

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON TUESDAY
13 NOVEMBER 2012, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor D Abbott (Chairman)
Councillors W Ashley, S Basra, R Beeching,
E Buckmaster, M Pope, B Wrangles and
J Wyllie

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors G McAndrew and P Ruffles

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Cliff Cardoza	- Head of Environmental Services
Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer
Andrew Pulham	- Parking Manager
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services
Neil Sloper	- Head of Customer Services and Parking
Ian Sharratt	- Environmental Manager
Trevor Watkins	- Waste Services Manager

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

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408 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors P Gray, N Poulton and C Rowley. It was noted that Councillor M Pope was in attendance as substitute for Councillor C Rowley.

409 MINUTES – 11 SEPTEMBER 2012

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

410 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman referred Members to replacement papers in respect of Minute 416 – Environment Scrutiny Health Check for July to August 2012, as the original papers had contained a minor error.

411 MOBILE (ANPR BASED) PARKING ENFORCEMENT

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report in respect of establishing a policy framework and priorities for the operation of a mobile Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) based parking enforcement service in East Herts.

Members were advised that, since the adoption of Civil Parking Enforcement, the guidelines for enforcement had been revised. East Herts Council also had a Parking and Transport Strategy and most residents valued the traffic management and safety benefits of Civil Parking Enforcement.

The Parking Manager stated that use of a mobile ANPR vehicle had already been approved by the Council and would be used in line with Secretary of State guidelines, as well as taking account of best practice and relevant statutes.

Members were advised that this vehicle would not be a substitute for Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs), which often acted as a deterrent to illegal parking. Members were further advised that the main function of the ANPR vehicle would be to target difficult to reach areas such as school zig zag markings and dangerous junctions.

In response to a query from Councillor B Wrangles, the Parking Manager advised that the Authority was licensed to retain DVLA data for the purposes of mobile ANPR enforcement. Officers were able to trace a vehicle's registered keeper and send them a parking contravention notice in the post. The DVLA data would only be held for as long as was necessary for the purposes of Civil Parking Enforcement.

Councillor B Wrangles commented on whether ANPR would be useful in tackling on-street or pavement parking where this caused an obstruction. The Parking Manager stated that it was not an offence to park on the footway unless there were single or double yellow lines. The Police could however enforce under criminal law if a vehicle was obstructing the footway.

Councillor J Wyllie commented on whether the ANPR vehicle could differentiate between a parked vehicle and one which was stationary in a queue of traffic. The Parking Manager stressed that there was no reason to believe this would become a problem in East Herts.

Councillor R Beeching queried whether the ANPR vehicle and associated technology and running costs would prove to be cost effective. The Parking Manager stressed that cost effectiveness could be measured as much in safety as in financial figures. Members were advised that the vehicle would be leased and would address issues residents found particularly offensive and dangerous, such as parking on school zig zag markings.

In response to a concern from Councillor R Beeching, the Parking Manager advised that the vehicle's ANPR

technology would not be used to assist the activities of the police.

Councillor B Wrangles commented on whether the ANPR data could be used to target taxi drivers blocking the footway. The Parking Manager emphasised that enforcement could only happen if a contravention had occurred.

In response to a query from Councillor M Pope, the Parking Manager stated that making footway parking a contravention would involve enacting a Traffic Regulation Order following a systematic District wide audit. Officers could then consider a District wide ban with exemptions or localised bans based on a systematic priority list of sites.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be received: and

(B) the policy framework and priorities for the operation of a mobile ANPR based enforcement service in East Herts be recommended to the Executive for adoption.

412 VEHICLE REMOVALS – TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ACT 2004

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report confirming the policy framework and priorities for the operation of a vehicle removal service in East Herts and also to confirm the mechanism by which the associated charges would be set.

Members were advised that the purpose of this report was to set out the policy framework for the clamping and removal of vehicles parked in apparent contravention of the rules in East Herts. The Parking Manager reiterated that such powers would not be used lightly as removing a vehicle was a draconian measure to take.

In response to a query from Councillor R Beeching, the Parking Manager stated that vehicles would very likely be claimed and in the unlikely event that a vehicle was unclaimed an auction sale would be the subsequent course of action. Hertfordshire Police would be notified in a timely manner of any instance of vehicle removal in case the vehicle was subsequently reported stolen.

In respect of further queries from Councillor R Beeching, Members were advised that all the charges were such that the authority would not be expected to make a surplus whilst operating a vehicle removal service.

In terms of removing automatic vehicles, the Parking Manager stressed that all aspects of safe vehicle removal was entrusted to NSL as the successful tenderer.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be received: and

(B) the policy framework and priorities for the operation of the East Herts vehicle removal service be recommended to the Executive for adoption.

