

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE  
Town Hall, Main Road, Romford  
30 April 2015 (7.30 - 9.30 pm)**

**Present:**

Councillors Ray Morgon (Chairman), Carol Smith (Vice-Chair), Alex Donald, Patricia Rumble, Garry Pain and June Alexander (In place of Barry Mugglestone)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Barry Mugglestone

**43 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 3 March 2015 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

**44 FLYTIPPING PROSECUTIONS**

The Sub-Committee was informed that fly tipping was defined as the illegal deposit of any waste onto land, or any waste dumped or tipped on a site with no licence to accept waste. This could be a single black bag or one or more tipper loads.

Fly tipping is reported through the Customer Relationship Management system (CRM). These figures are scrutinised by officers in Streetcare and amended to remove duplicate reports, missed waste collection and sacks put out in advance of collections, and reported fly tips which were not present when the street cleansing team attended to clear them. All reports of fly tips are submitted to Fly Capture which is managed and used by DEFRA.

It was noted that there were inconsistencies between how this was reported by each borough. In 2013-14 Havering had the 14<sup>th</sup> lowest number of fly tips across 33 boroughs, and was the 4<sup>th</sup> highest in number of enforcement interventions in relation to all waste type offences.

Enforcement can have an impact, however it is often difficult to identify where the waste has come from, waste such as a dumped fridge or garden waste are difficult to evidence and so no investigation takes place and the fly tip is cleared.

The Sub-Committee noted that during 2014/15 it was estimated that around 22% of fly tips reported were investigated for evidence, with 2098 warning letters, 193 Fixed Penalty Notices and 6 prosecutions issued for incidents linked to waste related offences.

The officer stated that there were often other issues behind why fly tipping was happening these could include overcrowding, ignorance, issues with

landlords, issues in getting to the RRC's or not being able to afford the bulky waste fees. Members noted that there were approximately 4-5 officers who dealt with enforcement across a number of areas.

The Sub-Committee noted that a number of recent fly tipping convictions had been secured as a result of evidence captured on covert CCTV cameras which had been strategically placed in the lanes around Upminster. These were small portable units which can be positioned in greenery around known fly tipping hot spots. The cameras had been deployed over most weekends throughout the year.

A longer term solution was to install a fixed network of cameras at strategic locations around Upminster and Rainham which would capture vehicle details and the loads (if they are open back) and may help secure prosecutions. The first camera had already been situated in Launderers Lane, Rainham.

Members discussed how flytipping was enforced in private alleyways. Officers stated that discussions with the lead members were on-going. If enforcement was put in place, it could mean fining a number of residents who have access to the alleyway, whether they are responsible for the fly tipping or not.

The Sub-Committee thanked the officer for the update.

#### **45 STREET LIGHTING TIMERS**

The Sub-Committee were informed that there were approximately 20,000 lights in the borough (including 1500 illuminated signs and 700 bollards) of which 55% were controlled by Photo Electronic Cells (PEC) which activated the lights automatically when it got dark and go off when it gets light.

Members raised concerns about the number of lights that were on during the day, known as "day-burn", as well as whether the shades on the new lights could be changed to deflect the light from residents' windows, especially for those in a cul-de-sac, where the properties are situated at different angles to the light.

It was noted that all repairs to street lighting was carried out within 5 working days. Delays happened when a major utility was involved as they did not have the same time scales as the borough.

#### **46 PERFORMANCE DATA**

The Sub-Committee was informed and noted performance data that had been discussed at the previous meeting.

Parking Performance - This was measured by income activity. Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) income was less than predicted and resulted in £218k pressure whereas the parking income (pay and display) performed better

than expected with a year end result of £130k better than predicted. Overall there was a net loss position against the budget of £88k.

The officer stated that it was very difficult to predict car parking, as compliance was a big area. With the recent changes in legislation, the CCTV car could no longer issue PCN's. There were a number of areas where improvements could be made including enforcement after 8pm in specific locations. This would need to be in conjunction with residents and businesses in the area.

Waste Collection - The contract for the waste collection started last year with Serco. A fire at the waste management facility in Frog Island which coincided with the first operational day of the new contract severely disrupted the waste and recycling collections, leading to a higher number of missed collections in August 2014. It was noted that currently missed collections of approximately 200 per month, is less than approximately 0.1% of all collections and of these 80% were rectified within 24 hours.

The Sub-Committee noted that the waste levy was rising as was tonnage. Across London tonnages rose by 3% by last year compared with an estimated 2% in Havering. There were a number of factors that contributed to the increase, including the growth in housing, with more residents there would be more waste. The average cost in waste per year was £13 million, with a prediction that by 2027 this would rise to in excess of £20 million.

The waste levy rose by 5% each year, however this could rise by 10% each year depending on the level of waste. The officer stated that the new waste contract would need to be decided upon soon, together with how waste is reduced and what initiatives would assist in this process. Cost and environmental benefit needed to be considered, however these did not always go hand in hand.

It was noted that some of the largest contributors to waste include the large supermarkets, in there "buy one, get one free" campaigns, as this produces more packaging and often wasted food. The "Love Food, Hate Waste" campaign has helped the consumer, but there is still more that can be done. The Sub-Committee noted that it was people's behaviour that needs to change.

Member raised issues with times of collections and the size of vehicles that were collecting. There were areas of the borough where parking had been restricted so that the lorries are able to access the roads, and some roads where the lorries are having to cross verges to gain access.

The Sub-Committee noted that recycling does not save any money in the current ELWA contract, it does divert from landfill, but is still subject to tonnage fees. The officer explained the hierarchy of waste stating that minimisation and re-use came before recycling.

The Sub-Committee noted that green waste customers had increased from 2013/14 to 22,289, this was short of the 22,500 target. Further work to promote and encourage usage would continue over the year.

Members raised concerns that about the number of green waste bags that were provided. At present there were 50 bags in a bundle, which was felt to be too many for residents with smaller gardens.

Members discussed the London Green Points scheme and how it worked. Members asked for details of the cost of the scheme and if it was of value to the borough.

**47 CHEWING GUM ON PAVEMENTS**

The Sub-Committee was informed that it took 10 times the value of a piece of gum to remove it from pavements. Even when removed, the gum can leave an oil based stain which discolours the pavement. The officer explained that although manufacturers of cleansing equipment had tried, to date there was no effective mechanical way to remove chewing gum. A recent pilot to support a regeneration initiative in Romford Town Centre was carried out to remove gum. It was estimated that it would take 24 weeks to remove the gum just from South Street and after which it was highly likely that the process will have to recommence to remove new deposits.

The officer stated that with proactive removal, together with a comprehensive communications campaign and an enforcement presence would be the most effective sustainable strategy to target the depositing of gum. This however would be costly. It was noted that the annual cost for one operative and the equipment was approximately £38,000.

**48 ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15**

The Sub-Committee received and noted its Annual Report for the municipal year 2014/15. This would now be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Board and then onto Full Council.

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**Chairman**