

Public Document Pack

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

Present:

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

27 DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS

No pecuniary interests were declared.

28 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 5 November 2014 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

29 CONTAMINATED LAND IN THE BOROUGH

The Sub-Committee received a presentation on Contaminated Land in the borough. Officers outlined the legislation and the legal definition of what contaminated land was.

It was noted that there was no land declared as contaminated in Havering, however there were sites that could potentially be affected by contamination. Areas that were more likely to be affected by contamination were predominately in the south of the borough. Contamination could come from old landfill sites or old factory site of anything from 30 to 150 year old.

Havering had three main responsibilities under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 Part 2a. These included Land Quality Reports, Contaminated Land Inspections and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Land Quality Reports – These reports can be provided to potential buyers of land, whilst they give no definitive answers they provide as much information as is available. The landowner is also able to test the land themselves.

Contaminated Land Inspections – The Council have a legal obligation to investigate sites. There had been four investigations made in recent years. The sites are generally those that have the biggest potential risk to properties either close to or on the potentially contaminated land.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – It was essential that the service was consulted on planning issues so that where potential contamination may be present; conditions can be attached to the planning application. Officers stated that if conditions were not attached the liability would then move from the developer to the council.

Members asked how residents that may live close to potential sites were informed. Officers stated that for a formal investigation, a letter is sent out to all residents in the area informing them that there would be no significant possibility of significant harm to their health. It is encouraged that this information is passed on if the property is sold.

Officers stated that when investigations were carried out that these were in depth. It was extremely difficult to prove that the contaminated land was a risk to health and the investigations relies upon DEFRA funding.

The Sub-Committee were able to see photographs of the investigations carried out. These include accessing people's gardens to take samples. Some show a change in the colour of the soil at approximately 2-3 metres deep. If there is no evidence that this has not travelled, then this is left as it is as there is no potential risk. The change in colour could be attributed to tar, ash, or other substances due to the industries that were present on site in the 1950 and 1960's.

Officers explained to the Sub-Committee how the prevention and management of contaminated land from current waste disposal practices was monitored. The example given was Veolia at Rainham and the waste leachate from the site. The leachate is vacuumed into pipes which are treated and discharged into closed sewers. Surface water is treated differently, and is in a separate gully.

A member asked if there was a specific condition that could be attributed to particular contaminants. Officers explained that there were 30 to 40 different contaminants and there would more than likely need to be long term exposure before any health risks could possibly be attributed. The most susceptible group would be females aged 0-6 years old and the most common illness that may be attributed are wide ranging such as skin irritants, asthma and cancer. However this would only be after long term exposure. Public Health was involved with any investigations from the start. Drop-in sessions were held in areas where investigations were being carried out and all GP's in the area were briefed.

The Sub-Committee thanked officers for a very informative presentation.

30 **PROBATION SERVICE INFORMATION**

The Sub-Committee received a brief from the Head of Streetcare on how the Probation Service was used by the Council, what tasks they undertook and how this was monitored.

The Ministry of Justice had retendered the contract for the reparation in Havering. The previous supplier, SERCO was being replaced. The Youth Offending Teams had also returned to the control of Havering and the services were waiting for the agreement in the way that reparations would be undertaken by young people.

There were a number of tasks that were packaged for the probation service to carry out in a three-month period. These included shrub pruning, cleaning and painting of rails. It was essential that the jobs were fixed tasks so that monitoring could be carried out.

Officers explained that they had a strong relationship with the supervisors so they are made aware of who can do what job. Regular monthly meetings are held with the supervisors to receive updates on the package of works. The council provide the equipment necessary for the job; however these are generally low cost items such as brooms, paint brushes, hi-visibility jackets and shovels. The work was well co-ordinated and carried out to a satisfactory standard.

Members asked if the offenders saw the work as a punishment or as a chance to work. Officers explained that it depended upon the supervisor and how the works were presented. The Sub-Committee noted that approximately 18,000 hours of work had been carried out by the Probation Service in respect of Streetcare duties.

The Sub-Committee agreed that an update in six months, once the new contract was in place, would be beneficial.

