

Public Document Pack

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Town Hall, Main Road, Romford
31 January 2012 (7.30 - 9.45 pm)**

Present:

Councillors Jeffrey Brace (Chairman), John Mylod (Vice-Chair), Dennis Bull, Garry Pain, Gillian Ford (In place of Barbara Matthews) and Frederick Thompson (In place of Peter Gardner)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David Durant, Councillor Peter Gardner and Councillor Barbara Matthews

19 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 8 November 2011 and 5 December 2011 (special meeting) were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

20 BRIEFING NOTE ON THE TRANSPORT VEHICLE TRACKING SYSTEM

The Committee received a briefing note on the Transport Vehicle Tracking System from the Fleet Engineer from Central Depot. The Committee was informed that the Transport Section had been operating a black box tracking system which was a retrospective system with the information and data being downloaded overnight when the vehicle was parked.

Due to advances in vehicle tracking the current system used, KL2, was now obsolete and needed replacing. The Transport Board had look at four different systems, and following testing had agreed on a replacement system called BATRAK.

BATRAK was an upgrade of the previous KL2 system and was a GPS "live" web based training system. The system was easy to use across all the fleet it gave details of drive analysis, including excessive braking, steering, throttle use and idle time. The latter would be monitored and reduced as this would be a fuel saving, and make the vehicles more cost effective.

A member asked if this system could be fitted onto existing vehicles. The officer explained that it could be, however they were on a rolling programme of renewing the fleet, and therefore both the new and old systems would be run side by side. It was explained that 80% of buses, 50% of highways vehicles and 100% of the Streetcare vehicles had been renewed and were using the new system.

The Committee had a detailed discussion about the maintenance of vehicles and the number of vehicles owned by the Council.

The Committee agreed that they would like a report on progress of the system in the new municipal year.

21 ALTERNATIVE VEHICLES BRIEFING NOTE

The Committee received a briefing note on Alternative Vehicles from the Fleet Engineer. The Officer explained the difference between an electric vehicle and a diesel vehicle.

The electric vehicle tested was the Transit AZD Connect this was compared against the standard Diesel Connect, as they were of comparable size and the controls were familiar. The manufacturer had quoted the operational range of 80 miles; however upon testing the vehicle on a 40 mile route, it could only complete less than 50% of the distance.

The Committee was informed that there were a number of other electric and diesel hybrid vehicles coming onto the market and officers would look to test other vehicles in the future.

The Committee discussed in detail other alternative vehicles and alternative fuels which could be used, together with the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Once the briefing had finished, the officer stated that there was a "Gator" electric vehicle available for the Committee to view, however the Committee decided it was not necessary to see this.

22 NOISE SERVICE REVIEW TRIAL

The Committee received an update on the Noise Service Review from the Public Protection Manager. The officer informed the committee of the previous service that had been provided. This included:

- Saturday nights, 22:00 – 03:00 (Sunday) for 50 weeks per year
- Friday nights, 22:00 – 02:00 (Saturday) for Summer months
- Sunday nights, 22:00 – 02:00 (Monday) for Summer months
- All other times by prior arrangements and infrequent, informal reactive service for serious cases.

However there were no longer resources available to be able to provide this reactive service

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. Officers would contact complainants on the alleged nights of the noise to arrange to witness it. This would be pursued over a 4-5 week period.

Given the current budget, whilst this was a 24/7 service, there was a cap of 15 hours per week on out of hours work. The Committee was informed that there are 1.6 FTE's allocated to a number of duties, including noise nuisance, planning applications, contaminated land and air quality.

The Committee noted the statistics set out in the presentation and that a 31% return of diary sheets was an increase from the previous 20%, therefore this was considered to be a positive reaction to the service. 66 out of hours visits were carried out for incidents of a domestic origin (music, barking dogs and DIY).

The Committee was informed that there had been no court action thus far for breach of notice.

A member asked if other boroughs provided a reactive service. The officer stated that some do, however the service provided by Havering served a greater number of long suffering complainants, rather than one off parties.

The Committee was informed that Homes in Havering had their own service which was dealt with by an Anti-social Behaviour officer.

23 PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

The Committee were presented with Performance Information for the services within its remit. A member asked for clarification on the volume of recycling which made up both the percentage achieved and the target figure of 35%.

24 FUTURE AGENDAS

The Committee agreed that it would look at the monitoring of highway repairs at its next meeting.

Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank