

MINUTES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 8 November 2023
(7:01 - 9:04 pm)

Present: Cllr Glenda Paddle (Chair), Cllr Dorothy Akwaboah (Deputy Chair), Cllr Andrew Achilleos, Cllr Paul Robinson, Cllr Phil Waker and Cllr Mukhtar Yusuf;

Apologies: Cllr Donna Lumsden, Cllr Ingrid Robinson, Cllr Muazzam Sandhu and Sajjad Ali

23. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

24. Minutes - To confirm as correct the minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2023 were confirmed as correct.

25. Fly Tipping Status Update

The Director of Public Realm and the Head of Regulatory Services presented a report on the fly-tipping status update.

The Director advised that Fly-tipping was one of the top environmental challenges faced by many local authorities across the country. It was classed as a crime and a nuisance which had significant financial and environmental costs for the council to combat the issue.

The Council had endorsed the formation of the Cleaner Communities approach which had brought together the key service stakeholders to collaboratively address fly tipping and associated issues within the borough. The group consisted of Public Realm, Enforcement, Landlord Services, Highways, Communications and Participation & Engagement.

The key element associated with the Cleaner Communities approach was the development of the working group that would target hotspot areas of fly tipping and develop action plans with preventative actions. There was an emphasis on a more intelligence-led approach to address street cleanliness which involved the sharing of data across the key service stakeholders.

This year, the performance of street cleansing was at a high level with 91% of reported fly tipping cleared within two working days. The Enforcement team were working hard to address eyesore gardens and fly tip hotspots with success gained from the Council's wall of shame.

It was noted that the figure from the Septembers Waste Strategy report of 43% of fly tipping was from household waste was not included within this report. A question was asked regarding the cost analysis on whether it was more cost

effective to continue to clear up the 43% of household waste or to provide larger bins to households. The Committee were advised that the true cost of fly tipping was unknown as it impacted many of the council services. There was a policy in place to allow households with five or more residents to apply for larger bins. It would cost the council £4m if it were to introduce larger bins to all households. There was also a risk that an increase in bin size would encourage the production of more household waste.

There had been a lot of preventative work undertaken on fly tipping hotspot areas which varied depending on the area. The Council had one mobile CCTV officer, four mobile cameras and 20 fixed cameras across the borough to monitor fly tipping areas. In general, the Enforcement Service had the access to any camera across the borough; however, it was important to note that certain Enforcement teams required cameras to be positioned in a certain way such and therefore it would be difficult to detect fly tipping on the cameras. The annual cost associated with operating CCTV cameras were estimated to be around £273,000 a year. It would be hard to quantify both the financial cost as well as the benefits regarding the preventative work done within the fly tipping hotspots.

In response to questions, the Committee were advised that the street cleansing schedule ensured that high footfall areas were cleaned every day. Higher footfall areas such as Barking Town Centre and Dagenham Heathway would be cleaned multiple times a day.

Tackling fly tipping on service roads and private land was a challenge due to it either being privately owned, sometimes by multiple owners or being on adopted land. Although service roads were not on the Councils cleaning schedule, the Council still had a duty of care to residents living around the area. The Council would carry out interventions and clear the fly tipped waste with the hope of recharging to the landowners; however, this was not always possible as often the land had multiple owners, or the owners lived overseas, or it is owned by a corporation. This had made it a challenge for enforcement to implement the cost for clearing up the fly tipped waste.

Landlords who were a part of the Councils licensing scheme, or any mandatory housing with multiple occupancy would have licensing conditions. This would require them to ensure no refuse was kept in the front or rear garden other than in an approved storage container. The Environmental Enforcement team would investigate any fly tipping complaint and take enforcement action on either the owner, the occupier, or both. Community protection notices would be issued if enforcement action was to be taken. If the notices were breached there would be consequences depending on the severity of the issues such as a fixed penalty or prosecution.

A question was asked as to whether Enforcement would work with charity shops within the Brough regarding donations left outside of the shops overnight. In response to the question, the Head of Regulatory Services advised the committee that at present, there were no issues raised involving donations left outside of charity shops. Most charity shops displayed signage that would advise residents not to leave donations on the pavement. It was suggested that charity shops with issues with donations being left on the pavement should provide donation bins.

