



London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

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

Monday 21 September 2015

PRESENT

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

Other Councillors: Councillors Sue Fennimore, Wesley Harcourt and Max Schmid

Officers: Craig Bowdery (Scrutiny Manager), Elizabeth Fonseca (Environmental Quality Manager), Sue Harris (Director of Cleaner, Greener and Cultural Services), Kathy May (Head of Waste and Street Enforcement), Edward Stubbing (Transport Planner and Engineer)

11. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

12. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Dewhirst.

13. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

14. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chair invited members of the public present to make any comments in relation to issues on the agenda as part of that item.

15. FUTURE WASTE AND STREET CLEANSING SERVICES – INVOLVING THE CITIZEN

The Committee received a report from the Director for Cleaner, Greener & Cultural Services outlining the challenges to the Council caused by rubbish dumping and maintaining the street scene. Officers explained that the Council had focussed on the issue of flytipping for several months but despite the increased resources allocated, it remained a concern. The Council was therefore seeking to use a wider dialogue with the community to tackle it together and to develop ways of working with residents more positively. Enforcement through prosecutions had proven to be time-consuming and resource-intensive as clear evidence was needed to link dumped rubbish with the offender, which was often very difficult. As such, residents were invited to suggest ways in which the Council could work with them to improve the Borough's streets.

A member of the public present explained that he appreciated the time and effort put into the issue by the Council and had attended multiple site visits with officers. However the problems persisted with only a slight improvement: more bins had been installed, but they were still overflowing with people dumping their rubbish on the incorrect day. He also acknowledged the work by Serco to clear flytipping within 24 hours or being reported, but it was still occurring. He argued that the root of the problem was that in much of the Borough's terraced housing there was insufficient space to store rubbish, which prompted people to dump their rubbish on the pavement and make the area look like a tip. He was particularly concerned in light of the anticipated further budget cuts to the service. He argued that more needed to be done to improve the infrastructure of properties to remove the incentive to dump on the streets. This was especially true of larger houses that had been adapted into Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs), which increased the number of households and therefore rubbish produced. He suggested that as the worst offenders, there should be an additional levy applied to HMOs to fund the additional costs of maintaining tidy streets.

Another member of the public expanded on the issues caused by HMOs and how the basements of such buildings were traditionally used for waste storage but this was no longer practical so rubbish was often left on steps and the pavement. New tenants moving into such properties were not instructed by their landlords of the required rubbish disposal procedures and so rubbish was left out incorrectly in leaking supermarket carrier bags that were often then attacked by foxes, creating more mess. Black rubbish sacks and recycling bags should be issued to new tenants at the landlords' expense and property managers should be required to instruct new residents. He also described how at properties without sufficient storage space, additional

rubbish collections had been arranged. It was suggested that these could be increased, with the costs passed onto the landlords.

Officers reported that they acknowledged the need for greater interaction with landlords. Work on this had begun, but it was agreed that this needed to be taken further. Officers also undertook to explore the feasibility of additional collections and how they might be funded.

Members of the public also highlighted that many of the Borough's residents did not speak English as their first language, and so it was suggested that all literature and signage needed to be very visual with clear pictures. It was also suggested that signs could be developed and put on the backs of doors of HMOs, so that even if the tenants changed, the signs would remain. Community skips that were in changing locations across the Borough were also suggested to enable people to dispose of rubbish and bulky items easily.

It was agreed that signage with clear visual messaging should be developed and officers agreed to look into them. In terms of passing on costs to landlords, officers reported that the legal responsibility for waste disposal rested with individual residents and businesses, so getting landlords' agreement could be difficult. Officers also described experiences of community skips in other areas, where they attracted large numbers of people from a wide area and some dumping of commercial waste, without having a significant impact on the wider street scene.

The meeting discussed the role of planning in new builds and conversions and the range of requirements that needed to be met before planning permission was granted. Officers welcomed the suggestion and agreed to explore ways in which they could better work with colleagues in planning and whether there was any scope to extend requirements to more historical buildings. They also explained that there existed regulations regarding waste storage for high rise buildings and that there was a London-wide project to expand them to smaller developments.

Members of the public also highlighted that many houses in the Borough were Council-owned and managed through social landlords. As such, the Council should be able to exert greater pressure to ensure residents complied with waste procedures correctly. The Cabinet Member also highlighted that some boroughs required compulsory registration for private landlords and that this could be explored in Hammersmith & Fulham to see if they could be made responsible for education of tenants or be subject to a levy for the cost of additional services. He also suggested that as a lot of on-street dumping seemed to come from house clearances, it would be productive to work more closely with local estate agents to prevent waste being left out on the wrong days.

