

ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.30 pm on 19 November 2013

Present:

Councillor William Huntington-Thresher (Chairman)
Councillor Samaris Huntington-Thresher (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Peter Fookes, Julian Grainger, David Jefferys,
Nick Milner and Catherine Rideout

Also Present:

Councillor Peter Fortune and Councillor Colin Smith

22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor John Getgood – Councillor Peter Fookes attended as his substitute, from Councillor Reg Adams and from Councillor Judi Ellis.

23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

24 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

No questions were had been received for the Committee.

25 MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1ST OCTOBER 2013

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 1st October 2013 be confirmed.

26 QUESTIONS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS ATTENDING THE MEETING

Three questions had been received for written reply from Mr Colin Willetts – details of the questions and responses are set out at appendix A.

27 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF REPORTS TO THE ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER

A) BUDGET MONITORING 2013/14
Report ES13144

The Committee received the latest update on budget monitoring position for the Environment Portfolio, based on expenditure and activity levels up to 30th September 2013, and on progress with the implementation of the selected projects within the Member Priority Initiatives. Budget monitoring showed a projected overspend of £670k.

The Committee discussed the advice that had been received from the Environment Agency (EA) that fallen leaves collected from roads should not be composted due to concerns about contaminated materials entering the food-chain. This was guidance and not a change in legislation (although the EA had linked the guidance to the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010) but there was also market pressure from processors and the agricultural sector. Officers considered that the guidance was based on questionable test results, and that most leaf fall from roads and pavements could be safely composted, if crushed material was excluded and treated as detritus. Councillor Julian Grainger commented that there was evidence about pollution levels at varying distances from different types of roads, and that there should be scope for using leaves from grass verges. The Council, in common with other authorities, had been lobbying hard on this issue and pressing for further testing. As the Council was projecting additional costs of £140k in 2013/14 due to this problem and the higher cost of recycling detritus the Committee considered that there was a good case for paying for independent testing. The Committee suggested that the Environment Agency be asked first whether the guidance could be relaxed if testing confirmed that leaves from the highway were acceptable.

Officers reported that they would be meeting with DEFRA in a couple of weeks, following which there would be more clarity about separation of materials for recycling for kerbside collection. Residents wanted the convenience of one box, whereas the industry, supported by the European Union, was pressing for greater separation. However, the major concern for the industry was keeping glass and paper separate, which Bromley's collection method already achieved. Paper recycling tonnages had reduced leading to a projected budget deficit of £130k. It was unclear why this was the case, but it was probably due to more residents moving to electronic forms of communication. It was confirmed that polystyrene could not currently be recycled, but it was incinerated where possible rather than sent for landfill.

The Committee requested that the Budget Monitoring Summary should provide more information on new variations since the last report, as well as since the original budget.

The report included a recommendation that the Executive be requested to approve the drawdown of £200k held in central contingency for the street

cleansing contract to meet the costs of additional street cleaning needed following the recent storm and due to new requirements for the disposal of leaves and detritus. The Portfolio Holder stated that as this was largely a new burden the money should be found corporately and not from the environment street cleaning contingency. The Committee supported this approach.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to

(1) endorse the latest 2013/14 budget projection for the Environment Portfolio;

(2) note the progress of the implementation of the Environment projects within the Member Priority Initiatives programme; and

(3) request that the Executive provides additional funding in 2013/14, without drawing down from the £200k held in central contingency for the street cleansing contract, to meet additional disposal costs for leaves and detritus.

B) WASTE SITE SUPERVISORS

Report ES13107

The Committee considered a report proposing the outsourcing of the Site Supervisor function at the Council's Household Waste Recycling Centres at Waldo Road and Churchfields Road. It was proposed that Veolia, the Council's Waste Management contractor, would take over responsibility for providing this service and two staff would transfer to them under TUPE arrangements. The report outlined the contract variation required, the savings that would accrue to the Council and details of the staff consultation on the proposals.

Following questions from Councillor Grainger, it was confirmed that if in future the current post-holders left and new supervisors were employed they would not have any right to join the Council's pension scheme. Indeed the two post-holders due to transfer would move to an alternative final salary pension scheme provided by Veolia.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to agree the proposed contract variation to facilitate the transfer of staff from the Council to Veolia.

C) ON-STREET LITTER ENFORCEMENT CONTRACT

Report ES13127

The Committee received an update on the use of Kingdom Security Ltd to provide an enforcement service serving fixed penalty notices (FPNs) for littering and dog fouling offences and outlining a strategy for the future delivery of this service.