In response to a question regarding any other forms of prioritisation with regards to fly tipping collection such as hazardous waste, the Committee was advised that there was a London wide contract with the City of London with the aim to collect hazardous waste within 24 hours.

Fly tipping on HRA land would be collected by the caretaking dedicated bulk waste crews. Waste collection on HRA land would still be under the Councils responsibility. The Council was in the process of reviewing the operating model around working with HRA land to create a more consistent approach to fly tipping across the Borough,

There was a significant increase in fly tipping reports and the tonnage collected over the past year as reflected in Table 1 of the report. There were several variables that contributed to the increased reports and tonnage collected. Over the past year, the street cleansing service had improved its provisions around fly tipping clearance which had an impact on the tonnage collected, with a quicker turnaround time and a more proactive approach to fly tipping collection. The pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis was another contributing factor in the differencing figures of tonnage collected within Table 1.

It was suggested that the opening time for the Frizlands Lane recycling center from 7:30am – 4:30pm was not flexible for the average working person's schedule. Other waste disposal sites within the East London Waste Association (ELWA) were also not realistically accessible to all residents due to the distances from the Borough itself. The Director informed the Committee that the waste disposal sites were operated by the East London Waste Authority ELWA who decided on the opening and closing times of the site. To have waste disposal sites open for longer hours would lead to increase in costs that would be charged back to the Council.

A behavioral change campaign was in place to educate residents on how to manage their waste as most fly tipping waste was a result of poor waste management. A part of the campaign was to change residents understanding on waste such as making them aware the fly tipping was a crime. Signage was displaced in fly tipping hotspot areas to deter people from fly tipping. The behavioral change campaign involved working with different communities within the Borough to address any barriers that residents faced with waste management.

The Committee noted the report.

26. Housing for Vulnerable People: Update Report

The Strategic Director Childrens and Adults and the Head of Support Lifecycle presented a updated report on Housing for Vulnerable People.

In September 2019, the Corporate Strategy Group endorsed the Housing for the Vulnerable People Programme to support primarily the Childrens' and Adult Services. The programme was led by Inclusive Growth and Community Solutions and focused on the demand and provisions of accommodation for vulnerable people. The focus of the programme was to supply provisions of housing to members of the following cohorts:

- People with mental health difficulties;
- People with disabilities;
- Older People;
- Care Leavers;
- Households with vulnerable children; and
- Homeless 16/17-year-olds.

An update on the Vulnerable Housing Programme was considered by the Corporate Strategy Group in March 2022 which outlined the work undertaken and made recommendations about the priorities going forward. The report made recommendations across 5 workstreams which were as followed:

1. Demand modelling – financial and people;
2. Process and operational improvements;
3. Ratification and monitoring of housing pathways;
4. Policy; and
5. Supply.

Cabinet had agreed to a guarantor scheme which was first piloted in Kent. Young people often would not have their own credit or family member to guarantee rent. There was a risk assessment process for any young person that wished to apply for the guarantor scheme to ensure the right support was provided to the young person.

In response to a question regarding supported accommodation, the Strategic Director advised the committee that there was a working group that investigated “floating support”. It was important to note that not all vulnerable adults in the community were residents of the Borough. There was a challenge of other authorities placing vulnerable people within the Borough which had an impact on the councils’ resources. Although there would be social care duties that the council would need to provide, the housing challenges would be within the Councils jurisdiction. The Council was responsible for care leavers up to the age of 25; however, the Council took a “no expiration date” approach towards all care leavers.

Independence training would be offered to all care leavers which would commence when they turned 16. The independence training included managing budgets and cooking classes. The council had a leaving care adviser that worked closely with young people to ensure they had a smooth transition into their forever home. Before a young person finds their forever home, they would have spent time in a structured home.

In response to a question on the mental health stepdown, the committee was advised that it involved support for residents who have had a mental health crisis. The residents would be offered supported accommodation to provide additional care and support. After some time, many residents would no longer require the level of support and would want more independence, which would prompt the stepdown process.

The Committee noted the report.

Standing Order 7.1 (Chapter 3, Part 2 of the Council Constitution) was suspended during consideration of this item to enable the meeting to continue beyond the 9pm threshold).

27. Work Programme

The committee approved the current working programme.

The Committee was reminded that the next meeting would have a earlier start time of 6pm due to the nature of the items.