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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
PLACES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE  
Council Chamber - Town Hall  
18 July 2023 (7.20 - 9.30 pm)**

**Present:**

**COUNCILLORS**

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Conservative Group</b>            | David Taylor (Chairman), Osman Dervish, Ray Best and Jason Frost |
| <b>Havering Residents' Group</b>     | David Godwin, Gerry O'Sullivan and Bryan Vincent                 |
| <b>Labour Group</b>                  | Katharine Tumilty (Vice-Chair) and Matthew Stanton               |
| <b>East Havering Residents Group</b> | Brian Eagling  |

Apologies was received for the absence of Councillor Natasha Summers.

The Chairman reminded Members of the action to be taken in an emergency.

**24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

An apology for absence from the meeting was received from Councillor Natasha Summers. Councillor Sue Ospreay was absent.

**25 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

**26 MINUTES**

The minutes of the sub-committee meeting held on 7 March 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**27 UPDATE OF TREE SERVICES IN HAVERING**

At the request of Members, a report that outlined the key activities, statistics, challenges and aspirations of the Havering Council's Tree Services was presented to the sub-committee.

**Places Overview & Scrutiny Sub  
Committee, 18 July 2023**

Members noted that there were an estimated 20,000 street trees, 250,000 trees in parks and open spaces and 4,000 trees on Council housing sites. These trees play an integral part in both managing the ecological footprint of Havering as well as the Borough's aesthetics.

Members commended the service on the number of new trees planted but were of the opinion that the current maintenance and pruning of trees needed a review. It was also noted that at present there was no contractor working for the council to undertake this exercise.

The Sub-Committee noted that Havering has never formally adopted a specific tree policy. It was stated that a new policy and accompanying strategy has been drafted, and was currently under review by business partners. The Strategy's vision is:

To preserve, improve and secure a nett gain of the Council's tree stock for current and future generations, adhering to the "right tree, right place" principal.

The aims, objectives and outcomes of the draft Tree Policy are subject to change and the team was considering looking to include reference to climate change mitigation. The draft policy currently contains the following:

- To manage the Council's tree stock in accordance with good arboriculture and streetscape practice to BS standard 3998.
- To maintain the Council's tree stock on a regular cyclical basis.
- To increase the stock of trees in an appropriate manner by seeking both grant funding and private sponsorship.
- To inform and educate residents and businesses about the value of trees, and explore ways for greater involvement, consultation and protection from residents and businesses.
- To promote and secure high quality tree planting and landscaping within new developments in order to maintain and enhance the Borough's local landscapes.

Members suggested that the service should proactively liaise with Planning Officers during the drafting stage of the policy in order to influence the choice of trees planning and planting in future developments.

Members asked for the draft policy to be presented to the sub-committee once it was ready for adoption.

Members requested that the sub-committee receive a breakdown of previous complaints relating to tree issues.

It was also suggested that information relating to the current regime of tree maintenance in cemeteries be presented to members at a later date.

The sub-committee noted that assuming funding is granted the service would commence purchase new tree stock in August 2023.

It was stated that between November 2023 – Feb 2024, the next round of tree planting will take place along with the commencement of the new tree maintenance contract

The Sub-Committee was informed of the following future plans:

1. School programme: The team would like to become more involved in community engagement and education of youngsters in the borough to fuel their enthusiasm for the natural environment.
2. Sponsorship scheme: Officers hope to relaunch this scheme in the next 12-18 months, as a way to encourage more tree planting on the public highway and enable residents to take more ownership of their surroundings.
3. The Team will continue to explore further opportunities across the service.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and presentation.

## **28 ULEZ ASSET REPORT**

At the request of Members, a report that detailed the financial impact of the ULEZ enforcement that comes into force on the 29 August 2023, impacting across a wide range of council vehicles and departments.