The Committee noted that there was currently a net cost for the contract, partly as a result of low recovery rates for the Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued which now stood at 47%. Members questioned whether the initial expectations of recovery rates had been too ambitious, and suggested that there was a need for a wider programme of education, possibly on a pan-London basis. They also mentioned anecdotal evidence of people being penalised for dropping items by mistake, or smokers being penalised for stubbing out cigarettes on the floor without being given the opportunity to pick up the stub. Officers confirmed that enforcement officers were trained to avoid this, and that FPNs issued by over-zealous officers had been voided.

There were a number of factors related to the low rate of recovery, including difficulties with obtaining correct identification, problems with the IT system (officers were looking at using the parking system instead), the need for robust processing and ensuring that tickets were only issued that could be enforced. Officers were investigating the recovery rates and approaches taken by other Councils, such as Enfield, Croydon and Medway, including offering discounts for early payment. Members questioned whether it was possible to measure the value of the deterrent effect of the contract and prove that littering was reduced. This was difficult to achieve, and officers were not aware of any other councils that had found a suitable methodology, but this would be investigated as part of preparing for the new contract. Officers were looking at different delivery models for this new contract to ensure that it would break even. The Portfolio Holder commented that the contract would have to pay for itself otherwise he would consider stopping it. He also cautioned against the aggressive issuing of tickets just to push up rates.

A Member asked whether photographs of litter and offenders were stored to target repeat offenders. It was confirmed that the enforcement officers did wear body cameras to provide a record of their activity, but action was only taken immediately after people were witnessed dropping litter.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to

(1) approve the extension of the existing concessionary contract arrangement to 31st May 2014 with an appropriate provider through a negotiated contract;

(2) authorise officers to review the existing service model and enter into negotiations, through a concessionary pricing contract, with service providers to establish an appropriate service model from 1st June 2014.

D) SEVENOAKS WAY (A224) PROPOSED UTC SCOOT SYSTEM
Report ES13099

The section of the A224 along Cray Avenue and Sevenoaks Way was one of the most congested stretches of road in the borough, and various proposals had been made over the years to aid traffic movement and reduce congestion. Some of these schemes were in the process of installation, but in order to maximise the benefit of these improvements it was proposed to install

a system that would link the traffic lights along the route and improve traffic flow.

The Chairman asked whether it would be possible to extend the SCOOT system to Kemnal Technology College in the north and to Carlton Parade in the south. It was possible to add the pelican crossing at Kemnal Technology College, although officers considered that there would be little benefit in this. The traffic signals at Carlton Parade were due to be updated by TfL in the next few years; only once this was done it could these be included.

Councillor Grainger asked about pelican crossings responding to pedestrians pressing the button to the detriment of traffic flow – he was concerned about a crossing in Pratts Bottom. He was informed that pelican crossings should be programmed to give longer delays if the button was pressed repeatedly, and officers undertook to discuss this particular case with him.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to

(1) approve the proposal to introduce a UTC Scoot system on this section of the A224 Cray Avenue/Sevenoaks Road, from Poverest Road to Main Road; and

(2) delegate authority to the Executive Director of Environment and Community Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and Ward Members, to approve the scheme's detailed design.

E) CRAY AVENUE: PROPOSED NEW CYCLE FACILITY
Report ES13112

A new off-road cycle facility was proposed in Cray Avenue, Orpington, to provide improved facilities for cyclists between the junctions of Poverest Road and St Mary Cray Station Approach. Detailed plans of the proposals were tabled at the meeting. Councillor Peter Fortune, Executive Assistant and Cray Valley East ward councillor, commended Angus Culverwell and his team for their extensive consultation on the proposed scheme with ward members and residents.

Councillor Grainger asked whether it would be possible to move the cycle lane across to widen the main carriageway just to the north of Poverest Road. Officers confirmed that there probably was space to move the cycle lane over, but this had not been part of the brief for the scheme. The precise route of the cycle lane had been chosen to take into account the surface tree roots along this stretch of road.

The new cycle route would be on the western side of the road, carrying cycle traffic in both directions – it was suggested that this should be made very clear to cyclists. Members also questioned whether the surface of the cycle lane would be smooth enough to make cyclists want to use it - the surface of the recently installed cycle route on Court Road appeared to be too ridged. Officers explained that this was probably due to route in Court Road being

over rougher ground, and this was not anticipated to be a problem in Cray Avenue.

