



London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

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

Tuesday 21 April 2015

## **PRESENT**

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

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

**Officers:** Arif Mahmud (Group Leader, Projects & Contracts), David Gawthorpe (Policy and Projects Officer), and Ellen Whitchurch (Head of Development Management)

## **51. MINUTES**

On page 3, Item 45 – Cycling in the Borough, the reference to ‘the ‘Boris bike’ cycle hire scheme’ was changed to ‘the Santander Cycles bike hire scheme’.

### **RESOLVED**

That, with changes noted above, the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2015 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

## **52. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Harry Phibbs.

## **53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **54. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public in attendance.

#### **55. HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE WORKS PROGRAMME 2015-16**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Transport & Highways detailing the proposed Highways Maintenance Work Programme for 2015-16. Officers informed the Committee that the works programme was prepared by carrying out inspections of every street in the borough and ranking them by need. The available budget then determined how many of the ranked issues were added to the programme.

Members requested a copy of the scoring system used to rank maintenance works and information about which streets had narrowly missed inclusion on the work programme.

**ACTION: Arif Mahmud to send the above information to the Committee**

The Chair asked if roads were automatically maintained after a period of time. Officers responded that inclusion on the works programme was entirely based on need not age. Weather, ground movement, and heavy traffic were the main reasons for deterioration and without these factors roads could last up to thirty years.

Councillors asked if the inspections were timed or took place throughout the year. Officers responded that there were safety inspections throughout the year as required by the Code of Practice but the yearly works programme inspections took place during the Summer.

Councillors asked what happened in cases where problems were caused by utility companies works. Officers responded that they would challenge utility companies if roads had not been properly restored. The Council has a record of utility works and companies would be charged for the maintenance if they had not fulfilled their obligations.

Councillors asked if residents' complaints factored into the works programme. Officers responded that there was a separate budget for smaller scale reactive works based on input from residents.

The Chair asked if the Council was responsible for roads on housing estates or whether they would come under HRH. Cllr Harcourt responded that housing estates were situated on private land and would therefore have their own maintenance budget, works programme, and contractors.

#### **RESOLVED**

That the report be noted.

## 56. STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING

The Committee received a report from the Executive Director for Transport & Technical Services outlining revisions to the Statement of Community Involvement in Planning (SCI) following changes to local consultation practices. Officers informed the Committee that the SCI explains how and when the community can get involved in the Council's planning processes (e.g. the Local Plan). A six week consultation was carried out and fifteen representations were received. The majority of these were from statutory consultees like Thames Water and Transport for London.

The updated document was scheduled to go to Full Council for adoption in June (subject to Annual Council agreeing the meeting calendar). Following adoption the document will be published on the Council's website as a guide for officers, applicants, residents, and community groups. The SCI provided a clear and transparent guide for consultation and due process.

Councillors asked officers to outline the main differences between the new SCI and current SCI. Officers responded that the main differences were as follows:

- Developers were required to bring proposals to the community before the application is submitted.
- Ward panels were introduced and pilots were run in some areas.
- Legislative changes around statutory notifications had changed and, while the Government still required paper notices, there were discussions about moving to electronic notification. LBHF had won a DCLG bid to become a pilot area for the new system which was expected to reduce the administrative burden related to paper notifications.

Officers noted an error in the table of notifications on page 58; the text, '*Everyone that was consulted about the application will be notified of the decision*' should have been removed. Officers informed the Committee that the number of people involved meant it was unfeasible to inform everyone by letter but moving to a self-service online system would mitigate the issue.

Councillors asked how developers were informed about community groups to consult with. Officers responded that the Council suggested developers held a public exhibition to show their proposals to the community and invite feedback. The Council gave the developer a list of invitees, including residents and community groups.

Councillors proposed that to raise awareness of local action groups they could be listed alongside statutory consultees on the materials sent to residents about upcoming developments.

**ACTION: Ellen Whitchurch to include the above proposal in feedback on the SCI**

Councillors raised concerns that there was a disparity in community expertise and resources in different areas of the borough. Councillors asked what

support was available to residents and if the Council could provide resources to help local groups. It was also noted that small and medium scale developments were often challenged but the large developments (e.g. Westfield) were deemed too big to challenge.

Officers responded that while the Council was not able to provide support because of its role as the decision maker, there were a number of voluntary groups that fulfilled this role including the Planning Advisory Service and Planning Aid for London. Both groups provided personal support and materials and were often staffed by planners volunteering their time.

### **RESOLVED**

That the proposal below be included in feedback on the SCI before it is approved by Full Council.

'That to raise awareness of local action groups they could be listed alongside statutory consultees on the materials sent to residents about upcoming developments.'

## **57. SERCO CONTRACT EXTENSION - FACTS AND PROCESSES**

The Committee received a report from the Executive Director for Environment, Leisure, and Residents' Services that set out the facts and processes that led to the extension of the Serco waste collection and street cleansing contract. The Serco contract for waste management was let in June 2008 and originally procured for seven years with an option for a further seven year extension. The extension of the contract included cost efficiencies of around £465k.

Cllr Harcourt informed the Committee that he had continued to carry out regular inspections of selected streets following some complaints about the service. The majority of the areas that were inspected were within the standards set by the Council. There had been some problems but the enforcement team had addressed them as they arose. On Lakeside Road CCTV had been used and a fly-tipper was identified.

Councillors noted that there seemed to be a discrepancy between the service reports and the public perception of the level of service. Councillors asked if the performance indicators and standards used were reflecting the situation on the ground. Cllr Harcourt responded that the indicators were standardised across a number of boroughs and were accurate.

Cllr Harcourt informed the Committee that there had been a number of meetings with Serco to discuss issues and find solutions. Cllr Harcourt also noted that there was an effort underway to make residents better understand their role and follow the Council's rules. Signs stating 'No fly-tipping' were replaced with signs stating 'Do not leave rubbish here' to make the language as clear as possible.

Councillors raised concerns about rumours of Serco reducing their level of staffing. Cllr Harcourt responded that there were no plans to reduce the level of staffing.

**RESOLVED**

That the report be noted.

**58. WORK PROGRAMMING**

The Chair requested that the work programme was circulated to members and any suggestions for items were emailed to David Abbott, Committee Coordinator ([david.abbott@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:david.abbott@lbhf.gov.uk)).

Meeting started: 7.00 pm  
Meeting ended: 8.00 pm

Chairman .....

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