

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 16 March 2023

Present:

Councillor Will Rowlands (Chairman)
Councillor Simon Fawthrop (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Kathy Bance MBE, Kim Botting FRSA,
Mike Botting, Adam Jude Grant, Alisa Igoe, Julie Ireland,
Alison Stammers and Harry Stranger

Also Present:

Councillor Michael Tickner, Councillor Chloe-Jane Ross,
Councillor Thomas Turrell, Councillor Nicholas Bennett
J.P. and Councillor Aisha Cuthbert

Councillor Angela Page

Amelia Nicholas-Head of Client Partnerships-Society
Works.

19 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25th JANUARY 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2023 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no apologies for absence.

21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Alison Stammers declared an interest as the Secretary of The Friends of Chislehurst Recreation Ground.

22 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS OR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO THE CHAIRMAN

One oral question had been received from a member of the public to the Chairman. This was in connection with item 13b: Beckenham: Southend Road, Park Road, Foxgrove Road Safety Scheme. As there had been many questions regarding this item, the Portfolio Holder had prepared an answer that had covered most of the questions that had been asked regarding this item. The Chairman's response was covered by the answer that had been prepared by the Portfolio Holder.

23 ORAL QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

There were five questions to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety from members of the public. These were all related to item 13b on the agenda, which was the Southend Road, Park Road and Foxgrove Road Safety Scheme. The questions and responses will be appended to the minutes.

24 ORAL QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Two questions were received from Councillor Alisa Igoe. The questions and responses are appended in the minutes.

25 WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Nineteen written questions had been received from the public. The questions and responses were tabled at the meeting and had been disseminated to the questioners. They are also appended to the minutes.

26 MATTERS ARISING AND WORK PROGRAMME

CSD23047

It was agreed that the date of the June meeting would be changed from June 21st to June 29th.

A Member noted that an answer was due concerning the two hour emergency response time from Riney. The Director said that he was confident that this was very close to a 100% response rate, but he would check this to make sure. A Member said that she had not yet received a response to her request at the committee meeting on 25th January, for details of the total Low Service Damages paid by JB Riney to Bromley Council. This was requested again, on 16th March and the Director said that he would provide a response.

RESOLVED that the Matters Arising and Work Programme report be noted and that the date of the June meeting would move from the 21st of June to June the 29th.

27 UPDATE FROM THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR SUSTAINABILITY, GREEN SERVICES AND OPEN SPACES

An update was provided by Councillor Aisha Cuthbert, Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces.

A Member expressed concern that the watering of trees was not scheduled to take place until mid-May, she said that the water bags were now empty and the ground was dry.

The Portfolio Holder responded that her priority was to get new trees planted. She said that she had every confidence in the proposed schedule of watering. Residents would be encouraged to help but not in hot weather.

A discussion took place concerning Kelsey Park Bridge and rats in Kelsey Park. The Portfolio Holder said that she would speak to Friends Groups concerning the rats, but she had not received any emails concerning this matter recently. Cllr Igoe commented that the Idverde Annual Performance Tetra Tech report of Sept 2022 (which came to Environment PDS 22 November) did in fact state residents were complaining of rats in Kelsey Park. An update regarding the bridge had been posted on the Council website.

The Portfolio Holder briefed the Committee concerning the new Veolia and Street Friends launch of an anti-littering campaign and said that the Jubilee Parks Grant would be open for new applications from 1 April.

RESOLVED that the update from the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces be noted.

28 UPDATE FROM THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS AND ROAD SAFETY

An update was provided by the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety.

Councillor Igoe referenced Westminster Council because they used the RingGo app but, also used **RingGo Retail**, where people could pay for parking in retail outlets and Westminster Council also provided **pre-paid scratch cards**.

She asked if this was something that Bromley could consider. The Portfolio Holder responded and said this had been considered, but there were too many complications and it was too expensive. Feedback from most local authorities regarding the use of cards had been negative.

A Member referenced Sainsbury's car park and said that there had been a queue there to use the cash machines and that members of the public were not aware that the machines were being replaced. She stated that it was currently still the case that 25% of transactions involved the use of cash. She suggested that as there was £180k underspend in the budget, that in certain locations machines that used credit cards could be used at a cost of £8000 each with £600 a year maintenance.

