

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON TUESDAY
23 FEBRUARY 2016, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor J Wyllie (Chairman)
Councillors K Crofton, H Drake, M Freeman
and T Page.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews, G Jones, L Haysey,
G McAndrew, P Moore, P Ruffles, S Rutland-
Barsby and G Williamson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

David Allen	- Waste Services Manager
Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Cliff Cardoza	- Head of Environmental Services and Leisure
Karl Chui	- Performance Monitoring Officer
Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
Sally Millett	- NGDP Graduate Trainee
Andrew Pulham	- Parking Manager
Kevin Steptoe	- Head of Planning and Building Control Services
Liz Watts	- Chief Executive

588 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors P Ballam, K Brush, P Phillips and S Reed.

589 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

590 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman stated that this was the last meeting of Environment Scrutiny Committee for this civic year. He thanked Officers and Members for their continuing support and hoped that the experience had been enjoyable.

591 ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY HEALTHCHECK OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2015

The Director of Finance and Support Services submitted a report on the performance of key indicators for Environment Scrutiny Committee for the period October to December 2015.

The Performance Monitoring Officer summarised the report and explained that 10 out of the 15 Environment Scrutiny Committee performance indicators were either on target or had exceeded their targets as at December 2015. The remaining five performance indicators were trends only. Additionally, in terms of the short term trend, six indicators out of 15 indicators had shown an improvement in performance compared to the previous period. Two indicators had maintained the same level of performance and seven had declined but were still within target.

Councillor H Drake sought clarification on the timescales around issuing Penalty Charge Notices (PCN). The Parking Manager explained the process and confirmed that no motorist was disadvantaged for challenging a PCN.

Councillor Drake sought and was provided with clarification on the impact of performance indicators on incidences such as fly tipping and how this was monitored.

Councillor K Crofton raised the issue of fly tipping on private land and asked whether fly tips occurred on certain days and whether there was any connection between this and the change in opening times of household waste recycling centres. The Head of Environmental Services and Leisure explained that some caution needed to be exercised on drawing conclusions on this as fly tips occurred for a range of reasons. Officers were currently analysing trends by day and geographical location to see if there was a link. He stated that Officers would report back on this issue as part of a report to the June meeting of Environment Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor K Crofton sought and was provided with clarification on declining trends in relation to EHPI 2.6 (Percentage of residual waste (refuse) sent for disposal). In relation to a question about EHPI204, the Head of Planning and Building Control explained the volatility of planning appeals and how these affected declining trends.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the reported performance for the period October to December 2015 be approved.

592 FOOTWAY AND GRASSED VERGE PARKING ENFORCEMENT POLICY

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report on the possible implementation and enforcement of a footway and grassed verge parking ban in East Herts. The Parking Manager provided a summary of the report and the options available to the Council and the separate role of the Police, to prevent obstruction by cars parked illegally.

Members thanked the Officers for the research undertaken in providing a clear and concise report and vigorously debated the advantages and disadvantages of each of the options contained within the report as detailed.

The list of criteria for identifying priorities was discussed and specifically, whether bullet point four within paragraph 2.8

should be included. The Chief Executive explained that the rationale behind the criteria, as detailed, was for Members to identify “hot spots” as the “eyes” of their respective wards so that resources could be more appropriately targeted. Having been put to the vote, the Committee agreed that bullet point four should stand as it would only be used by Officers to prioritise and target “hot spots” nominated by Members

The Committee supported a targeted local ban approach for the control of footway and grassed verge parking and the criteria for the evaluation of requests for footway and grassed verge controls as detailed. The Committee also agreed that this be promoted on the basis of an experimental Traffic Regulation Order.

Councillor K Crofton did not support the approach being implemented on the basis of an experimental Traffic Regulation Order and requested that his contrary view be recorded.

RESOLVED – that the Executive be advised that (A) a targeted local ban for the implementation of footway and grassed verge parking be supported;

(B) the criteria for evaluating requests for footway and grassed verge controls, as detailed, be supported; and

(C) the targeted ban for the implementation of footway and grassed verge parking be promoted on the basis of an experimental Traffic Regulation Order.

593 CAR PARKING FEES AND CHARGES 2016/17

The Executive Member for Economic Development submitted a report on the results of the two year trial of new car park charges which had begun in September 2014. In response to a query from the Chairman regarding the implications of motorists being offered a free parking hour, the Parking Manager explained that no modelling had been carried out on that option. Councillor M Freeman suggested that this should be reviewed again in another year.

The Committee noted the outcomes of the trial car park charges and agreed that the current charges be extended until the end of March 2017.

RESOLVED – that (A) that the outcome of the trial of new car park charges be noted; and

(B) current trial charges be extended until the end of March 2017.

594 PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT REVIEW

The Chairman of the Planning Enforcement Review Task and Finish Group submitted a report following the outcome of their review of Planning Enforcement Policy. The Head of Planning and Building Control summarised the report.

In response to a query from Councillor K Crofton regarding monitoring the service of enforcement and related notices, the Head of Planning and Building Control explained how the process would work. Councillors L Haysey and S Rutland-Barsby thanked the Chairman of the Panel, Councillor T Page and Officers for their thorough and helpful review of the process.

Councillor K Crofton queried how matters reported anonymously were treated and suggested deleting Parish/Town Councils from the process. Councillor D Andrews also expressed concern regarding the inclusion of Parish Councils in the process on the basis that they might be “too close” to the case and some, were not duly elected. The Head of Planning and Building Control explained that such situations occurred infrequently and why it was important to include Parish/Town Councils when matters of concern were reported anonymously.

The Committee received the report and supported the recommendation now detailed.

RESOLVED – that the Executive be advised that (A) the revised Planning Enforcement Policy be supported;

(B) Officers' delegated powers in relation to the service of enforcement and related notices be changed;

(C) performance indicators dealing with initial site inspections be changed so that 100% of all urgent cases should be dealt with within two days and 90% of all other cases should be dealt with within 15 working days; and

(D) a business case be submitted to the Executive if necessary, to enable the implementation of pro-active site monitoring.

595 WASTE AND STREET CLEANSING CONTRACT –
FUTURE SERVICE CONSIDERATIONS

The Executive Member for Environment and the Public Space submitted a report seeking the establishment of a Task and Finish Group which would advise on the future objectives and outcomes expected from the Waste and Street Cleansing Contract. The Head of Environmental Services and Leisure provided a summary of the report.

The Chairman explained the composition of the Task and Finish Group and asked that expressions of interest be forwarded to the Scrutiny Officer who would co-ordinate matters.

The Committee agreed the recommendation, as detailed.

RESOLVED – that a Task and Finish Group comprising of 5 or 6 Members be set up to consider the future objectives and strategic outcomes for the next waste and street cleansing contract.

596 EVALUATION OF SCRUTINY AND WORK PROGRAMME
FOR 2016/17

The Chairman of Environment Scrutiny Committee submitted a report evaluating the progress made in relation to the work

programme over 2015/16 and detailed what actions needed to be carried forward to the 2016/17 Environment Scrutiny Work Programme.

The Scrutiny Officer stated that she would be forwarding to Members an evaluation sheet for their individual comments on work achieved during the past civic year. She asked Members to return the document by the deadline specified.

The Committee received the report and supported the recommendation, as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that (A) Members’ comments be collated as part of the evaluation exercise and used to frame the draft 2015/16 Overview and Scrutiny Annual report; and

(B) the work programme be approved.

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm

Chairman
Date