



Environment Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee Annual Report 2020/2021

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to write this foreword to the summary of the Sub-Committee's work during the 2020-2021 municipal year.

The Sub-Committee's work has, of course, been dominated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. We have nevertheless sought to maximise the impact of the Sub-Committee's work whilst also being mindful of the increased workload on Council officers as a result of the pandemic.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the other members of the Sub-Committee and all officers who supported our work during such a challenging time. I hope the report acts as a good summary of our work this year.

I commend this annual report and am pleased to submit it to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Councillor Maggie Themistocli
Chairman, Environment Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee

REMIT AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

The areas scrutinised by the Committee are:

- Environment
- Transport
- Environmental Strategy
- Community Safety
- Streetcare
- Parking
- Social Inclusion
- Councillor Call for Action

SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Maggie Themistocli (Chairman)
Councillor Michael Deon Burton (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Carole Beth
Councillor Nic Dodin
Councillor Dilip Patel
Councillor Darren Wise

COVID - 19 UPDATE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

The Sub-Committee received a presentation that detailed the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and how this had required Environmental Services to change its level of service.

It was noted that Business Continuity plans had been enacted across services and that all office based staff were told to work from home. Some staff were moved to support other work areas within the Council and in some cases the Council made use of agency staff to cover those who were 'unable' to work.

It was noted that there had been a loss of income across the service, emanating largely from the Parking service. There had also been a loss of external funding, mainly from Transport for London (TfL).

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.

It was stated that staffing levels are now back to normal, however, some services were still working with reduced staffing in vehicles and there was still reduced levels of cleansing in blocks.

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

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

Members received a report that 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 the Cabinets in the Constituent Councils for consideration and to confirm that all 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.

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 by the sub-committee.

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 was understood the majority of these nuisance vehicles are traveling to and from the industrial estates on Ferry Lane and Lamson Road.

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.

BRIEFING ON GREEN SPACE VERGE CONVERSIONS

The Sub-Committee received a briefing concerning a number of complaints received by the service over the last few 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.

CRM - GARDEN GREEN WASTE DISCOVERY- SHOW & TELL

The Sub-Committee received a presentation on garden green waste. It was noted that following support from an external company, the Green Waste service had received an excellent response from a recent user survey. As of 1st December 2020, work was being undertaken looking at how to optimise the service, addressing issues resulting from feedback of external and internal sources.

Overall aims of the service review included:

- Designing the service around a resident-centric approach
- Where possible automating manual tasks and functions
- Reducing carbon footprint by shifting paper processes to online or email

It was stated that, under the revised Green Waste Programme, digital information would be an opt-in service so paper based information would not be abolished completely, allowing residents without internet access to still use the service.

AIR QUALITY - ACTION PLAN

The Sub-Committee received a briefing on the air quality action plan that was approved by Cabinet in 2018. The purpose was to accomplish compliance with the national air quality goals. The plan outlined the actions Havering Council will take to improve air quality within the Borough between 2018 – 2023.

There were four main areas within the action plan:

- Air quality modelling and monitoring
- Public health awareness and encouraging smarter travel
- Building emissions and development
- Transport emissions

UPDATE ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE REVIEW

Members received a briefing on a number of Environmental and Climate change themed policies which needed to be updated and modernised to reflect the contemporary way Havering Council was operating.

It was stated that success was based on having outlined clear actions which can be measured by strong governance and effective consultation.

Member discussions had developed key emerging themes that there should be an emphasis on practical actions which benefit residents, businesses and the wider stakeholders in the Borough.

It was agreed that Members of the topic group on climate change would be sought both from the Sub-Committee and from any other non-executive Members who may be interested. The scope of the review would be agreed at the first meeting of the topic group and then brought to the Sub-Committee for approval.

PARKING FEES AND CHARGES 2021/22

Members received a presentation on the Parking Tariffs in 2020.

The Sub-Committee noted that during the financial year April 2020 to March 2021, the council had experienced changes to parking due to the Covid pandemic. It was stated that parking enforcement, fees and charges were suspended between April 2020 and September 2020.

The Sub-Committee was informed that in August 2020, fees and charges were reintroduced with pragmatic Covid 19 measures to support the local community and enforcement was reintroduced in September 2020.

It was explained that before the reintroduction of parking fees and enforcement the Council made the following changes due to the Covid pandemic:

- The Havering Hero Permit – this was for key workers such as carers and NHS staff and supports vulnerable residents to receive services at home
- One hour free parking on street
- A 20% discount in council car parks
- A better cashless parking service with Ringo

RECYCLING FUTURE WAYS

The Sub-Committee received a report that outlined the current and future potential waste and recycling provision in Havering.

The presentation covered the following areas:

- Havering's current position, including Covid-19 impacts on recycling and waste generation.
- The addition of more materials to the recycling stream and other methods of material capture for recycling.
- Upcoming legislation that may impact on waste collection in Havering.
- Future service planning.

The Sub-Committee was informed a further consultation was due in the spring with the following likely changes:

- Mandated separate weekly food waste collections by 2023
- Consistent set of materials for recycling
- Producer pay / compliance schemes / possible funding of collections
- Deposit return schemes introduced
- Introduction of a plastic tax
- Free garden waste collections being considered

CLIMATE CHANGE TOPIC GROUP – SCOPE

The Sub-Committee considered a report that detailed the scope of the Climate Change Topic Group.

The scope of the topic group was required under the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules to be presented to the Sub-Committee for approval.

The Sub-Committee approved the following scope for the Topic Group:

- To recommend new Council policies on carbon emissions in light of tackling change.
- That in view of other Councils having declared a Climate Emergency, to consider what action, if any, Havering should take in light of this trend.
- To consider if the Cabinet should have a lead portfolio holder for climate change or if should it be added to an existing portfolio or be part of every Cabinet Member role.
- To recommend what Council policies may need to be reviewed and refreshed.
- To investigate whether the themes of the overall Sustainability and Efficiency Policy are sufficient or if in anything should be added and to consider if the proposed actions under each theme are robust and measurable.
- To consider how the Council can develop a narrative with the community on the actions being taken by Havering Council to tackle climate change.
- To review any other related issues that may emerge as a result of the topic group's scrutiny.

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Throughout the year the Sub-Committee continued to receive the quarterly performance reports that had previously been reported to Cabinet and Demand Pressure Dashboards which illustrated the growing demands on Council services and the context that the performance levels set out in the reports had been achieved within.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

None – narrative report only.

Legal implications and risks:

None – narrative report only.

Human Resources implications and risks:

None – narrative report only.

Equalities implications and risks:

While the work of the Sub-Committee can impact on all members of the community, there are no implications arising from this specific report which is a narrative of the Sub-Committee's work over the past year.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Minutes of meetings of Environment Communities Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee