

# Community Safety, Environment and Residents Services Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes

Monday 18 September 2017

## **PRESENT**

**Committee members:** Councillors Larry Culhane (Chair), Iain Cassidy, Charlie Dewhirst and Steve Hamilton

**Other Councillors:** Wesley Harcourt (Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport and Residents Services)

**Officers:** Elizabeth Fonseca (Environmental Quality Manager), Nick Austin (Director for Environmental Health), Joyce Golder (Principal Solicitor (Litigation), Claire Rai (Head of Community Safety), and Stephen Gibbs (Neighbourhood Warden Manager).

## 9. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Holder.

## 10. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## 11. **MINUTES**

### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **12. COUNCIL'S DRAFT AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN CONSULTATION**

Elizabeth Fonseca explained that the council was required to adopt a new Air Quality Action Plan for 2018-23. There was significant evidence that poor air quality was having a negative impact on residents of Hammersmith and Fulham; 25% of early deaths in the borough had been attributed to the effects of poor air quality. It was therefore important that the council developed an Air Quality Action Plan which would help it to tackle the issue. The Greater London Authority (GLA) had developed a framework for Councils across London to use when developing their action plans. It was hoped that having a more coordinated approach across London would help to increase the impact of each borough's actions.

Maps showing the concentration of nitrogen dioxide pollution and particulate matter in the borough were shown, with main roads clearly standing out as the principal areas of concentration. Elizabeth Fonseca explained that the majority of nitrogen dioxide pollution came from diesel vehicles, whereas particulate matter was caused largely by particles from tyre, brake and clutch wear and particles being resuspended in the air, although there were also many other sources. Unfortunately, there was little that the council could realistically do to significantly reduce the impact of pollution from roads, national or regional action would need to be taken as most of the traffic in Hammersmith and Fulham was passing through rather than being caused by residents.

Hammersmith and Fulham's draft action plan proposed actions in a wide range of areas. Air pollution would continue to be monitored closely, the council having doubled its nitrogen dioxide monitoring network in 2016. The council's own vehicle fleet and the larger fleets of its contractors would be upgraded to less polluting vehicles. Council buildings would also be fitted with low-emission boilers as they needed replacement. Greening measures would also continue to be introduced on the highway, with some schemes to look at reducing the canyon effect which concentrated pollution between tall buildings on main roads. Planning controls would be used to ensure that large developments did not have a negative impact on air quality. The council would also try to persuade people make less polluting choices, for example, through discounted parking permits for low emission vehicles, the promotion of active travel and anti-idling campaigns.

A resident asked why planning powers were not used to prevent tall buildings from being built near to polluted roads, as it was known that this would cause a canyon effect. Elizabeth Fonseca explained that each application for development was assessed individually and that developers could potentially overcome issues of the canyon effect through other design measures. Councillor Harcourt said that Hammersmith and Fulham used the limited planning powers available to it to good effect, but said that it was difficult to prevent developments on air quality grounds.

A resident asked what the impact of the 20mph speed limit was on air quality. Elizabeth Fonseca explained that driving at 20mph would typically reduce a vehicle's emissions as traffic flow should be smoother and a consequent

reduction in acceleration and braking which caused significant amounts of pollution. A resident noted that traffic lights often stopped drivers and asked whether these ought not to be retimed to favour cars to prevent pollution from idling vehicles and stated that vehicles are forced to idle because shutting them off and turning them on again is even worse for the environment. Elizabeth Fonseca said that this is not the case with modern cars, some of which are fitted with Start/Stop technology.. A resident noted that the needs of pedestrians and other road users also needed to be considered. The Chair asked whether officers working on air quality cooperated with staff responsible for transport and highways. Elizabeth Fonseca confirmed that they did work closely together.