Members were informed that in addition to different sources of publicity, staff would be going out into high streets to engage with the public to help them

16 March 2023

use the new machines. Councillor Stammers asked to be given prior notice of drop in sessions.

A Member raised the matter of collisions in Holmesdale Road and asked for a meeting to discuss this. The Portfolio Holder stated that he was aware of the issues associated with this road and that the Council had a programme of planned road safety improvements across the borough; this road had not been forgotten. The successful implementation of projects relied upon TfL funding and also on TfL Sign off. Suggestions for improvements could be emailed to the Portfolio Holder and the Assistant Director for Traffic and Parking.

Members discussed the issue of pot holes not being repaired to an adequate standard and that Riney should be encouraged to clear sites properly when they had finished their work. The matter of members of the public claiming compensation for damage to their vehicles because of potholes was also discussed. It was noted that in the case where potholes were reported and not repaired in time by Riney, then the liability would move to them. It was also noted that funding for the maintenance of main roads came from TfL and that this was a national problem.

RESOLVED that the update from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety be noted.

29 UPDATE FROM COUNCILLOR TURRELL REGARDING SNOW FRIENDS

Councillor Turrell provided data regarding the current number of Snow Friends and co-ordinators that had been re-registered under the new registration process. The Chairman asked Councillor Turrell to disseminate the data to the committee.

The re-registration process was required for insurance purposes. The Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces had offered to assist Greenwich Council if they wished to implement a Snow Friends scheme in their borough.

There was a general consensus that the re-registration process was too bureaucratic and that it was putting people off becoming Snow Friends. The Chairman requested that Cllr Turrell try and make the process simpler and less bureaucratic.

RESOLVED that the update from Councillor Turrell regarding snow friends be noted.

30 ECS PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

A discussion took place regarding KSI targets, data and classifications and what was being done to encourage school travel plans and active travel. A Member requested that data be separated so that it would distinguish between those who were injured, seriously injured and those who had died. She expressed the view that more clarity was required and that LBB should provide this data---she said that TfL were already doing this.

The Portfolio Holder commented that every death was one too many. Each KSI incident was looked at in great detail. The LBB Road Safety Manager said that herself or another officer would meet with police before an inquest to ascertain what could be learned from the incident before the matter was considered at the Coroners Court.

A Member stated that she felt uncomfortable in considering targets. She felt that the focus should be on minimising accidents. She agreed with the principle that the term 'accident' should be replaced by 'collision' and expressed the view that the trend was upwards. The Portfolio Holder commented that the baseline had reduced and that the trend was downwards.

RESOLVED that the ECS Performance Overview be noted.

31 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF REPORTS TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER

a ECS BUDGET MONITORING 2022/23

ES20271

Members discussed the overspend regarding arboricultural management and it was noted that this was because extra works had been instructed to the contractor as a result of cyclical inspections of trees in the borough. It was asked if the overspend regarding pest control was to do with rats. The Director for Environment and Public Protection answered and said that he believed this was probably the case.

RESOLVED that the ECS Portfolio Holders endorse the 2022/23 revenue budget monitoring for the Environment and Community Services Portfolio.

32 BECKENHAM: SOUTHEND ROAD, PARK ROAD, FOXGROVE ROAD SAFETY SCHEME

A Member expressed concern that the proposed scheme failed to conform to the London Cycling Design Standards. She said that she had spoken to Active Travel England who had offered to provide a free formal design review. She offered this service to officers and to the Portfolio Holder and moved that the recommendations be deferred. The Chairman pointed out that the scheme had already been subject to a stage one road safety audit.

16 March 2023

Ward Councillor Michael Tickner spoke in respect of the application and said that he had long campaigned for road safety to be improved at this junction. The area had become increasingly popular with the upgrade to Beckenham Place Park that had been undertaken by the London Borough of Lewisham with Lottery funding. He said that a pedestrian crossing was needed on the main Southend Road. There had been a history of accidents caused by motor vehicles exiting Park Road with limited visibility. He said that it was essential that something should be done. He proposed that the scheme should go ahead but that if accidents continued, then the option should still be available either to close Park Road or to at least to close it for vehicles emerging from it.

Councillor Chloe Jane-Ross said that she supported the proposal because it was a dangerous junction with a blind corner and it was urgent that action be taken to slow down speeds and to reduce the number of accidents at the junction. It was clear that a crossing was needed for children in the area going to school. She felt that the proposals would improve road safety and recommended that the proposal be approved. She recommended that any future substantive changes that may be required should come back to the committee but at this stage doing nothing was in her view not an option.

