

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 November 2017 at 7.00 pm

Present:	Councillors Roy Jones (Chair), Cathy Kent (Vice-Chair), Russell Cherry and Gary Collins
Apologies:	Councillor Terry Piccolo Aaron Watkins, Portfolio Holder for Environment
In attendance:	Julie Rogers, Director of Environment and Highways Daniel Helps, Senior Manager, Counter Fraud & Investigations Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

17. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

18. Thames21- Presentation Only

The Chair announced that Emma Harrington, the Development Manager for Thames21 had been taken ill and would not be presenting her report tonight. The Chair asked that this item be added to the work programme for a future committee.

19. Linford Household Waste & Recycling Centre - Commercial Vehicle Access Policy

Julie Rogers, Director of Environment and Highways, presented the report that following an independent survey undertaken in June 2017 and a separate investigation undertaken by the Fraud Team, it was evident that a significant degree of commercial waste abuse on site was jeopardising the site's environmental permit, exacerbating capacity issues and had created significant avoidable waste disposal costs.

Daniel Helps, Senior Manager, Counter Fraud & Investigations, stated that over an eight day period of investigation and surveillance there had been over 100 visits by vehicles which appeared to be disposing trade waste with some vehicles making multiple visits in one day. This had resulted in penalty notices being issued and in some cases vehicles being seized. It was also evident that vehicles from outside the borough were also using the site to dispose of trade waste.

The report further explored the options to reduce the unauthorised disposal and recommended that a van and trailer permit scheme be introduced. The option to introduce a permit system, to limit the potential for commercial waste abuse on-site, where vans and trailers on-site would be required to show a valid permit each time they accessed the site. Julie Rogers stated that initially there may be potential fly-tipping from those vehicles from outside the borough which the cleansing team will monitor and address.

Councillor Jones thanked the Officers for the report.

Councillor Cherry asked why the producing of proof of residency had stopped on the site. Julie Rogers stated that this was due to the observed activity, health and safety of staff and planned action going forward.

Councillor Cherry questioned whether any staff members on the site were under suspicion. Daniel Helps stated that an ongoing investigation was in place and he was unable to disclose any information at this time.

Councillor Cherry asked if CCTV would be set up on the site. Julie Rogers stated that CCTV was already in place with the camera near the entrance being able to read registration number plates. Daniel Helps stated that CCTV would form part of the redevelopment of the site.

Councillor Collins questioned whether vehicles that fly-tipped could be followed and fined. Daniel Helps stated that if this was the case investigations would take place which could include surveillance; he and Julie have already discussed this as a way forward.

Councillors Collins questioned whether the 12 visits per year had been written in stone or could this be reviewed. Julie Rogers stated that 12 visits had been recommended using best practise and experience of other local authorities and that the balance of 12 visits worked well. If permits were lost or stolen a resident could apply for a new one but would only have the balance of time remaining transferred to the new permit.

Councillor Cherry questioned whether the permit was designed specifically for one person with one vehicle. Julie Rogers stated the each permit would have its own serial number and would include the vehicle registration number so that it could not be copied or transferred. A temporary arrangement would also be set up for hired vehicles.

Councillor Jones questioned those residents who used small trailers to dispose of waste and how would the permit scheme affect them. Julie Rogers stated that yes it would apply to those trailers and that this decision had been based on best practice at other councils. Initially there would be some flexibility and staff would use their discretion but it would give the team the opportunity to re-educate users on how the site should be used.

Councillor C Kent questioned whether residents would still need to show some proof of residency when visiting the centre. Julie Rogers confirmed that yes this was the case and that this would take effect from next week.

Councillor C Kent made a point of clarification that no charge would be made to residents to use the permits. Julie Rogers stated there were no plans to charge for the permit scheme. However, if the permit had to be replaced more than once an administration charge may apply.

Councillor C Kent questioned whether staff had been given the appropriate training. Julie Rogers stated that Kingdom Enforcement Staff would be conducting this element of work and would provide the appropriate support on any challenging behaviour. Julie Rogers stated that no team members should place themselves at risk.

Councillor C Kent asked how this information was going to be advertised especially for those residents who do not have access to social media. Julie Rogers stated that work was underway with the communications team to prepare posters and leaflets. Julie Rogers also stated that it would be a challenge but some flexibility would be given to begin with and that it would be an opportunity to re-educate those using the site inappropriately.

Councillor Collins asked for clarification that would those residents with a permit still need to show a proof of residency. Julie Rogers stated that she would check and report back to Members.

Councillor Collins asked Officers when the permit scheme would commence. Julie Rogers stated that the scheme would start subject to Cabinet approval, in January 2018.

Councillor C Kent questioned whether the savings published had been earmarked to clear any potential fly-tipping. Julie Rogers stated these were not savings, they were mitigation for budget pressures currently being experienced; however she assured that any fly-tipping would be addressed.

Councillor Jones thanked Officers for the report and stated that it was evident that something had to be done to reduce costs and that the proposed route made sense.

RESOLVED

That the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked to make the following recommendations to Cabinet:

To implement a permit based system for site access for Commercial Vehicles and Vehicles towing trailers at the Household Waste and Recycling Centre.

The meeting finished at 7.33 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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