

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE
VIRTUAL MEETING
8 September 2020 (7.00 - 9.00 pm)**

Present:

Councillors Carole Beth, Matt Sutton, Maggie Themistocli (Chairman),
Michael Deon Burton (Vice-Chair), Darren Wise and Nic Dodin

The Chairman explained the Sub-Committee's protocol during the Covid-19 pandemic

Unless otherwise indicated all decisions were agreed unanimously.

15 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2020 were agreed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman at a later date.

16 COVID - 19 UPDATE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

The presentation before members detailed the impact the Covid-19 pandemic had required Environmental Services to change its level of service.

Business Continuity plans had been enacted across services. From late March, all office based staff were told to work from home. Some staff were moved to support other work areas within the Council

A percentage of staff were 'unable' to work which reduced service levels and stopped some services and the council had to make use of agency staff in some areas.

There had been a loss of income across the service but it had been mainly Parking that had been affected..

There had also been a loss of external funding, mainly from Transport for London (TfL).

Change of patterns of work had taken place to allow staff to social distance.

With regards to Highways and Transport TfL funding was now only available for schemes supporting safe cycling and walking. Consultation on small highways schemes had re-started.

Regarding parking the decision was made to make parking free in Council-owned car parks, CPZ's and on-street. There had been limited enforcement mainly for dangerous parking and yellow lines. Some enforcement officers had been moved to support other work. The loss of income was estimated to be (£3.5M over period).

The current situation was that enforcement of CPZ's were reintroduced on 13 July. Charging for car parks and on-street was reintroduced with enforcement from 3 August. There had been the introduction of the new Ringo App for payment. 1hr free parking had been introduced on-street & 20% discount with Ringo in car parks to support high streets. 'Havering Hero' permits were introduced to support key workers.

The immediate impact on waste and recycling had seen Serco experience an initial 30% loss of staff; and there had been a reliance on agency staff. Waste and recycling services were maintained on weekly collections. Garden waste and bulky waste collections ceased on 26 March in line with the Business Continuity Plan. There had been a significant increase in tonnages collected (42% following May Bank Holiday weekend) Gerpins Lane refuse and recycling centre had been closed by ELWA/Renewi.

With regards to the current situation regarding waste and recycling. Serco staffing levels were back to normal; crews were working in 'bubbles'. Waste & recycling tonnages reduced but remained high (10% extra). Serco were now deploying more staff. Garden waste collections had been reinstated 13 April. Bulky waste collections were reinstated 1 June; with free collections for NHS shielding customers Gerpins Lane had reopened on 11 May, new arrangements were in place with less vehicles allowed on site and initially with traffic management in place.

The initial impact on estate cleansing services had been the immediate loss of staffing (18%). New working arrangements were put in place to ensure staff safety including provision of PPE and a reduction of staff numbers in vehicles. There had also been a reduced amount of cleansing inside blocks.

Currently staff levels were back to normal. Services were still working with reduced staffing in vehicles and there was still reduced levels of cleansing in blocks.

With regards to street cleansing there had been an immediate loss of staffing (22%). New working arrangements had been introduced to ensure staff safety including the introduction of PPE & reduction of staff numbers in vehicles. There had also been staggered staff start times to allow social distancing in depots.

At present staffing levels were back to normal and 10 day sweeps were in place. Staggered staff start times were still in place to allow social distancing in depots.

In respect of grounds maintenance and parks the initial impact had meant all parks/open spaces & car parks remained open. There had been a significant increase in daily use of parks and open spaces. There had been an initial loss of Grounds Maintenance staffing; with the remaining team used to cover problems elsewhere, mainly street cleansing and the Cemetery Service. There had been reduced levels of maintenance in parks but additional emptying of bins. There had been a closure of parks facilities – sports pitches, play areas, MUGA's, etc and no events had taken place. There had been additional patrolling in parks to address safety issues. Some depots had closed and there were staggered start times for staff.

Going forward, use of parks and open spaces remained high but had reduced. Normal maintenance routines were now in place. All depots had re-opened but staff remained on staggered start times. All parks facilities had now reopened and limited events and sports were allowed.

In response to a question relating to the use of pay and display machines, officers confirmed the pay and display machines were still being used but due to Covid and the touching of surfaces, cashless payments had increased significantly and the increase could also be due to Ringo app payment method being easy to understand and operate.

The Sub-Committee wished to place on record their thanks to staff who had continued to provide a good service to residents of the borough during testing times.

