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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE Town Hall, Main Road, Romford 29 January 2013 (7.35 - 8.45 pm)

Present:

Councillors Jeffrey Brace (Chairman), John Mylod (Vice-Chair), David Durant, Barbara Matthews, Linda Trew and Billy Taylor

17 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18 WINTER MAINTENANCE

The Committee received a presentation on the Winter Maintenance Programme 2012/13 carried out by Streetcare. The Committee noted that there was a new salt storage facility at Central Depot which could store up to 2,500 tonnes of salt. The salt for the majority of the UK came from salt mines in Cheshire from a company called Salt Union. The cost of the rock salt was £41 per tonne, and was delivered in 28 tonne loads. Road deliveries from Cheshire were 24/7.

The Committee was informed that Streetcare received lots of compliments on the clearance of snow and ice following the recent bad weather. The service received a five day forecast and was therefore able to assess and plan whether gritting was needed. During the recent snow, the service gritted day and night to clear the major routes in the Borough, and received five forecasts per day to ensure that the routes were kept clear.

On average 16 tonnes of salt was spread a night at a rate of 10 grammes per square metre. This was generally from 6:30pm through to 11pm. This avoided the "rush-hour" traffic and the vehicles could continue moving. However during snow-down this time could be longer dependent on the conditions. There were five vehicles out at a time, and the north of the borough was often colder as it was higher and more open.

The Committee were given an extract from the Met Office guidance about how residents can help by clearing their own paths, dispelling the myth that others can hold them responsible if they were to fall and injure themselves.

All Street Cleansing and Civil Enforcement Activity was suspended in snow down conditions and the staff were deployed onto local footways, shopping

areas and bus access points to distribute salt, to maintain the safety of pedestrians. All salt bins were located at key locations; subway ramps, hills, shopping areas, medical centres etc.

During snow down conditions the refuse routes were gritted the day before collection so that the service does not suffer. Following the recent weather the collections were down 10-15% on the Monday but all collections were back on track by the Wednesday.

A member asked if the salt when distributed caused blockages and pollution to the drains. The officer stated that the salt dissolves and is not a problem.

A member asked about the budget for the winter maintenance and if it was sufficient. The officer stated that there was a budget and the only extra costs were fuel and callout cost for operatives. He stated that checking the weather forecast regularly ensured that the service was prepared. The service tracked the weather from the beginning of November through to the end of March however operatives were on call until April. With the new storage facility it meant that salt was available. He added that in the past, when salt reserves were low, it was mixed with small quantities of sharp sand which was then spread.

The Committee asked that thanks be sent to all staff for the excellent job they carried out in clearing the ice and snow following the recent bad weather.

19 COUNCIL CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT MONITORING

The Committee agreed to review the following reports at its next meeting:

- Adoption of the London Permit Scheme (LoPS) for Road Works and Street Works.
- Department for Communities and Local Government Weekly Collection Support Scheme.

20 FUTURE AGENDAS

A member asked if an item on the Gerpins Lane Reuse and Recycling Centre could be brought to a future meeting as there were issues with the staff and procedures. Officers explained that this was an agenda item for the next meeting.

21 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Head of Streetcare stated that following the last meeting, he had met with Friends of the Earth Havering and resolved any issues they had.

Environment Overview & Scrutiny
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A member asked if there was any update on the Blue Badge situation, in respect of backlogs and signage. An officer stated that the renewal process was now a rolling programme, so there was no backlog expected and the issue of signage was been address by the Council and the Liberty Management.

Chairman

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