether there were any terms and conditions in place in respect of noise and lighting when companies made a booking. It was confirmed that there were hiring lease arrangement terms and conditions attached to any hire agreement by Green Spaces. It was an offence to create a nuisance hence such matters could be reported to the Environmental Protection service, which would respond accordingly. It was noted that the service was reactive rather than proactive. Site visits to ensure compliance were not routinely undertaken; the service was responsive and officers responded to any complaints raised.

Councillors asked if the same contractors returned to the same sites each year or if there were changes in contractors. It was confirmed that typically the same funfair operators returned to the same sites, but other operators could come in at any point.

Members raised concerns regarding large advertising boards noting that these were sometimes left up for a considerable amount of time before and after funfairs. In response, officers explained that travelling fairs were required to remove signage within 14 days of an event finishing. If they failed to do so, the Council could issue a fixed penalty notice (FPN) to the operator. In the case of events on private land, the situation was more complex.

Where repeated noise complaints had been received in respect of a specific contractor, Members recommended the inclusion of a specific clause in relation to this in the hire agreement. **It was agreed that officers would follow this up with the Green Spaces team.**

The Committee asked about the fines in place for leaving advertising boards up and sought reassurance as to whether these were robust enough. It was explained that the fines were moderate, between £50 and £100, and that multiple fines could be issued depending on the amount and location of the boards. Members heard that these were statutory fines which could not be amended – prosecution was an option in extreme cases. It was noted that the service was reactive and relied on people reporting any concerns.

In view of the above, the Committee suggested the introduction of a bond concept for funfair companies to ensure they removed their posters and did not damage Council land. **It was agreed that this was a good idea which would be fed back to Green Spaces.**

With regard to food hygiene, it was confirmed that mobile caterers were obliged to be registered with the home authority where their business was based.

At the request of Members, it was agreed that Green Spaces would be requested to clarify how much of the £25k revenue was reinvested in the repair of the Council's green spaces further to an event. Noting that funfairs were largely unregulated, Members recommended the inclusion of additional measures in local policy. **The Head of Public Protection and Enforcement agreed to explore this further outside of the meeting.**

Members asked about the responsibility for health and safety enforcement at funfairs. It was explained that the Health and Safety Executive enforced funfairs rather than the local authority and would investigate any injuries or incidents – these were not routinely reported to the local authority.

Councillors recommended that, when signing up, funfair operators be asked to confirm that no health and safety incidents had occurred at previous events. The officer agreed to feed back this suggestion for inclusion in future policies. Members heard that, when considering applications, Green Spaces would take into account any complaints previously received and this would feed into their decision. It was noted that complaints regarding funfairs were rarely received. However, it was recognised that policy could be more robust and the importance of reporting issues to build a data picture for shaping future work was emphasised.

Members enquired how the Council worked proactively with funfair operators to ensure they adhered to regulations and behaved reasonably. Officers affirmed that there was a lot of advice, guidance, and education available for operators, including information on the HSE website.

In response to questions about food safety at funfairs, it was explained that food inspectors did not proactively inspect food establishments at events unless it was a licensed event like a Christmas market. However, they would respond to claims or reports of unsafe or unhygienic practices and food poisoning. It was noted that food inspectors had a planned programme for inspecting food businesses in the Borough and would react to any reported issues.

Should someone fall ill after eating food at a funfair that had already packed up and left, the matter would be referred to the home authority of the funfair operator for follow-up. The home authority might decide to bring the inspection forward or carry out another investigation. It was acknowledged that proving instances of food poisoning could be difficult without hard samples of the food.

Members sought clarification regarding the permitted operating hours for circuses and funfairs and whether certain aspects of these events were time limited. It was explained that each site was conditioned based on its local circumstances, and Green Spaces would decide the most appropriate start and finish times. There were no regulations stipulating specific timings, but the hire agreement could include such stipulations if deemed appropriate.

Councillors expressed concern about the reactive behaviour of the Council and suggested more proactive work with the hiring part. **The Head of Public Protection and Enforcement agreed to take the feedback back to the relevant department.**

RESOLVED: That the Select Committee:

- 1. Noted the information included in the report regarding the regulatory requirements of fun fairs; and**
- 2. Noted the current Council hiring processes related to fun fair events on Council land.**

Richard Webb, Director of Community Safety and Enforcement, and Freddie Mohammed, Parking Representations and Appeals Manager, were in attendance to answer Members' questions in relation to the report in the agenda pack.

It was noted that it would be helpful if APCOA could attend a future meeting of the Select Committee to answer Members' questions.

Councillors asked about the contract key performance indicators in Appendix 2, questioning if everything was as perfect as it seemed. It was explained that the report provided a snapshot of the last month and that there had been months with amber and red indicators, which were addressed in contract meetings.

Members suggested an annual review to identify patterns and raised a ward-related issue about enforcement consistency at Ruislip Lido during the summer months. Officers acknowledged the challenges around parking in and around the Lido and explained the deployment of tow trucks and CEOs during the summer, mentioning the limitations due to the lack of a pound and the need to move obstructive cars to another location.

In response to further questions from the Committee, it was explained that CEOs worked autonomously, and it was not possible for officers to monitor them at all times due to a lack of resources. However, body worn cameras could be tracked, inactivity was monitored and contractor supervisors made their own checks – the data was fed back to LBH officers and footage could be reviewed when necessary.