The Sub-Committee **noted** the contents of the presentation.

17 **QUARTER 1 2020/21 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The report and presentation before members set out the Quarter 1 performance relevant to the remit of the Sub-Committee.

Due to COVID-19, performance was not reported according to the original reporting schedule in order to prioritise service delivery. Performance for Quarter 4 2019/20 would be reported with Quarter 1 2020/21 to provide the opportunity to understand performance in this period.

Members noted that though service delivery was returning to business as usual, there would still be an impact on performance due to COVID-19.

Five Performance Indicators have previously been selected to be monitored by the Sub-Committee:

- Improve air quality in the borough by reducing the level of NO₂
- HMO licenses issued
- HMOs enforced against
- Total Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued in month
- Response rate for PCN Challenges and Representations

In relation to air quality the data showed a dramatic decrease in NO₂ levels across the borough with significant drops in areas of concern (i.e. normally with readings markedly above the annual objective 40ug/m³). Though this showed an average NO₂ reading over the three month period rather than quarterly breakdown.

The anti-idling campaign had been slowed down because of the changes in the preferences and the behaviours of people because of the Covid virus. However, leaders of the campaign were offering educating training courses to fleet drivers. The Council's own fleet drivers had been receiving similar training by the Council.

The School Streets project was going ahead, as the Council had received funding for 18 schools in 13 locations. The project was currently at the consultation stage. Upon completion, roads school areas would be temporally closed when pupils were going to and leaving from schools.

In relation to HMOs during Quarter 4, the number of licences issued increased as Licensing Officers were concentrating on processing applications ahead of implementation of new software which went live on 1 June 2020. There was also an increased number of applications received during this period. Covid-19 had not yet adversely affected the number of new applications received.

The number of enforcement operations was reduced from January 2020 and ceased from the end of March due to Covid-19. As a result no enforcement action in the form of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) had been taken for unlicensed HMOs. However the team had been concentrating their efforts on desktop conditional audits for licensed premises with financial penalties being issued where landlords have failed to comply; i.e. licence conditions have been breached. this has enabled us to maintain a steady flow of FPN cases.

In relation to Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) Quarter 4 performance for total PCNs issued in a month was 22,541, similar to Quarter 3 2019/20 performance (23,538). During this period, there continued to be poor compliance levels in Moving Traffic Contraventions (MTC).

Quarter 4 performance for response rate for PCN challenges and representations improved from the previous quarter, with performance six days below target.

Quarter 1 performance for total PCNs issued in a month dropped significantly due to parking restrictions reduced during Covid-19 lockdown, therefore issuance decreased.

Performance in Quarter 1 dramatically improved for response rate for PCN challenges and representations. Due to Covid-19 lockdown, there was less parking enforcement activity and a reduction in PCN issue, This meant officers were able to concentrate on reducing backlog and improve on response times.

Parking restrictions were re-introduced in August (Quarter 2) and therefore it was expected to see an increase in the number of PCNs issued.

In response to a question relating to the anti idling campaign, officers confirmed that the Council's fleet did not have devices to control idling and that it was a case of educating drivers.

In relation to the forthcoming year's performance indicators, the Chairman asked Members to email in their suggestions.

The Sub-Committee **noted** the report and presentation.

18 **EAST LONDON JOINT RECYCLING AND WASTE STRATEGY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES - FORMAL ADOPTION BY CONSTITUENT COUNCILS**

The report before Members provided an overview of the rationale for developing a new East London Joint Resources and Waste Strategy (ELJRWS) that will set out how waste and recycling services in Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Newham and Redbridge would be developed leading up to and beyond the end of the existing waste disposal contract in 2027.

The East London Waste Authority had formally approved a set of Aims and Objectives for the joint strategy, and these were now being brought to Cabinet and the Cabinets in the other three Constituent Councils for consideration, to confirm that all five Partner Authorities were in accord. The draft aims and objectives set out what it is the partners aimed to achieve together and provide a frame work within which the Partners can broadly seek to determine such factors as:

- What East London's waste was going to look like in the future;
- How much of it there will be;
- How much that can be reduced by;
- How much could be diverted for reuse;
- How much could be collected for recycling in a condition that meets market needs, and;
- What treatment solutions would be used to deal with what was left over.

In response to a question relating to how ELWA would engage with residents and community groups etc, officers replied that once the document was in its final form then full public consultations would take place.