31 **BUDGETS**

The Sub-Committee received budget figures, within its remit from Period 8. This was up to November 2014. The details given showed the current budget, any spend and the remaining balance. Officers explained that the budget period was $\frac{2}{3}$ through the year and there were no immediate concerns at this stage; however weather damage from either winds or ice/snow could have impacts on the budgets. This could include fallen trees, highway defects i.e. potholes and gritting of the roads. It was noted that any grants that had been awarded or income was not reflected as these were still in the system.

32 **COUNCIL'S CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT MONITOR - PROGRESS OF FOUR CABINET REPORTS**

The Sub-Committee received updates on reports when had been approved by Cabinet. The updates were:

Keeping town centres vibrant by reducing on street parking charges and maintaining turnover of visitors (Approved by Cabinet on 17 April 2013) – the Head of Streetcare informed the Sub-Committee that this report had been approved to harmonise the charges for on street pay and display and outlying car parks, as well as Parks across the borough. The tariff of 20p for 0-2 hours and 50p for 2-3 hours were introduced.

This scheme had been a success and had boosted the local shopping centres as visitors were able to spend more time in one location and get all their shopping done. The tariffs had also been made simpler in car parks, and the whole borough was now in-line.

The Sub-Committee noted that these smaller charges had also reduce the amount of commuter parking as the borough lay in Zone 6.

It was agreed that the issue of car parking in Parks would be discussed at a future meeting

Authority to commit to making progress against the GLA's Exemplar Borough qualifying criteria to become a designated Cleaner Air Borough (Approved by Cabinet on 17 April 2013) – The Sub-Committee was informed that since this report had been approved the GLA had not progressed with its programme for an Authority to attain Exemplar Borough Status to become a 'Cleaner Air Borough'. However the Council had continued its work to meet its legal duty regarding air quality by adopting the principles of the scheme and to try to continue to work to improve local air quality and reduce health and environmental impacts. There were a number of projects being undertaken to meet both DEFRA, EU and local levels.

Neighbourhood Responsibility progress report (Approved by Cabinet on 10 July 2013) – The Sub-Committee noted that the initial focus of the Neighbourhood Responsibility project was on the Briar Road Estate. Its purpose was to bring one community together through partnership working with committed groups of local residents. Officers stated that a vacant shop was used to combine services including Streetcare, Social Care, Housing and Community Safety into one location and to establish a 'Neighbourhood Office'. The shop was run by volunteers from the estate and a Briar Resident Action Group (BRAG) was established. This group included representatives from LBH, HAVCO, the Police as well as local residents.

The volunteers were resident with a good knowledge base and regular drop-in sessions were conducted by officers from the council to deal with any enquiries. BRAG also run local events including Christmas and Easter events for the children of the estate and events for the elderly. The estate is now better engaged and improvements have been made by way of Better Homes, the removal of walkways and alleys and a general better use of space. A new multi-play area had also been installed on the Bosworth fields for use by the community.

Approval to access energy efficiency funding through the Green Deal & Energy Company Obligation (ECO) via a Greater London Authority (GLA) framework (Approved by Cabinet on 25 September 2013) – It was agreed to defer this item until the next meeting.

33 CRM ENQUIRIES

The Sub-Committee received details of enquires raised under the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. The information presented was for all enquires, within the sub-committee's remit, for the period from December 2013 to November 2014.

The Sub-Committee noted the number of enquires received over the period. The most popular enquiries included fly tipping, highway defects, registration of births and deaths, street lighting and green bin requests.

The Chairman asked if details could be given to the next meeting of any areas where the trends had gone up or down.

34 FUTURE AGENDAS

The Sub-Committee agreed that it would look at the following at its next meeting:

- Fireworks, how displays are monitored and information for organisers
- Briefing on the enforcement of untidy front gardens
- Approval to access energy efficiency funding through the Green Deal & Energy Company Obligation (ECO) via a Greater London Authority (GLA) framework – review of Cabinet Report.
- Trends in CRM enquiries

Other items to look at in the future:

- Update on Reparation for Havering following new tender (July 15)
- Car Parking in Parks

35 **URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chairman stated that the current topic group on the Maintenance of Road and Pavements in the Borough had almost concluded in relation to reactive defect. The group would now be look at scheduled works and asked that member indicate to the Committee Officer if they wish to take part in the topic group.

Chairman