A Member stated that the Portfolio Holder was not an expert in these matters and therefore she would like the engineers to confirm to the Committee that the proposal was indeed compliant with national safety standards. She pointed out that this scheme would cost in the region of £125k and so there should be no doubt from the offset that this scheme would be successful and would meet safety standards, not requiring changing later. She felt that the proposal should be deferred so that the committee could have a proper consultation with engineers with respect to road safety. Councillors would not wish to support anything that jeopardised the safety of their constituents. She pointed out that no one from Park Road had shared in a consultation because they did not have the opportunity.

In response the Principal Transport Projects Manager addressed the committee and said there was nothing unusual with the design. Indeed such schemes had been implemented across the UK and one had recently been implemented at Scotts Lane in Bromley. Therefore as the Council had implemented such schemes for many years he did not understand the level of concern that had been generated. He informed the committee that the Council had used Watermans who were independent, experienced and competent design consultants. Judgement and experience were also required. Watermans would not have signed off the project if they felt it was dangerous, as they would not wish to incur reputational damage.

The Principal Transport Projects Manager explained that the design would go through a road safety audit process using independent road safety engineers who were experienced in design. They would make a determination concerning the safety of the scheme. It was explained that there would be another three stage process after this. Stage three would check to ensure the

scheme had been implemented in accordance with the actual design and that no issues had arisen. In stage four, 12 months of collision data would be collected to ensure that the design was safe. All these stages would be undertaken by independent parties. The Council would be obligated to address any issues that arose in these stages.

The Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety urged the committee not to defer the scheme but to accept it. He explained that £125k included the cost of two pedestrian crossings; each pedestrian crossing costed about £25k. He pointed out that Bromley already had four arm and five arm roundabouts in various locations.

Councillor Igoe moved for a deferral and this was supported by Cllr Bance. The Chairman moved for acceptance of the scheme and this was seconded by Cllr Fawthrop. A vote was taken and eight members voted to accept the scheme as per the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED:

1) That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to approve the proposal to improve the safety of the Southend Road/Park Road/Foxgrove Road junction, including the provision of new pedestrian crossing and cycle facilities.

2) That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to delegate any minor changes to the design at the detailed design stage to the Director of Environment and Public Protection after discussion with the Portfolio Holder.

a PROPOSALS FOR SUSTAINABLE PLANTING

ES20265

An explanation was provided by the Assistant Director for Carbon Management and Green Space as to how the Grass Verges Project and the Sustainable Planting Projects would synch together. It was noted that there would be separate consultations but they would be similar in content and style.

RESOLVED

1) That the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces be recommended to approve the proposal to trial sustainable planting at the ten sites identified in the report.

2) That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to approve the allocation of £75k from the Invest to Save Earmarked Reserve for the upfront costs associated with establishing regenerated planting, to realise an annual

16 March 2023

saving of £29k from a variation to the management regime applied to the ten sites under the contract with Idverde for park management and grounds maintenance.

3) That the Portfolio Holder be recommended to approve the variation of the Idverde contract of £75k as a one off cost to cover the purchase, preparation and installation of the regenerated planting schemes at the ten trial sites.

b ECS DRAFT PORTFOLIO PLAN

ES20257

A Member queried when the residential electric vehicle charging infrastructure project report would be presented to the committee as there was no mention of it in the work programme. It was clarified that the report would be presented to the committee no later than March 2024. A Member commented that she was disappointed that there was no mention of air quality and PM 2.5 in the Draft Portfolio Plan. Members were reminded that a report on air quality was scheduled for the September 2023 meeting. A discussion took place regarding green garden waste recycling sites and the Director stated that there were other green garden recycling sites apart from Waldo Rd and that details regarding these would be forwarded the day after the meeting.

(Post meeting note: This information was sent to Cllr Ireland (who raised the issue) on 22nd March by the Head of Environmental Strategy, Tech Support & Commissioning.)

A Member expressed frustration regarding utility companies and the fact that often they did not make sufficiently adequate repairs to roads in the borough after digging them up. She said that they were tearing up the borough's roads. The Assistant Director for Highways responded and said the Council had no direct control over utility companies and that a change in the law was required. The Chairman said that he was hoping to secure a meeting with Thames Water by the end of April.