Councillors enquired about the contract with APCOA and whether competitors were regularly considered. Officers stated that the existing contract had begun in April 2022 and would run until 2027. It was explained that the contract had likely been awarded based on value for money and that other contractors might not engage with them until the end of the current contract. Officers also highlighted the factors affecting PCN numbers, such as policy decisions and the deployment of CEOs in different areas.

Members sought further clarification regarding the responsibility for issuing FPNS for idling cars and the shift to cashless parking. It was explained that idling was a criminal offence under the public spaces protection order, requiring different systems and training for officers hence it would be difficult to train CEOs to take on responsibility for both parking and idling offences. It was confirmed that cashless parking systems allowed for payment by phone and card, and problematic locations would be considered for appropriate steps.

Councillors pointed out that a year-on-year comparison of PCN data would be helpful.

In response to further queries raised by the Committee, it was confirmed that adequate signage was a legal obligation under the Traffic Signs Directive. The onus was on drivers to familiarise themselves with the signs and the restrictions in place.

With regard to cashless payments, it was recognised that scams using fake QR codes etc were a national problem. Officers regularly discussed this matter with the Police and did everything possible to raise public awareness. It was confirmed that CEOs had been instructed to remove fake QR codes or cover them when possible. Members heard that data relating to scams was not recorded centrally. However, officers would continue to monitor this and target areas where there had been a spike in criminal activity.

In response to questions from Members regarding blue badge fraud, it was confirmed that there was no requirement for residents to display their photograph. The Committee was advised that CEOs could ask to inspect badges and that initiatives with the Counter Fraud Team had been undertaken.

At the request of Members, it was agreed that officers would clarify the meaning of the term 'statutory' parking dispensations as referenced on page 41 of the report.

Further to Councillors' queries, it was agreed that officers would clarify whether income generated had matched expectations and the % usage of the Hillingdon First Card in the Borough. It was agreed that this information would be sourced after the meeting and fed back to the Committee.

In response to concerns raised by Members regarding the safety of CEOs and the reliance on body-worn cameras, the Committee heard that CEOs were trained in conflict management and there were protocols in place for code yellow and code red situations. Code reds were discussed at monthly meetings and closely monitored. It was also mentioned that CEOs had mobile phones as back up should their devices fail and that incidents were reported to the police to build a pattern or trend.

It was reported that CEOs were encouraged to report any incidents so these could be logged and addressed. CEOs did not routinely work after 19:00 hours; thereafter any out of hours parking-related problems would need to be reported to the Police. Members were informed that CEOs' working hours could be extended from time to time if needed but a permanent change in hours would require an amendment to the current contract.

Further to the Committee's questions regarding banding, it was confirmed that two things had happened in parallel; one was Hillingdon's application to move from Band B to Band A. The second was the London Council's application to increase the band fine rates across London. Members heard that the increase in fine levels had been agreed, and this had impacted on LBH's application to go from Band B to Band A. It was confirmed that the Pan London change would now increase the fine levels even higher than it would have done. This had undermined Hillingdon's consultation somewhat as the Council had consulted publicly about a change based on moving from Band B to Band A at a certain level, and now those levels had completely changed. The Cabinet Member would therefore need to decide whether to continue to push for Band A, remain on Band B or revisit the matter at a later stage.

Officers were requested to provide information on the incidence of code reds in car parks. It was agreed that this would be followed up after the meeting.

In response to further questions from Councillors, it was confirmed that approximately 40% of Hillingdon's residents now used the pay by phone parking service. It was noted that fines could only be cancelled where there was evidence of error. The Traffic Management Act was inflexible – once a parking ticket had been issued, the onus was on the recipient to prove that it had been issued in error.

Noting that similar pay-by-phone locations sometimes had different parking codes and different parking rates which was somewhat confusing, Members enquired whether the current system could be simplified. It was agreed that officers would review this further outside of the meeting to see if changes could be made to simplify the system.

	<p>Councillors asked about the effectiveness of the ANPR van and its potential for issuing tickets. The officer explained that they had trialled an ANPR van and were evaluating its cost-effectiveness. They mentioned that the van could cover more ground efficiently, but for most offences, a CEO still had to issue the ticket.</p> <p>Members enquired about the percentage of PCNs that went to debt collection. Officers stated that they had access to this data and could provide it, explaining that the decision to pay or contest a PCN varied among individuals.</p> <p>In response to questions about the split of revenue between APCOA and the Council, it was explained that APCOA was paid a fee to deploy officers, and the revenue from fines went to the Council to offset the costs. It was emphasised that the contract was not based on the number of PCNs issued but on compliance.</p> <p>Finally, it was noted that, prior to the meeting, the Chair had requested a breakdown of the £4.5 million mentioned in the report regarding spend on traffic wardens. It had been agreed that officers would provide this information outside of the meeting.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Select Committee noted the content of the report and the Council’s obligations under the governing legislation.</p>
56.	<p>FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan be noted.</p>
57.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>At the request of Members, it was agreed that an item on allotments would be added to the Committee’s Work Programme. Members enquired whether the information item regarding Heathrow could be brought forward on the Work Programme.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 9.00 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 on epenny@hillington.gov.uk. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, officers, the press and members of the public.