Members expressed the view that storing and disposing of waste needed to be made as simple as possible as people tended to do whatever was easiest. It would therefore be important to ensure information relating to collection days was easily available and understood. It was suggested that such information should be included in Council Tax bills throughout the year.

A range of leaflets and stickers to be distributed by residents or affixed to instances of flytipping was also suggested. It was argued that if residents saw other residents highlighting the negative impacts of illegal dumping, then the message would be more powerful than if it only came from the Council. It was also highlighted that the term 'flytipping' itself was not always understood and shouldn't be used in communication with residents.

A member of the public argued that the 'Keep Britain Tidy' national campaign many years ago had been a powerful mechanism to limit littering and make people aware of their responsibilities. The campaign now needed to be refreshed to remind people, with particular attention paid to educating children. It was suggested that the Council should encourage more schools to visit the Western Riverside Waste Authority site to see the implications of not recycling properly. Officers welcomed this suggestions and explained that they were encouraging their colleagues from other authorities to re-adopt something similar to the 'Keep Britain Tidy' campaign.

Officers highlighted the questions listed in appendix 1 of the report and asked residents to give their views on them by 10th October before the formal consultation was launched. It was agreed that an update on this item would be considered by the Committee in January.

RESOLVED

That the report and the proposed resident consultation be noted.

16. AIR QUALITY

The Committee received a report from the Environmental Quality Manager presenting the Council's 2015 update on air quality in the Borough. Mr John Griffiths, Chair of hfcyclists, also presented a report on his group's work to monitor air quality at a range of heights around Shepherds Bush Green and the Hammersmith Gyratory. The data from hfcyclists appeared to suggest that air quality levels were worse than at the locations measured in the Council report. Another finding from hycyclists was that NO₂ levels were 30% higher at pushchair height.

Officers explained that like other authorities, the Council was required to improve air quality to a defined level by 2030, but that predictions based on recent years suggested this would be extremely unlikely. Officers explained that this was an issue that would require action on a larger scale than a single borough, and so they continued to lobby the GLA and Government for more coordinated action.

The Committee discussed how certain driving increased pollution, such as excessive braking and acceleration, and how road surfaces and the wear on tyres also played a part. There had been some initial work to quantify the impact of greener driving, but this was not yet finished. The Chair suggested that if the impact could be quantified, then it would be easier to persuade people to change their driving style. Officers explained that it was a significant

challenge as many people resented being told how to drive. However there was a potential opportunity with large Council contractors, for whom meeting green driving standards could be made a prerequisite for contract awards. Members also discussed the potential to design-out pollution with increased water features and foliage.

The decision by TfL to not expand the Ultra Low Emission Zone to Hammersmith & Fulham was also discussed. It was felt that the case for including the Borough should be easy to make, but it was acknowledged that many other boroughs also wanted the Zone expanded. Regardless of designation, it was hoped that there would be a knock-on effect as buses and taxis travelling in and out of the Borough would have to meet the standards of the Zone.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

17. PARKING TASK GROUP REPORT

The Committee received a report from the Scrutiny Manager outlining the work of the Parking Task Group, which had been created following a meeting of the PAC where members of the public raised concerns regarding parking the Borough. It was agreed that the issues raised by the Task Group would not be resolved immediately and that an ongoing Parking Issues Board should be created to replace the Task Group and provide an ongoing member-level sounding board to inform the Council's parking policies.

Noting the Task Group's discussions on facilitating cashless payments for parking and the use of smartphone applications, the Cabinet Member confirmed that the feedback had been taken on board and that a Cabinet decision to implement many of the suggestions was expected in October. Members of the Committee welcomed this and asked if a report could be prepared which detailed how the suggestions and comments put forward by the Task Group had been reflected in the final decisions taken.

Action: Edward Stubbing

RESOLVED

That the Committee note the work of the Parking Task Group and recommend that the Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport & Residents Services establish a Parking Issues Board to replace the work of the Parking Task Group.

18. WORK PROGRAMMING

Members requested that a report on the Borough's cemeteries be considered by a future meeting, which identified the key challenges and priorities and recognised the recent awards won at the Margravine cemetery.

RESOLVED

That the proposed work programme be agreed.

19. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates of future meetings were agreed as follows:

- 18 November 2015
- 18 January 2016
- 2 March 2016
- 12 April 2016

Meeting started: 7.00 pm
Meeting ended: 8.50 pm

Chair

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