(Post Meeting Note: The meeting with Thames Water was subsequently confirmed for 25th April at 6pm)

The committee discussed the issue of the collection and disposal of nitrous oxide containers. It was explained that the small bullet like containers could be placed in a normal recycling box. The larger containers were sometimes picked up in the course of fly tipping collections. These were taken by Veolia to Waldo Road and stored in a cage because of issues with compressed gas. The Council were in discussions with Veolia as to how to dispose of these containers. An update would be provided at the next meeting. The committee was informed that the local MP Bob Stewart had written to the Government concerning this matter, seeking a review and possible tightening up of licencing laws concerning the selling of nitrous oxide. The Vice-Chairman

suggested that it may be prudent if the Portfolio Holder also drafted a similar letter.

RESOLVED:

1) That the residential electric vehicle charging infrastructure project report would be presented to the Committee no later than March 2024.

2) That an update would be provided at the next meeting concerning the collection and disposal of nitrous oxide containers.

3) That the Environment and Community Services Portfolio Holders be recommended to endorse the outcomes, aims and performance measures set out in the draft 2023/2024 Environment and Community Services Draft Portfolio Plan.

c ARBORICULTURE - TREE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY REVISION

ES20244

It was noted that in the incidence of any notable tree removals or if it was proposed to remove a number of trees, councillors would be informed. The Vice Chairman raised the possibility of residents paying to select a particular tree in their ward for planting. The Arboricultural Manager responded and said that LBB was looking to move away from monoculture and was planting a diverse range of trees to promote resilience in the tree population.

It was asked if developers could be prosecuted for the unauthorised removal of trees. The Arboricultural Manager said that this responsibility sat with the Planning Team.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces be recommended to endorse and to adopt the revised Tree Management Strategy and associated policies.

d FIXMYSTREET PRO & WASTEWORX REPORTING SYSTEM REVIEW

ES20270

The LBB Technical Support and Market Manager (Technical Support Team) attended to update the committee and answer questions. He was supported by Amelia Nicholas-Head of Client Partnerships-Society Works.

The Head of Client Partnerships informed the committee that Society Works had 11 million users globally across a variety of platforms and that their aim was to facilitate and increase citizen engagement. They aimed to provide a swift response to interactions and so get people democratically engaged.

16 March 2023

They sought to improve processes for local authorities and to make things easier and reduce costs. They were continually evolving and were aware of the digital transformation that was rapidly taking place in local authorities. They analysed points of failure to see where improvements could be made.

The LBB Technical Support and Marketing Manager ran through some key points and assorted items of data. He said that the Council received approximately 3000 reports on a weekly basis and 93% of them came via Fix My Street. Eighty seven percent of the reports were closed with no follow up comments. Various reporting platforms existed to check on comments and progress. The Wasteworks system was also popular with members of the public with a high level of engagement.

The Head of Client Partnerships said that Society Works were aiming to use data more effectively and also for pre-emptive communications to avoid complaints. They also wanted to look at the administration of the system and see how officers were physically using it to see if any improvements in this area could be made.

There was a general consensus that terminology and categories should be simplified. It was anticipated that in the future the software would be upgraded so that individuals could use the system in a more human and fluid manner.

A Member asked if the word 'accident' could be replaced with 'collision' and it was agreed that this would be instigated. The matter of incidents closed off prematurely was also discussed.

RESOLVED that the ECS Portfolio Holders be recommended to approve the direction of travel and Roadmap of FixMyStreet Pro as outlined in the report.

e REDUCTION AND RECYCLING PLAN 2023-

ES20269

The Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety declared an interest as a member of ReLondon.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to approve Bromley's Reduction and Recycling Plan as set out in the report.

33 POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER ITEMS

34 ECS CONTRACTS REGISTER

ES20261

RESOLVED that the ECS Contracts Register be noted.

35 ECS RISK REGISTER

RESOLVED that the ECS Risk Register be noted.

**36 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION)
(VARIATION) ORDER 2006, AND THE FREEDOM OF
INFORMATION ACT 2000**

37 ECS PDS PART 2 CONTRACTS REGISTER

RESOLVED that the ECS Part 2 Contracts Register be noted.

**Oral Questions from Members
Oral Questions from the Public
Written Questions from the Public**

The meeting ended at 9.55pm

Chairman