Officers were asked what measures were in place to ensure that cyclists were aware of traffic turning left off the main road, for example at the entrance to Denvale Trade Centre. This would be checked, but the usual approach was to paint give way markings in the surface of the cycle lane.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to

(1) agree the proposal to implement a new cycle facility, as detailed in the drawings submitted at the meeting; and

(2) delegate authority to the Executive Director of Environment and Community Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and Ward Members, for any specification changes considered necessary at the detailed design stage.

28 SHARED PARKING SERVICE; PROGRESS REPORT
Report ES13125

The Committee was informed about progress made following the creation of the shared parking service with LB Bexley, and the issues that had arisen during the first six months of operations. Full year savings for Bromley were originally expected to be £94k, but were now anticipated to be £114k. The report had already been considered by the Parking Working Group at its meeting on 9th October 2013.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

29 ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO PLAN 2013/14; HALF-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT
Report ES13122

The report outlined progress at the half-year stage against commitments made in the 2013/14 Environment Portfolio Plan. Members raised the following issues –

- (a) Kerbside Collection of Textiles - This was still being investigated to find the most suitable methodology. The existing waste collection vehicles did not have an additional container for textiles, while a separate dedicated collection would be expensive. Despite the delay income targets were still being met from the bring-banks. The Portfolio Holder pointed out that income from bring-banks would drop when kerbside collection started.
- (b) Recycling of Carpets - Collection facilities for carpets at Waldo Road and Churchfields Road were being considered, but the variety of materials in carpets meant that this was not straightforward.

- (c) Organic Waste – The Portfolio Holder reported that there was broad cross-party support for AD facilities at London Councils and confidence that pollution controls were adequate, but there was usually local opposition. Councillor Grainger asked whether there was a possibility of building smaller, more local AD plants.
- (d) Transport Strategy - Councillor Peter Fookes suggested that there was a need for a transport strategy statement that took into account the aims for extending the DLR to Bromley and Tramlink to Crystal Palace.
- (e) Leaf Clearance - Councillor Peter Fookes commented that he thought that leaf clearance in some areas of Bromley could be improved, and that residents needed more information about when leaves would be collected. The Portfolio Holder responded that the borough had more street trees than other boroughs, so leaves were more of a problem in Bromley. Leaf collection depended on when particular trees shed their leaves, so it was difficult to make detailed plans in advance, but extra crews had been brought in and residents were being encouraged to use the “purple bag” scheme.
- (f) Coordination of Streetworks – Councillor Peter Fookes asked whether webcams in key locations might assist the public in checking whether delays were likely. The Executive Director of Environment and Community Services confirmed that all highway works had to be logged with the Council and that there was London-wide coordination. On occasion the Council did postpone planned works, but the system depended on the utilities passing on information quickly and emergency works presented a challenge. The Council had, in April 2013, launched web-based system mapping all known planned and emergency works and giving members of the public the opportunity to set up text alerts. Councillor Catherine Rideout drew attention to problems caused by roadworks in Westmoreland Road – officers responded that there had been some short-term emergency works, but these had now been completed.
- (g) Satisfaction Survey - The Executive Director of Environment and Community Services reported that a recent independent survey had shown a 75% resident satisfaction rate with street cleanliness.
- (h) Lamp Column Replacement Invest to Save Project – Councillor David Jefferys reported that there had been problems and delays with the project in Shortlands Ward, and also in neighbouring Copers Cope Ward – he stated that he would provide officers with a list of specific issues after the meeting, and asked what could be done to penalise the contractor and improve project management. Other Members commented that there had been no systematic problems in their wards. Officers accepted that there had been teething problems with the project in some areas. Project management had been tightened up and a board put in place chaired by the PDS Committee Chairman to oversee progress. The initial aim of installing 140 columns per month

had been scaled back to 100 columns per month, so that installation of the columns did not run too far ahead of the electrical connections, and the aim now was to complete each column within 10 working days. The contractor had to provide exception reports where this was not achieved. Since the start of the financial year over 2,000 columns had been installed with about 200 complaints received (10%); the contractor had been informed at the last project board meeting that this ratio needed to be reduced.