The Sub-Committee **noted** the report

19 **COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION - ENFORCEMENT OF WEIGHT LIMIT ZONE - RAINHAM VILLAGE**

In accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rule 9, a Councillor Call for Action was received from Councillor Durant on 10 August 2020.

The report before Members detailed a proposal following a request from Ward Councillors to consider an appropriate solution to the high volume of complaints being received regarding the speed and frequency of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV's) travelling through Rainham Village (Upminster Road South and Wennington Road.) It is understood the majority of these nuisance vehicles are traveling to and from the industrial estates on Ferry Lane and Lamson Road.

There was already a maximum weight limit of 7.5t zone currently present on these problem roads (and almost all roads in Rainham to the south west of New Road/A1306) but this zone did not extend to Lamson Road and Ferry Lane.

The existing weight limit zone restricted HGV's from using these roads and due to alternative routes to Ferry Lane and Lamson Road being available (A13 and New Road) there is no 'access exemption' to vehicles travelling to these industrial estates.

However with no enforcement of the restrictions currently taking place, this has not deterred all HGV drivers from using these routes when travelling to or from the industrial estates on Ferry Lane and Lamson Road.

To resolve the issues and achieve an acceptable level of compliance of the existing restrictions, a high level of enforcement would be required. For this reason it was recommended that the use of static CCTV cameras to enforce the existing weight limit restrictions in Rainham and Wennington is progressed and funding sought.

Enforcement via camera would see CCTV cameras installed on existing lamp columns (subject to structural testing) at a particular location/s which would capture the vehicle registrations of each vehicle entering or exiting the restricted zone. This data would be processed and confirmation of the weight of each vehicle would be requested from the DVLA. If a vehicle was found to exceed the weight limit, a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) would be issued.

An ideal location for the camera/s to be located had previously been identified as Bridge Road near to the junction with Viking Way and Lamson Road. Cameras at this location would be best placed to capture details of vehicles entering/exiting the zone which have travelled to or from the industrial estates on Ferry Lane and Lamson Road.

Appendices to the report showed existing weight restriction and compliant routes to industrial estates and a visual guide to enforcement.

At this point Councillor Durant confirmed by phone that he was having some technical difficulties and although he could hear the meeting he was unable to be heard.

Councillor Durant had confirmed that he was happy for the Sub-Committee to debate the item and reach a decision.

In response to a question about the future use of the A1306 becoming a boulevard in the future, officers confirmed that the vehicles would not be able to use that route once the Beam Parkway scheme was implemented then that may be the case but as that development was in its infancy then the traffic measure would be introduced under an experimental traffic order that would last for eighteen months.

In response to a question relating to the vehicle usage through Rainham Village, officers confirmed that the usage was not so much deliveries but vehicles commuting through the village using it as a short cut on to the A1306

Officers undertook to investigate whether the restrictions on the temporary order could be time related, perhaps 8am to 6pm.

The Sub-Committee **considered** the report and **agreed** that the actions currently being taken by officers to address the issue were appropriate and made no further recommendations to the service.

20 **BRIEFING ON GREEN SPACE VERGE CONVERSIONS**

The report before Members detailed that there had been a number of complaints received by the service over a period of years from members of the public and requests to Councillors asking that green space be converted to parking bays, it was decided that areas from which requests were being received be considered for this work and funds be found for converting green space to hard standing parking areas.

The service contacted all Councillors and asked them to provide details of areas where they were getting pressure from residents requesting verge conversion work. This information had been collated along with direct requests from residents. An external consultancy was commissioned to

carry out a review of over 70 locations and to provide a report on the findings with recommendations for each location. Out of the 70 locations, 48 were found not to need conversion to hard standing, some of these would however benefit from the addition of yellow lines to aid access etc. This had left 22 locations which were then scored. Locations were then scored based on various criteria as detailed in the draft report.

The report detailed that eight locations were to be progressed.

An ED report had been drafted to request that green space in areas where it had been demonstrated that there was a need for parking are converted to hard standing parking. The report had been circulated to business partners and comments received and included as part of the report. The next step was to revise the report based on comments received and submit to theme board.

The report and its progression through the Council's decision making process had been put on hold due to the Covid pandemic and had been programmed to progress in November/December 2020.

Officers advised that they would need to check to ensure that funding was available, following Covid, before the further consultations took place.

Officers also confirmed that due to new programming of works that if Cabinet agreed the scheme then works should commence in April 2021.

The Sub-Committee **agreed** that a report be progressed through the decision making process from November/December this year.

Chairman