

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Town Hall, Main Road, Romford
24 April 2012 (7.30 - 9.20 pm)**

Present:

Councillors Jeffrey Brace (Chairman), John Mylod (Vice-Chair), Dennis Bull, Peter Gardner, Barbara Matthews and Garry Pain

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David Durant

There were no declarations of interest.

25 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 31 January 2012 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

26 AGEING WELL REPORT

Committee Administration officers presented a report detailing the outcomes of the Ageing Well event held earlier in the year. This had been an event organised, with support from the Centre for Public Scrutiny, for stakeholders to consider issues impacting on the older population in Havering. Members were invited to review the issues and themes raised during the event and to consider which of these could be included within the Committee's work programme for the coming year.

The areas that the Committee agreed would be good to scrutinise were:

- Slips, Trips and Falls attributed to highways
- Transport (access to Queens and St Francis Hospice)
- Bus Provisions
- Subway Access to Romford Market
- Roadways into the Parks – jointly with Towns and Communities OSC.
- Blue Badge Scheme (assessment)

Members stated that the appendix was very good and should be used as a rolling update, they also agreed that it would be useful to find out what areas other OSCs are looking at, to identify any joint working.

A number of issues were raised about complaints from residents which the Head of Streetcare agreed to look at.

27 REVIEW OF WASTE MANAGEMENT - BIFFA, ELWA, SHANKS

The Committee received a presentation on the Waste Management Partnerships within Havering. These included Biffa the waste collection contractor, East London Waste Authority (ELWA) - the disposal company and Shanks East London - the disposal contractor.

Officers explained that Biffa provided the following services:

- Household waste (black sacks)
- Kerbside recycling (orange sacks)
- Garden waste (green bins and sacks)
- Trade Waste
- Clinical Waste
- Bulky Waste

The Committee were informed that ELWA had been established as a Statutory Waste Disposal Authority in 1986 and they managed approximately 500,000 tonnes of waste per year from the four London Boroughs in East London (Havering, Barking and Dagenham, Redbridge and Newham). In 2002 ELWA awarded a 25 year PFI contract to Shanks. The Integrated Waste Management Strategy set out measures to improve recycling and composting rates and to divert waste from landfill. This was the main goal for Havering.

Officers explained that in 2006 Cabinet agreed Havering's Waste Strategy, This linked with ELWA's headline strategy which would be in operation until 2020. The key targets in both strategies included:

- Giving priority to achieving statutory recycling and composting standards; 27% by 2007/08
- Recycling or composting jointly 25% of waste in the period 2005/6 – 2009/10, 30% in the period 2010/11 – 2014/15 and 33% from 2015/16 onwards.
- Working with ELWA to divert from landfill 40% of waste in the period 2007/08 – 2009/10, 45% in the period 2010/11 to 2014/15 and 67% thereafter.

The actual achievements of these targets included:

- 35% of waste was recycled or composted.
- Reduction of household waste by 11,000 tonnes since 2006/07.
- ELWA diverted 52.3% of municipal waste from landfill in 2010/11.

The Committee noted that the achievements exceeded the targets within the strategies and that Havering's figures were the highest of the four ELWA boroughs. Officers explained how recycling had been increased through the introduction of a wheeled bin garden waste collection and composting service, the separation of orange and black sack collections, improvements at Recycling and Reuse Centres (RRCs) together with other initiatives. Members agreed that the Orange bag scheme was simple for householders to use, as all recycling materials went into one receptacle, and they were easier to store than large bins. Members asked about the take up of the Green Bins. Officers responded that the charge for the bins covered the running of the services and any promotions. They currently had 18,000 customers and were still growing by 1,000 a year, this would equate to approximately a fifth of the borough.

Waste minimisation campaigns had also been run to reduce the amount of waste produced, in the form of Love Food Hate Waste workshops, roadshows, leaflets, publications and Home Composting. Members asked if there were Water Butts available through any of the schemes, given the recent hosepipe ban, and if provisions had been made for temporary recycling schemes to be installed at the caravan and camping sites during the Olympics. Officers would update the Committee at the next meeting on both issues.

The Committee were informed that the controls at the RRCs restricted controlled waste (builder's rubble) and use by non-ELWA residents, as a result use of the Jenkins Lane RRC had dropped by 30% once the controls had been introduced.