The Sub-Committee was informed that the council operates a fleet of c. 200 vehicles across its various functions and the ULEZ compliance status summarised as follows by service:

Highways – operate vehicles 7500kg > 18,000kg and all are compliant for the up and coming ULEZ changes. The Highways vehicles are manufactured from 2014 > 2018 and the Highways contract is due for reprocurement in April 2024 at which point it is likely that the remaining in-house activities will be outsourced. It was stated that there is a freeze on replacing these operational vehicles which all have an operating life of 7 years. As these vehicles are all Euro 6 and are not subject to daily ULEZ charges.

Passenger Transport Services (PTS) – operate 62 vehicles ranging from 3500kg > 12000kg (15 seats to 73 seats). PTS had intended to replace 27 'out of life', non-compliant buses last year and were at the award stage in November 2022 when they were asked to defer most of the replacements pending a review of Home to School Transport policy. It was agreed that PTS would apply to TfL for Community Grace Period Certificates, which

allow a temporary exemption period up to October 2025. This has now been completed. The current PTS fleet which is a mixture of Euro 5 and Euro 6 Vehicles are currently ALL exempt from ULEZ daily charges.

Grounds Maintenance and Environment/Neighbourhoods – both of these services have been the subject of deferred fleet replacement due to potential inclusion within procurement of larger contracts.

The Environment/Neighbourhoods function (mechanised sweepers) is now within scope of the new waste contract commencing with Urbaser in Autumn 2023.

It was stated that a decision was recently taken, when scoping the forthcoming Highways contract, to retain the grounds maintenance function in-house. A Non-Key ED is being prepared seeking permission to replace these vehicles and a procurement Gateway meeting is taking place this month to establish the agreed route to tender. However, pending delivery of the new grounds maintenance fleet assets, up to 32 vehicles will be subject to the ULEZ charge of £12.50 per day.

Housing – Most of the housing fleet is hired and ULEZ-compliant (Euro 6). There are 8 x 3.5 tonne vehicles that are due for replacement and they will be subject to the daily ULEZ charge of £12.50 up to the point where replacement vehicles are available. Specifications are being agreed with the Housing service and a business case is being prepared to replace them.

Bereavement Services – The fleet are currently linked to the procurement of the grounds maintenance vehicles and all 4 vehicles are ULEZ non-compliant and are subject to the daily fine of £12.50. All are due to be replaced this year.

Pool Cars – The fleet usage is monitored over time relative to demand and as a result the number of pool cars has been reduced since its introduction from 20 to 10 remaining vehicles. It is proposed replace the remaining 'owned' fleet with electric vehicles once the charging infrastructure is in place. In the meantime, the current diesel vehicles are being sold and temporary (Euro 6) hired vehicles are replacing them.

Car Parks and Parking Enforcement – Both sections have been under review including their facilities operational base at Angel Way car park. Ongoing discussions are taking place regarding their fleet requirements including the possible provision of e-bikes. It was noted that Parking Services have 6 vehicles subject to the ULEZ daily charge of £12.50.

The report detailed a projected cost of replacing non-compliant vehicles. An appendix to the report identified the fleet and the following costs:

- The daily, monthly and yearly costs of ULEZ fines per vehicle.
- The ULEZ cost for this current year from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023
- The estimated cost of replacing non-compliant fleet assets

- The estimated cost of replacing all vehicles including the buses with TFL community grace period application certificates.
- Identifies 201 vehicles with 68 ULEZ non-compliant.

The Sub-Committee noted that the projected schedule identified a worst-case scenario, that the unlikely event of no further fleet replacements being achieved during the current financial year and all non-compliant vehicles being used daily, the Council's potential exposure to ULEZ fines would be approximately £103k in 2023/4.

Members asked that the service produce a year on year breakdown of reduction of the ULEZ fine in order to determine cost to the council.

The Sub-Committee noted the current position of the council vehicles.

29 **SCOPING DOCUMENT FOR SCHOOL STREETS SCHEME TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

The scope for the school Streets Scheme task and finish group was agreed by the sub-committee.

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**Chairman**

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