A resident asked whether the council planned to take enforcement action against those idling on the borough's roads. Elizabeth Fonseca explained that the most effective way to combat idling was to raise awareness through campaigns. It was intended that enforcement powers would be used, but it was very difficult to take formal action against a driver as legislation required that a warning be issued before a fine could be given, and almost all drivers would heed the warning and turn off their engine. A resident asked that anti-idling leaflets be distributed to members of the public so that they could help to educate idling drivers, whilst another resident asked that more work be done with large venues to prevent taxis, coaches and lorries from idling there. Elizabeth Fonseca said that the council's anti-idling campaign already distributed leaflets and worked with venues; she agreed to ensure that more was done.

A resident of Ashcroft Square said that he would favour pedestrianisation on King Street to reduce pollution; he also complained about noise pollution caused by the council's street cleaning vehicles. Councillor Harcourt said that he hoped that electric street cleaning machines would be introduced in the next few years and said that this should mean that they were both quieter and less polluting than the current sweepers.

A resident asked if pollution from aircraft was covered by the action plan. Elizabeth Fonseca said that the main impact of aviation on the borough was people travelling to and from Heathrow airport in vehicles mostly on main roads through the borough..

A resident asked what could be done to reduce pollution from taxis. Councillor Harcourt explained that from 2018 Transport for London (TfL) would require that all new taxis were capable of running with zero emissions at the tailpipe; this would mean that new taxis would either be electric or be hybrids and so nitrogen oxide pollution from taxis would drop significantly. There were also to be two low emission bus corridors running into the borough along the A4020 and the A315. Elizabeth Fonseca explained that the council also lobbied TfL to try to persuade them to do more.

A resident asked whether the queuing of buses at Hammersmith Bridge was permanent. Councillor Harcourt explained that the current system would only operate until major repairs had been completed. These were likely to start in the summer of 2018 and were expected to last around 12 months; the council

would push TfL to try to ensure that the closure period was kept to a minimum. Councillor Harcourt also explained that TfL were being asked to stagger departures from Hammersmith Bus Station to prevent queuing at the bridge.

A resident asked whether a diesel scrappage scheme would be developed. Elizabeth Fonseca explained that such a scheme would need to be set up by the government; so far they had been unwilling to commit to this action in their recent revised strategy to improve air quality which focussed other than to ask councils to do so.

### **13. RIPA AND CCTV UPDATE**

Joyce Golder explained that the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) controlled the council's use of covert CCTV. Between June 2016 - August 2017 covert surveillance had been used on 12 occasions to identify the perpetrators of anti-social behaviour and drug dealing. In January 2017 the Office of Surveillance Commissioners inspected the council's use of RIPA. The report had generally been very positive; 6 recommendations for minor improvements were made as detailed in the report.

A resident said that they wanted more CCTV cameras to be installed on estates to help to tackle anti-social behaviour and rough sleeping in communal areas. The Chair noted that there was a programme of expansion of the CCTV network on housing estates and said that the council recognised their value. Joyce Golder said that the council's use of CCTV had been commended many times and that 543 arrests had been made as a direct result of the CCTV service's work.

The Chair asked whether the existing RIPA procedures made it difficult for officers to deploy covert CCTV. Joyce Golder said that the procedures worked well within RIPA, however, there would be a change to the regulatory framework as the provisions of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 came into force, which might make covert surveillance easier to organise.

A resident asked whether the council ran a CCTV service for other organisations. Claire Rai explained that the council's CCTV service only ran public space CCTV cameras. It worked with Hammersmith BID to prevent crime in Hammersmith Broadway and also had a link to Westfield's CCTV network. CCTV networks in council buildings, schools and at other sites were run by the managers of those buildings.

A resident asked how long CCTV footage was retained. Claire Rai explained that CCTV was kept for 30 days, although if requested by the police, it could be kept for longer.

A resident asked whether CCTV could be used to take enforcement action against those who were fly-tipping. Councillor Culhane explained that CCTV was used to prove the identities of those fly tipping and that the council often forced individuals and companies to pay the council for the cost of

investigation and clearing their dumped waste. The council had appointed a Street Tsar to reduce fly-tipping through the use of CCTV.

