

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Subject Heading:

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL
REPORT, 2011/12

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Policy context:

Under the Council's Constitution, each
Overview and Scrutiny Committee is
required to submit an annual report of its
activities to full Council

SUMMARY

This report is the annual report of the Committee, summarising the Committee's activities during the past Council year.

It is planned for this report to stand as a public record of achievement for the year and enable members and others to compare performance year to year.

There are no direct equalities or environmental implications attached to this covering report. Any financial implications from reviews and work undertaken will be advised as part of the specific reviews.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Committee note the 2011/2012 Annual Report and authorise the Chairman to agree the final version for Council.
2. That the Committee agree the report be referred to full Council.

REPORT DETAIL

During the year under review, the Committee met on seven occasions and dealt with the following issues:

1. BUSINESS CASE FOR LED LIGHTING

- 1.1 At its first meeting of the year in June 2011, the Committee received a report which detailed business cases for various sites where LED Lighting had been piloted. The Committee was informed that LED Lighting was used more than general lighting and the payback was only one tenth of ordinary lamps.

2. BUY WITH CONFIDENCE

- 2.1 At its June meeting, the Committee also received a presentation from the Trading Standards Fair Trading Divisional Manager on the Buy with Confidence Approved Trader Scheme. The Committee was given examples of rogue trading and it was explained that in response to concern 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.

- 2.2 The Scheme provided consumers with a list of local business which had 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. The Committee was informed that the following checks were carried out:

- Experian check
- Companies House check
- CRB check (if the work included entering people's home)
- Insurance check
- Full audit of contracts and advice given to improve standards if necessary.

3. THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL STRATEGY

- 3.1 In July 2011, the Committee met jointly with the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees in order to scrutinise aspects of the Council's Financial Strategy for the coming year. The meetings, chaired by the Chairman of Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee, scrutinised several issues of relevance to this Committee. Services valued most by residents would be protected, and in particular there would be no change to refuse collection.

4. MONITOR OF SCHOOLS UNDER THE CARBON REDUCTION COMMITMENT

4.1 At its meeting in September 2011, the Committee received an update on the position of the monitoring of schools as part of the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC). The Committee was informed that all state-funded schools (including academies) within Great Britain participated within the CRC Scheme under the umbrella of their local authority. In doing so, it was the carbon footprint of the local authority that was legally and financially responsible for participation in the CRC Scheme that was considered, rather than that of the individual schools.

4.2 The Committee was informed that the Department of Energy and Climate Change had published a discussion paper on Academies' participation in the CRC. The paper addressed how academies could be dealt with under the CRC scheme and laid out four possible options:

- **Option 1:** Retain the status quo. This option noted that the Department for Education (DfE) was consulting on school funding reforms that may allow the cost of CRC allowances to be retained centrally before calculating budgets for both maintained schools and Academies.
- **Option 2 and 3:** Proposed the individual qualification and participation of schools (option 2 for all schools, option 3 for Academies only)
- **Option 4:** Proposed the optional disaggregation of Academies, who would qualify with their LA but participate individually.

4.3 The Committee's view was that the CRC allowance costs should be passed directly to the schools, so that they are accountable for the energy they use. This would be an incentive for schools to reduce their energy consumption.

5. SCORES ON THE DOORS

5.1 At its September meeting, the Committee received a presentation on the "Scores on the Doors" scheme. Scores on the Doors is a Food Hygiene rating scheme. It provided details of inspections carried out of all food premises, including restaurants and manufacturers of food. It was emphasised that Scores on the Doors was not an award scheme; it offered consumers guidance and transparency about the hygiene of food premises.

5.2 The Committee was informed that a scoring system had been used for over 20 years, and that all high risk premises are inspected, unannounced within a 6 month period. Premises such as hospitals that provided food to vulnerable people or nurseries that catered for very young children, were inspected more frequently based upon the risk to the public.

5.3 Members noted that all scores were included on the national website, and once business had been inspected and the scores established, the business is informed and a sticker showing how many stars they have are sent to them to display. An average score was two stars out of five.

6. OLYMPIC ENFORCEMENT 2012

6.1 In November 2011, the Committee received a presentation on the Olympic Branding Enforcement. The Committee was informed how the Games would be protected through education of traders and businesses and through intelligence gathering. Enforcement would include the sale of fake tickets, counterfeit merchandise and any other scams associated with the Olympics.

6.2 Members noted that Trading Standards nationally were working in partnership with the London 2012 Intellectual Property Crime Unit, the Metropolitan Police, Customs and Excise, Sponsors, Stakeholders and Industry Groups. New laws were in place specifically for the Olympics and these included:

- The Olympic Symbol Protection Act 1995.
- The London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games Act 2006.
- Advertising and Street Trading Regulations Framework in the vicinity of Olympic events.
- An exclusion zone around the venues in the UK.
- Measures to prevent ambush marketing.

6.3 The Committee was informed that the protection was important as the Government predicted that £2 billion of Olympic merchandise would be sold; of this, the Government would receive 20% of the revenue. The revenue would be used as a legacy for the Games, and without it taxpayers would pay for any loss. Members raised concerns about this and agreed that the protection was important.

7. TRANSPORT VEHICLE TRACKING SYSTEM

7.1 At its meeting in January 2012 the Committee received a briefing on the Transport Vehicle Tracking System. The Committee was informed that the Transport Board had looked at four different systems, and following testing had agreed on a replacement system called BATRAK. This was an update of the previous KL2 system and was a GPS "live" web based training system. The system was easy to use across all the fleet and gave details of drive analysis, including excessive braking, steering, throttle use and idle time.

8. ALTERNATIVE VEHICLES

8.1 At its January 2012 meeting, the Committee received a briefing on the different Alternative Vehicles that were available and how electric and diesel vehicles differed. The Transport Service had tested a comparable electric vehicle against a standard diesel vehicle. The Committee was informed that

during testing, the electric vehicle, which the manufacturer had quoted had an operational range of 80 miles, was only able to complete less than 50% of the distance of a standard route of 40 miles.

9. OTHER ISSUES CONSIDERED

- 9.1 Solar Panels – At its meeting in November 2011 the Committee received a presentation on the solar panels which were installed in the roof of the Town Hall. These ran on a Feed-In Tariff; however the generation tariffs changed as of December 2011 and multi installations would be counted as one roof, therefore reducing the Feed-In Tariff by approximately 10%.
- 9.2 Noise Service Review Trial – At its January 2012 meeting, the Committee received an update on the Noise Service Review. The Committee was informed that the new provision was a witnessing service provided by arrangement, for cases where noise diary sheets had been returned; a questionnaire had been completed showing the action taken by the complainant to deal with the problem, and the indication that a noise nuisance was likely.
- 9.3 Performance Information – At all of its meetings, the Committee received updates on Performance Information about the service. This included details on Flytipping, Abandoned Cars, Tonnage of Household Waste, Missed Collections of Waste, together with information from Public Protections on service requests responded to with five working days, noise complaints responded to within five working days, and Non-Compliant Food Inspections.
- 9.4 Requisition of Cabinet Report, Hornchurch Country Park Proposed Ingrebourne Hill Extension – At its special meeting in December 2011, the Committee considered a call-in of the Cabinet Decision on the extension of Ingrebourne Hill, in Hornchurch Country Park. Following in depth discussions the Committee resolved to not uphold the requisition
- 9.5 Visits to Waste Sites – During the year, the Committee carried out three visits to different types of waste sites. These included Frog Island MRF, where the general waste was taken. MDJ Light Brothers Ltd, who dealt with Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment and The Ideal Waste Paper Co. Ltd, who dealt with the recycling from the borough.