

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON TUESDAY
17 SEPTEMBER 2013, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor D Abbott (Chairman).
Councillors W Ashley, P Ballam, R Beeching,
E Buckmaster, M Pope, C Rowley and
K Warnell.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor D Andrews.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer
George A Robertson	- Chief Executive and Director of Customer and Community Services
David Thorogood	- Environmental Co- Ordinator
Trevor Watkins	- Waste Services Manager

230 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Wrangles and J Wyllie. It was noted that Councillor R Beeching was substituting for Councillor J Wyllie.

231 MINUTES – 11 JUNE 2013

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the

following amendment:

Minute 60 – Contract Performance Environmental Operations 2012/13.

Delete in middle of 1st sentence 3rd paragraph – ‘.....brakes even.’

Replace with – ‘breaks even’.

232 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman advised that, with Members' consent, he would like to move the report in respect of Fuel Poverty up the Agenda so this report could be considered after the Environment Scrutiny Work Programme.

Members were also advised that a larger print copy of pages 47 – 55 of the agenda had been circulated to Members.

233 ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY – WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman submitted a report setting out the future work programme for Environment Scrutiny for 2013/14 to 2014/15, the detail of which had been set out in Essential Reference Paper “B”.

Members were advised that the report in respect of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) would now be considered at the 10 June 2014 meeting of the Committee.

Members were also advised of two new requests for the work programme as follows:

- 25 February 2014 – Review of Affordable Warmth Strategy.
- 10 June 2014 – Parks and Open Spaces high level action plan.

The Committee approved the work programme as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that the work programme, as now detailed, be approved.

234 FUEL POVERTY – AN OVERVIEW

The Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support submitted a report in respect of the revised national definition of fuel poverty. The report highlighted the activity being undertaken in East Herts to help address the issue amongst vulnerable residents.

The Committee was reminded that, at the 11 June 2013 meeting, Members had requested that an initial report be presented to their next meeting outlining measures relating to fuel poverty in East Herts. Members were already aware that the specific aim of reducing fuel poverty formed part of the Council's 2013/14 Vision and corporate priorities.

Members were advised that, in the UK, the concept of fuel poverty had traditionally been taken as occurring when a family spent more than 10% of household income on heating a property to a comfortable level.

Members were referred to paragraph 4.3 of the report now submitted for a summary of the principal issues relating to fuel poverty across the District. East Herts had a diverse mix of house types with many older hard to treat homes and many of these homes were off gas.

Members were reminded of the '*Green Deal*', a Government initiated scheme, which had been fully launched in January 2013 and had been set up to provide a loan to householders to provide for a wide range of energy efficiency improvements. Councillor K Warnell commented that the elderly were particularly vulnerable.

The Committee was advised that Home Heating Oil

buying clubs operated mainly in rural areas, where residents combined their orders to achieve a more competitive price from the supplier. Several such clubs operated across East Herts and savings of at least 10% were achieved due to less delivery journeys, thereby saving time and diesel as well as reducing congestion.

Members were advised that some homes in East Herts would not be suitable for top-ups of insulation due to unsuitable cavities following the construction process. The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) the activity relating to fuel poverty in East Herts be noted;

(B) the progress made with the Green Deal and the interim grant scheme now being put in place be noted; and

(C) a review of the Council's Affordable Warmth Strategy be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee and, if possible, before the end of the Civic Year, following the expected publication of the Government's Fuel Poverty Strategy in 2014.

235 NEW RECYCLING SCHEME – REMOVING CARD FROM THE ORGANIC WASTE STREAM – PROGRESS WITH IMPLEMENTATION

The Executive Member for Community Safety and Environment submitted a report updating Members on the progress being made to change dry recycling collections to a dual stream system.

Members were reminded that in March 2013, Council had approved a scheme to change the current kerbside sorting of dry recyclables using boxes to a dual stream comingled system, with paper being kept separate in a box and all other dry recyclables placed in a third wheeled bin.

The Waste Services Manager advised that the primary motive was to enable cardboard to be moved from the organic waste stream into the dry recycling, as changing standards for compost quality meant it would be impossible for processors to meet the new standards with the level of coated card being collected.

Members were advised of progress regarding the delivery schedule for the new wheeled bins, as well as the publication and delivery of publicity advising residents of the new scheme.

Officers would give a full briefing at Council on 16 October 2013, and Members would receive an information pack prior to the new service going live on 11 November 2013.

The Waste Services Manager gave a presentation setting out the background, the benefits and the suggested timescales for the new recycling service, known as Separate Paper and Recycling Collections (SPARC). The communication methods due to be used were also summarised for Members.

In response to a query from Councillor R Beeching, Members were advised that the collection of additional cardboard outside of the new wheeled bin was not possible as the new service and vehicles were bin based and all the comingled material needed to be contained in the bin.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the progress in implementing the new recycling scheme be noted.

236 ENVIRONMENT HEALTHCHECK MAY TO JULY 2013

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

performance of key indicators for Environment Scrutiny Committee for the period May to July 2013, the detail of which was set out in the report now submitted and within the attached Essential Reference Papers.

Members were advised that, in respect of EHPI 157a – processing of planning applications: ‘Major’ applications, Performance was ‘Red’ for July 2013 as 1 out of 5 decisions had been made within the target timescale. Members were advised that the remaining four decisions had been delayed either by applicants or as a result of the requirement for additional input from third party organisations.

The Director stated that, in respect of EHPI 218b – percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours of the required time, Performance was ‘Red’ for July 2013 as targets had not been met as two vehicles collected on behalf of Riversmead were outside of the timescale as a result of access issues.

The Director updated Members in respect of the performance of the Authority relating to NI 191 – residual household waste per household and NI 192 – percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the reported performance for the period May to July 2013 be received.

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm

Chairman
Date