Councillor Dewhirst asked whether there were plans to extend the CCTV network to the Western End of King Street. Clair Rai agreed to look into the issue and report back to Councillor Dewhirst.

Councillor Cassidy asked how good the council was at getting access to footage from other organisations CCTV networks. Claire Rai explained that it depended on the organisation; some partners such as Westfield were very helpful whereas other premises might be more reluctant to share their footage.

#### **14. NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS SERVICE**

Claire Rai introduced the report, saying that the Neighbourhood Wardens Service consisted of 13 officers who patrolled the borough's streets and estates. The service had been formed when the Shepherds Bush Street Wardens and the Estate Wardens Services had merged.

The Neighbourhood Wardens provided a wide range of services, including:

- Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour both through intervention and by passing information to housing officers so that tenancy action could be taken where the perpetrators were council tenants.
- Stopping Begging and Street Drinking by providing support for those on the streets and by taking enforcement action where necessary.
- Providing Reassurance through high visibility patrols and home visits to residents.
- Helping to keep the borough clean by issuing fines to those littering or failing to clear up after their dogs.
- Engaging with residents and helping with their problems; the team regularly attended community events to talk to residents and also gave fraud prevention advice to older residents.
- Doing joint work with the police, including carrying out weapons sweeps across housing estates. Intelligence was also regularly provided to both the police and other council services.
- Helping with major incidents by being available to do what was needed. The team carried out a range of roles in an emergency, from acting as the Local Authority Liaison Officer to manning cordons and helping to direct the public. The team had attended the terrorist attack at Parson's Green on Friday 15 September.

A resident asked how the service could be contacted and whether they would attend all incidents. Stephen Gibbs said that the Neighbourhood Wardens operated from 8am -11pm Monday to Saturday and 10am-10pm on Sundays. The service could be called on 020 8753 2645 and where possible the team would visit a resident on the same day as their call; if this proved impossible officers would contact the resident to discuss the issue with them over the phone.

A resident asked how the team helped rough sleepers if they only worked until 11pm. Stephen Gibbs explained that monthly patrols were run at 3am, along with St Mungos who provided support to those sleeping on the streets.

A resident asked how many fixed penalty notices had been issued for littering. Stephen Gibbs explained that the vast majority of the 72 fixed penalty notices issued between January and July 2017 were for littering whilst in 2016 120 fixed penalty notices had been issued. The council's street scene enforcement officers were noted to issue far more of these notices as that was one of their primary roles, whereas Neighbourhood Wardens carried out enforcement alongside a wide range of other duties. The resident explained that he had previously asked that the council look at ways to carry out more littering enforcement as he did not feel that residents were getting the message. Councillor Harcourt agreed to provide the resident with a response to his suggestions about increased enforcement.

A resident asked whether the service would be affected by the changes to shared service arrangements. Claire Rai explained that it wouldn't be as neither the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea nor Westminster City Council had a Street Wardens service. Councillors were pleased that the borough had been able to retain its service as it was very useful for residents.

The Chair asked where officers working in the service were recruited from. Stephen Gibbs explained that staff were from a wide range of backgrounds, with some from enforcement, some from customer service roles and some ex-police officers; the key to being successful in the role was being approachable and being able to communicate well with the public.

A resident asked whether the service dealt with fly-tipping on estates. Stephen Gibbs explained that the service would report fly-tipping to housing officers and Mitie to arrange its removal. Where rubbish was considered to be a fire risk they would arrange removal immediately.

## **15. WORK PROGRAMME AND DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The work programme was noted.

Meeting started: 7.00 pm

Meeting ended: 8.45 pm

Chair .....

Contact officer: Ainsley Gilbert  
Committee Co-ordinator  
Governance and Scrutiny  
☎: 020 8753 2088  
E-mail: ainsley.gilbert@lbhf.gov.uk