413 INCREASING DRY RECYCLING CAPTURE

The Head of Environmental Services submitted a report updating Members in respect of the progress made in improving recycling performance.

The Head of Environmental Services stated that, at the Environmental Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 26 June 2012, Members had been informed that the five lowest performing recycling areas had been identified and that bin hangers had been sent out advising residents that they were in one of these areas. Residents had been reminded of the range of materials they could recycle and how to contact the Authority if they required new or additional containers.

Members were advised that, to date, there had been a significant increase in recycling levels in all but one of the targeted areas.

The Waste Services Manager stated that dry recycling capture was being continually monitored. Officers would be continuing to spread the message in respect of increasing dry recycling capture across the District in 2013.

In response to comments from Councillor R Beeching, the Waste Services Manager confirmed that paper recycling was down 8.7% as more people were reading newspapers online, glass recycling levels were holding steady and plastics and cans recycling was steadily increasing.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be received; and
(B) The Executive be advised that Environment Scrutiny Committee supported the roll-out to the next group of rounds.

414 GROUPS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT REVIEW
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TASK AND FINISH
GROUP

The Chairman of the Grounds Maintenance Contract Review Task and Finish Group submitted a report advising the Environment Scrutiny Committee of the results of the review of the contract by the Task and Finish Group. The Committee Chairman thanked Officers for their support of the work of the Task and Finish Group.

Members were advised that the Task and Finish Group had assessed whether the existing contract represented good value for money. Members were referred to paragraph 2.11 of the report now submitted for the

contractor's final offer in the event of an extension. Councillor G McAndrew referred to the positive comments that had been received from Riversmead and South Anglia Housing Associations.

Members were referred to paragraph 2.17 for the improvements brought about by the contractor as part of the effective working relationship with East Herts Council. The Committee Chairman also referred Members to page 50 of the report now submitted for the options open to the Committee when making recommendations to the Executive.

In response to a comment from Councillor E Buckmaster regarding the savings from any extension to the contract, the Head of Environmental Services confirmed that there would be a reduction in the annual contract charge.

Councillor R Beeching proposed and Councillor B Wrangles seconded, a motion that the Executive be advised that the preference of the Environment Scrutiny Committee would be for a 5 year extension to the Grounds Maintenance Contract.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED. The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the report be received;

(B) the approach and findings of the Grounds Maintenance Contract Task and Finish Group be endorsed;

(C) the Executive be advised that the current Grounds Maintenance Contract represented good value for money and an extension to this contact was the option most likely to deliver best value to the Council; and

(D) the Executive be advised that the preference

of the Environment Scrutiny Committee would be for a 5 year extension to the Grounds Maintenance Contract.

415 2012 – 13 SERVICE PLANS: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS AND EXCEPTIONS REPORT

The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services submitted a report in respect of a mid-year summary of the Council's achievements against its priorities for 2012/13 and details of service plan actions that required a revised completion date or had been suspended. The report also monitored the outstanding four service plan actions from 2011/12, which were detailed in Essential Reference Paper "D" of the report submitted.

Members were referred to paragraph 2.1 of the report for the 30 actions covered by the 2012/13 service plans, of which 13% (4) had been achieved, 60% (18) were on target, 13% (4) had revised completion dates, 3% (1) had been suspended and 10% (3) had been deleted as they were no longer appropriate.

Members were referred to Essential Reference Paper "B" for an overview of Service Plan Actions by Corporate Priority. This also detailed the actions taken by the Authority in relation to the outcomes that had been achieved.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the progress against the Council's priorities and the revised completion dates, suspensions and deletions against the 2012/13 Service Plan Actions be received.

416 ENVIRONMENT HEALTH CHECK JULY TO AUGUST 2012

The Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services submitted a report on the

performance of key indicators relating to Environment Scrutiny Committee from July to August 2012, the detail of which was set out in the report now submitted.

In response to a concern from Councillor J Wyllie in respect of EHPI 2.1e – Planning Enforcement: Service of Formal Notices, the Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services undertook to provide a written response after the meeting.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the reported performance for the period July to August 2012 be received.

417 WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13

The Chairman submitted a report setting out the Committee’s future work programme for 2012/13, the detail of which had been set out in Essential Reference Paper ‘B’ to the report now submitted.

The Chairman referred to a vacancy on the Agenda for the 26 February 2013 meeting of the Committee. He invited Members to e-mail him or the Scrutiny Officer with ideas for this vacancy.

The Committee approved the report.

RESOLVED – that the work programme be approved.

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm

Chairman
Date

