

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE HELD ON

17 November 2009

7.30-8.37pm

PRESENT

COUNCILLORS

Tony Hall (Chairman)
Joel Charles (Vice Chairman)

Maggie Hulcoop

Eddie Johnson

Chris Millington

Clive Souter

Lorna Spenceley

ALSO PRESENT

Jean Clark

Linda Pailing

36. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

37. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting on 15 September 2009 and the special meeting on 5 November 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

38. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

39. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS & PETITIONS**

(i) **Petitions**

(a) **One-Way Traffic System**

A petition of 25 signatures was received from residents of Rectory Wood requesting that Rectory Wood be made a one-way system.

A representative from each political party responded to the petition and the Chairman confirmed that for the proposal had been referred to Essex County Council Highways department for consideration.

The Committee also noted the suggestion that the proposal be considered by the newly established Harlow Localism Panel and the Chairman undertook to refer the proposals to the next meeting of the Panel early in 2010.

(b) Waste Collection Service

A petition of 54 signatures was received objecting to the new waste collection service.

In the absence of the lead petitioner, the Chairman presented the petition to the Committee outlining the four main areas of objection (1) that Government was tackling the issue of waste in a back to front way and that it should be addressing the issue of recyclable packaging with manufacturers (2) the terrace design of properties in Harlow made it difficult for many residents to move wheelie bins from the back to the front of properties (3) storage of wheelie bins at the front of properties was very unsightly and (4) wheelie bins are a fire and vandalism risk.

A representative from each political party responded and the petition was noted.

(ii) Written Question from a Member

A copy of the written question from Councillor Clive Souter and the Chairman's response is attached at Appendix A of these minutes.

40. **NON-CONTENTIOUS BUSINESS**

RESOLVED that the following items would be taken as non-contentious business:

- (i) Agenda item 7 - Committee Forward Work Plan.
- (ii) Agenda item 10 – Play and Youth Activity Strategy.
- (iii) Agenda item 11 – References from Committees.
- (iv) Agenda item 12 – Grants Panel (minutes).
- (v) Agenda item 13 – Local Development Framework Working Party (minutes).

- (vi) Agenda item 14 – Green Space Working Party (minutes).
- (vii) Agenda item 17 – Waste Management Contract Working Group (minutes).

41. **COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN**

RESOLVED to note the Committee Forward Work Plan.

42. **PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

The Committee received a report on the work that had been undertaken to secure funding for the redevelopment of playing pitches in Harlow and seeking approval for a Playing Pitch Strategy.

The Committee discussed the report at length and:-

RESOLVED to approve the Playing Pitch Strategy.

43. **SCHOOL RUN TRANSPORTATION GROUP**

The Committee received a report on the work that has been undertaken by the School Run Transportation Group.

RESOLVED to note the report.

44. **PLAY & YOUTH ACTIVITY STRATEGY**

The Committee received a report seeking approval for a Play and Youth Activity Strategy.

RESOLVED to approve the Play and Youth Activity Strategy attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

45. **REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

Licensing Committee
12 October 2009

(i) Review of Hackney Carriage Tariffs

RESOLVED that the Hackney Carriage tariff increases, detailed in appendices C & D of the original report, be adopted with effect from 7 December 2009.

(ii) Gambling Act – Review of Licensing Policy

RECOMMENDED to Council that the revised Gambling Act Licensing Policy be adopted.

46. **GRANTS PANEL**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Grants Panel meeting held on 22 October 2009 be noted.

47. **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING PARTY**

RESOLVED that the draft minutes of the Local Development Framework Working Party meeting held on 16 September 2009 be noted.

48. **GREEN SPACE WORKING PARTY**

RESOLVED that the draft minutes of the Green Space Working Party meeting held on 14 October 2009 be noted.

49. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

50. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The meeting did not move into private session because the only confidential item was taken as non-contentious.

51. **WASTE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT WORKING GROUP**

RESOLVED that

(i) the minutes of the meeting of the Waste Management Contract Working Group held on 4 September 2009 be noted.

(ii) the draft minutes of the meeting of the Waste Management Contract Working Group held on 16 October 2009 be noted.

CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE

MEMBER QUESTION

Environment & Community Committee

17 November 2009

Q1. Councillor Clive Souter

Would the Chairman comment on the success or otherwise so far of the new Waste Collection Service?

The rollout of the new Waste Collection Service is going extremely well. Rollout is on target, with containers being delivered and the new collection service starting on time. We are almost at the end of the second phase, and phase 3 deliveries start next Monday (23rd).

The tonnage collected so far indicates that we are on track to achieve the predicted tonnage for this year for the food waste collection. It is not straightforward to calculate the tonnage per household or to compare the tonnages with other authorities. It is anticipated that we are on target to achieve the predicted overall recycling rate of 46% in a full year, which will be an increase of approximately 20 percentage points over the recycling rate pre roll-out. The food waste scheme is proving to be a popular service that residents are embracing. From the start of the new service up to the 13th November, around 164 tonnes has been diverted from landfill (around 54 lorry loads). Likewise, the nappy service is equally popular.

Enquiries have been lower than anticipated. Up to 14th November 2009, 2,125 enquiries about the system have been logged at Contact Harlow, and have either been dealt with at the time of the contact by Contact Harlow staff or have been referred to Waste Watch staff for a visit. Of these enquiries, 223 (10.5%) have been from residents who don't want the bins, and 334 (15.7%) have been from residents who state they have no space for the bins. In response, visits and discussions by Officer's with the residents concerned has resulted in less than 20 properties refusing the new bins out of the 18,000 plus properties that now have them. 123 (5.8%) of the calls have been from residents who are glad we introduced the scheme (but people rarely take the time to compliment a service whereas they are quick to criticize). The remainder of the calls have been from people wanting further information about how to operate the system, including 607 calls (28.6%) asking what goes in to the bins, despite the wealth of information given out prior to and during delivery.

WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme – a Government funded not-for-profit agency), who have provided the Council with advisory support and some funding, have praised the communications campaign expressing the view that it is very comprehensive.

WasteWatch (an environmental charity) have provided support staff throughout the roll-out, some of which will be ongoing until the end of March. The support staff, door steppers and road show staff have been invaluable to ensuring the roll-out has run as smoothly as possible, ensuring resident enquiries are dealt with as quickly as possible and efficiently.

Door stepping is demonstrating that the vast majorities of residents have received the information pack and understand it. There were some anomalies around the liners that should be used for the food waste collection and a press release and more information is going out on this shortly.

In conclusion, this is a success story for the Council and it will make a significant reduction in waste that would have otherwise gone to land fill.