Future challenges were explained to the Committee. This would include new legislation, new strategies, targets and pressures. These would take the form of the revised Waste Framework Directive which had an increased focus on reuse and recycling and on the quality of recycled materials (compost). It was hoped that the new Anaerobic Digestion plant would contribute to this at the Shanks site in Frog Island. The Mayors Municipal Waste Strategy 2011, included the following targets and pressures:

- Achieve zero municipal waste direct to landfill by 2025
- Increase London's capacity to reuse or repair from 6,000 tonnes/year to 30,000 by 2031
- Recycle or compost at least 60% by 2031
- Cut greenhouse emissions by one million tonnes by 2031
- Generate as much energy as possible from organic and non-recyclable waste

The Waste Strategy for England 2007 also had a number of targets and pressures, which would have to be taken into consideration. The total cost of disposing of household waste will cost Havering just under £11 million in 2012/13.

As a result it would be necessary to review the Havering Waste Strategy and how Havering works with its partners to take account of proposed legislation, targets and strategies. The Committee requested that a draft be brought to a future meeting.

28 MONITORING OF HIGHWAY REPAIRS

The Committee received a briefing note on the inspections undertaken to monitor the public highway. These were:

Planned and ad hoc routine safety highway inspections – There were two categories of safety inspection, proactive and reactive. The majority of safety inspections were proactive and undertaken in a planned way during daylight hours. Inspections were carried out between two and twelve times a year, depending on the footway or carriageway being inspected. i.e. Town centre footways, with a large footfall were inspected monthly, whereas smaller residential street with a lower footfall were inspected six monthly.

The reactive inspections were caused by a report of defect from members of the public, Councillors, Council Officers and the Police. A member asked how long after an inspection would a footpath be repaired. The officer stated that for an emergency repair, the time was 24 working hours, if not the standard policy was 28 days. He added that this sometimes slips, especially during the winter as there are often more repairs needed i.e. potholes.

Planned and ad hoc highway tree inspections – There were some 20,000 trees on the public highway which were the responsibility of the Council. This together with some 40,000-50,000 trees within parks, made a very large work programme of maintenance. Inspections are carried out in accordance to the individual tree species requirements. Larger trees were inspected and pruned every three years, smaller species of tree were inspected and pruned every five years. There were also ad hoc works as a result of storm damage; vehicle damage and disease which may have include specific species related diseases.

Constant monitoring and inspections are carried out throughout the year as officers travel to and from their scheduled inspection areas. All inspections are carried out by a qualified tree officer. There were three Arboricultural Officers and one Tree Preservation Officer. During inspections information such as species, size, condition and appropriate works that are required are programmed into the tree database and passed to the corporate contractor for completion.

New Roads and Street Works Assessment (NRSWA) Inspections – All utility works undertaken within Havering were co-ordinated and checked upon by the Councils NRSWA team. The only exception to this was due to emergency work, where only two hours notice is necessary. If work is

scheduled, then the Council can say no to the utility company if they decide to.

Every opening made by the utility is recorded on the database, and once the work is completed and the highway has been reinstated, an onsite inspection is undertaken to ensure that the work carried out is to the necessary standard. These checks ensure that the structural integrity of the public highway has not been compromised by the excavations that have taken place.

Member raised concerns about the pavements in Hornchurch Town Centre as they needed levelling out. The officer present agreed to pass this to Regeneration, who was responsible for the current improvements.

Street Lighting Inspections

The Committee was informed that planned night scouting was carried out every four weeks to check the street lighting. The Councils Maintenance Lighting Contractor carried out planned electrical and structural testing inspections and all results were reported back to the Street Lighting team for action. There was a six year planned structural test programme in place.

The Committee was informed that there were 20,000 lamp columns in the borough. The Council were in the process of removing the 500 cast iron columns and the 2000 concrete columns and replacing these with new columns. There was also a new painting scheme of columns in process.

Officers added that if a lamp column is damaged as the result of an accident, the Council would make it safe and install a new column, however they have to inform the utility company to install the electricity, which can take up to 3 months. Officers stated that they want to have an agreement whereby columns are reconnected within 28 days.

Condition surveys

The Committee was advised that condition inspections are made every year of all the footways and carriageways that had been put forward for resurfacing. A clear picture of the areas that are in most need of renewal is established and the resurfacing programme can be finalised. All work that is carried out is inspected by an Area Liaison Officer or Engineer. The local DSO carried out the works. The Committee were also informed of a specialist scanner survey which is undertaken for A, B and C Class roads annually, this shows any defects that are below the surface.

Inspections of Structures

Highway structure (bridges, culverts, retaining walls and subways) was subject to a rolling programme of inspections every 2 years. When a structure is found to be deficient in its load capacity, it is then subject to

interim measures which can include temporary works, weight limits and more regular monitoring.

29 COMMITTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee received a report on the work that had been carried out over the last municipal year. The items discussed at this meeting would be included in the final report before it was signed off by the Chairman.

The Committee agreed the contents and authorised the Chairman to sign off the final version.

30 PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

The Committee received details of the service performance indicators within its remit. The indicators were noted.

Chairman