

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday 28 June 2011 (7.30pm – 9:00pm)
Havering Town Hall, Romford**

Present:

Councillors Jeff Brace (Chairman), Wendy Brice-Thompson (substitute for Garry Pain), Barbara Matthews, John Mylod, Billy Taylor (substitute for Peter Gardner), Frederick Thompson (substitute for Dennis Bull)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dennis Bull, Councillor Peter Gardner and Councillor Garry Pain.

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chairman announced the arrangements to be followed in the event of the building needing to be vacated as a result of an emergency.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 6 April 2011 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the following comments and signed by the Chairman.

A member stated that they understood the total cost of tonnage under the Carbon Reduction Commitment to be £450,000, however the minutes stated £400,000. Officers confirmed that this was due to the cost of street lighting being taken out of the figures.

Members asked for clarification on the adaptation for heat waves as listed under the nine actions for the Climate Change Action Plan. Officers stated that whilst there were no defined rules, the Council had an obligation to give advice on what to do in the hot weather, especially for the young, old and vulnerable people.

The Committee discussed the grants available from Energy Action Grants Agency (EAGA) and Warmfront. Officers gave information that the council were aware of some shortcomings of EAGA, and that a letter from local MPs can help, however the call-centre is based in Newcastle, and the funding had been cut back. Members stated that the website was difficult to use, and that trying to contact someone was impossible. Members asked if officers could find out the company policy of EAGA.

2. BUSINESS CASE FOR LED LIGHTING PROGRAMME

The Committee received details of business cases for various sites, where LED Lighting had been piloted, from the Energy Manager. The officer explained that LED lighting is used more than general lighting now, and the payback is 1/10 of ordinary lamps.

Business Case for Angel Way multi-storey car park.

The Committee were informed that a number of different lighting systems had been trialled, however due to Angel Way Car Park having the ParkMark the lighting had to meet certain standards, and that 90% had to be lit at all times.

Officers stated that for the period of one year, the saving was £8,245 with a total investment of £40,000 with 50% from the Salix grant.

Members asked how the LED lights compare with traditional lighting? Officers explained that some LED lights have a blue tinge which represents daylight, however there are different colours available dependant on where they are being placed. Officers stated that LED lights were now used in subways.

The Committee discussed issues relating to LED lighting including how the heat can affect them. Officers clarified that the fluorescent tubes used look the same as ordinary lights, however they have an aluminium strip with ridges on the top which disseminated the heat.

The Committee were informed that refurbishment of Angel Way Car park was due to be completed by 15 July 2011, and publicity would be made available. Officers stated that existing fittings were being used, as these were vandal proof, and the car park also had CCTV.

Business Case for Road Signs

The Committee were informed that there were 600 signs which could be de-illuminated, and others that could be changed to LED lights and a photocell added. There were three individual measures, which were being proposed. These were:

1. Removal of lighting from signs which do not have to be illuminated
2. Removal of one lamp and installation of photocell
3. Replace existing lighting with LED lights and install photocell.

Officers informed the committee that the first measure was a good saving, the second measure was a good cost benefit, however the third measure could be dangerous to implement as some lights were difficult to change given their locations. Officers stated that the engineers wished to look at how this would work so by the time it was implemented the cost could have reduced.

Officers stated that where possible self illuminated bollards were being installed, however there was no Salix funding available for road sign lighting.

LED lighting to floors 1 and 2 West Wing, Town Hall

The Committee were informed that the basement had already been completed with LED lighting, the first floor had been completed and the second floor was awaiting a delivery of the tubes. The lighting used was close to natural light. Due to personal taste over half of the tubes had now been removed, which was an additional saving to the Council's overall consumption. The funding for this was from the Salix grant which funded 50% of the cost.

3. COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME REPORT

The Committee received a report containing the proposed work programme for the municipal year. During discussion of this, Members expressed a wish to view one of the alternative vehicles used as part of the fleet.

The Committee agreed the work programme for 2011/2012.

4. BUY WITH CONFIDENCE PRESENTATION

The Committee received a presentation from the Trading Standards Fair Trading Divisional Manager on the Buy with Confidence Approved Trader Scheme. The Committee were given examples of rogue trading and explained that in response to concerns about "rogue traders" which were often highlighted in the media, a partnership of Local Authority Trading Standards Services had taken a ground-breaking step by putting together the Buy With Confidence Scheme.

The Scheme provided consumers with a list of local businesses which have given their commitment to trading fairly. Every business listed had undergone a series of detailed checks before being approved as a member of the scheme. Initially there were only small businesses including builders and electricians, however this had grown and now included Estate Agents, Photographers and Solicitors. To date there were 43 councils across the country promoting the scheme, and there were 56 Havering based business on a database of 4,200. This was increasing all the time.

The Committee were informed that the scheme was set up due to pressure from consumer groups, local traders, CAB, Age Concern, local anti-acquisitive crime groups and community safety partnerships. Furthermore, the scheme supported the "Cold Calling Control Zones".

Members asked if the "Cold Calling Zones" could be rolled out across the whole borough. Officers informed the committee that there is no law against cold calling, therefore it was difficult to enforce borough wide. The service was, however, looking to expand the "Cold Calling Control Zones". Officers

explained that the zones were across the borough, with three in Harold Wood/ Harold Hill, one in Collier Row, and one in the south of the Borough

The Committee were informed that the scheme was promoted to members of the public and local traders. There was information available on-line, via Age Concern, and via telephoning Consumer Direct. An advertisement had been published in the Living magazine, which had been paid for by local traders.

Members asked about the checks that are carried out before traders are added to the scheme. The officer stated that the following checks were carried out:

- Experian check
- Companies House check
- CRB check (if the work included entering peoples homes)
- Insurance check
- Full audit of contracts, and advice given to improve standards if necessary

Members asked if this was an additional cost of council staff time. The officer confirmed that it was part of the Trading Standards role, so there was no additional cost, and it embraced Havering's Living Ambitions Strategy by:

- Safeguarding the elderly and vulnerable.
- Preventing crime committed by rogue traders.
- Stimulating the local economy by directing consumers from Havering and other authorities to businesses based in the borough.
- Educating traders and consumers.
- Attaining a high level of customer satisfaction.

The Council were informed that a new "Care with Confidence" addition to the scheme was being developed in conjunction with Adult Social Care, to assist with the Individual Budget Scheme, in ensuring providers were approved before they can offer any care.

Members asked how business/traders on the scheme were monitored. The officer informed the Committee that all members were checked as above, but also that they hold the appropriate professional qualification. The service relied on the public informing them if there were problems, and they would investigate any issues.

Members asked if there was a problem with a trader, what action is taken? The officer explained that if necessary the trader could be suspended from the scheme or removed completely. Trading Standards offered a mediation scheme in the first instance. To date there have been no problems in Havering, however there have been traders removed from the scheme nationally.

The Committee were informed that there was a fee of £135 per year for businesses to join the scheme, during the initial set up there would have been

costs in officer time however, it was hoped that the scheme would become cost neutral in the future.

The Committee thanked the officer for the informative presentation and agreed that details on Cold Calling Zones should be added to their work programme for the next municipal year.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was agreed that Service Performance Information would be dealt with at the next meeting.

A Member requested that budget variances be included on the Committee's work programme. It was agreed that the information would be brought to the September meeting.

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Chairman

13 September 2011