- (i) Travellers - Councillor Nicholas Milner reported that the recent occupation of the Beckenham Spa car park by travellers was a great concern for local residents. The Portfolio Holder responded that the Council was reliant on the Police and their priorities to tackle the problem. There would be a programme to provide gates or barriers at vulnerable locations in parks.
- (j) Parking near Stations - Councillor Grainger asked whether it would be possible to establish whether commuters parking near stations were local residents or were driving in from outside the borough. The Portfolio Holder responded that this would require permission from the DVLA to check licence plates, but the issue remained of what could be done with this information. Councillor Samaris Huntington-Thresher added that in her opinion “rail-heading” should not be viewed as a problem, as it probably prevented commuters driving through the borough towards central London. It was noted that the scheme to improve parking at Orpington Station was now due to commence in January 2014 for completion within five months – there would be an impact on traffic and parking during construction. Councillor Julian Grainger suggested that there were a number of locations in his ward where yellow lines could be removed.
- (k) Parking at the Princess Royal University Hospital (PRUH) – Officers reported that they had held a useful meeting with Kings College Hospital, focussing on two major issues. Firstly, additional temporary accommodation was being provided for staff and there were some highways issues relating to this. Secondly, initial discussions had been held about providing an extra car parking deck at the PRUH and a business case and feasibility study were being developed. Kings had already carried out a similar project at their Denmark Hill site.

The Chairman concluded by stating that the Committee was pleased with the overall good progress in meeting the priorities set out in the Plan.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**30 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME, MATTERS ARISING FROM
PREVIOUS MEETINGS AND CONTRACTS REGISTER**
Report ES13115

The Committee received a report summarising its work programme, progress on previous committee requests and the summary of Environment Portfolio contracts.

Councillor Grainger suggested that the notes from the 2012 LIP review could contribute to a draft transport strategy for the borough. He advised that the Contracts Register Summary at Appendix 3 would need to have more detail about extensions in future as a result of requests from Audit Sub-Committee. He also asked that the meaning of the “Total Value” column be clarified and its accuracy checked.

It was explained that the “Ambulance Hire” contract related to the social services transport fleet operated by Care Services but commissioned by the Environment and Community Services Department. The contract had been extended for a year while future fleet strategy was reviewed. The Chairman stated that he would discuss the matter with the Chairman of the Care Services PDS Committee.

RESOLVED that the work programme, progress on matters raised at previous meetings and the summary of Environment Portfolio contracts be noted.

The Meeting ended at 9.30 pm

Chairman

APPENDIX A

**QUESTIONS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FROM MR COLIN WILLETTS
FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

1. Since we have noted several recycling banks still full after reporting, could the Portfolio Holder tell us the individual schedules for emptying (presuming this is not ad hoc) recycling banks- a) textile, b) green glass, c) clear glass, d) mixed plastics & e) paper at i) Cotmandene Crescent & ii) Station Approach, St Mary Cray?

Reply

Regarding Cotmandene Car Park, St Mary Cray:

Glass (all collections) – Fortnightly (Thursday or Friday - Week 1*)
Textiles – Twice Weekly (Monday & Friday)
Paper & Cardboard – Twice Weekly (Monday & Thursday)
Cans & Plastic Bottles – Weekly (Thursday)

*Week 1 is the same week that the domestic non-recyclable waste service is delivered in this area. The collections of glass banks are made either on the Thursday or Friday dependent on the volume of glass recycle collected throughout the week.

Regarding Station Approach, St Mary Cray:

Glass (all collections) – Monthly (Thursday or Friday – 1st week of Month)
Textiles – Weekly (Friday)
Paper & Cardboard – Weekly (Monday)
Cans & Plastic Bottles – Weekly (Thursday)

Note that these are the guideline schedules and variances to these collection dates may occur from time to time due to the availability of the specialist vehicle that is employed by the contractors in making these collections. For example, the Hi-Ab vehicle requires maintenance for both the vehicle and the lifting crane which may cause variance in the collection days from time to time.

Each of these sites is monitored on Monday, Wednesday and Friday by our contractor Veolia with a view to advising Waste Services when the bins are approaching full to enable extra ad-hoc collections to take place if necessary.

2. Bearing in mind the increase of footfall following completion of the Croudace site coupled with continued tree root growth trip hazards

particularly adjacent bus stop/drop kerb crossing for Leeson's pupils could the Portfolio Holder programme in footway renewals for 262 Chipperfield Road down to opposite 293.

Reply

The planned maintenance programme for footways and carriageways is based on annual condition surveys, and Chipperfield Road will be considered as part of this process

3. In the Cray Valley Road 30/10/13 we noted that the green & clear glass banks were both full (as were Station Approach), could the Portfolio Holder tell us the scheduled dates of this secondary site (if indeed it is) for removal of each individual recycling bank as set out in question 1?

Reply

The emptying schedule for the recycling banks located in Oasthouse Way, on the corner of Cray Valley is as follows;

Glass (all collections) – Monthly (Thursday or Friday – 1st week of Month)

Textiles – Weekly (Friday)

Paper & Cardboard – Weekly (Monday)

Cans & Plastic Bottles – Weekly (Thursday)