

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**COUNCILLORS**

**PRESENT** (Chair) Susan Erbil, Margaret Greer, Lee David-Sanders, Birsen Demirel, Mahmut Aksanoglu, James Hockney and Derek Levy

**ABSENT** Elif Erbil

**STATUTORY CO-OPTES:** *1 vacancy (Church of England diocese representative), vacancy (other faiths/denominations representative), Mr Tony Murphy (Catholic diocese representative), Alicia Meniru & 1 vacancy (Parent Governor representative) - Italics Denotes absence*

**OFFICERS:** Doug Wilkinson (Director of Environment & Operational Services), Sue McDaid (Head of Regulatory Services), Jon Sharkey (Regeneration & Environment), Mark Bradbury (Director of Property & Economy) and Shafiara Muttalib-Mehra (Build the Change Programme Director) Jane Creer (Secretary) and Robyn McLintock (Secretary)

**Also Attending:** Councillor Rick Jewell (Cabinet Member for Environment)

**1**

**WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

The Chair, Councillor Susan Erbil, welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Councillor Elif Erbil and for lateness from Councillors Mahmut Aksanoglu and Birsen Demirel.

**2**

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3**

**TO AGREE MINUTES OF MEETING ON 20 & 21 JULY & 5 AUGUST 2021**

AGREED the minutes of the meetings 20, 21 July and 5 August 2021.

**4**

**FLYTIPPING UPDATE**

RECEIVED the update circulated to Members, and presentation from Councillor Rick Jewell (Cabinet Member for Environment), Doug Wilkinson

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(Director of Environment Operational Services), Sue McDaid (Head of Regulatory Services), and Jon Sharkey (Head of Public Realm Services).

Points highlighted included:

- Increased flytipping was a national problem, not unique to Enfield, and had also been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns.
- Key challenges included regular turnover in the resident population, lack of awareness about proper waste disposal, over-occupied properties, some types of properties with little space for waste storage or recycling, business over-generation of waste, the perceived low threat of being caught, and the lengthy legal processes to be followed.
- The strategic approach being followed by the Council included working with a number of services and other agencies.
- The Council had a good record around proactive flytip clearance but had not previously promoted all its activities.
- Measures to prevent recurrence were set out.
- More recently, a communication campaign was begun to increase public awareness, including on social media, to generate positive interest.
- There was robust enforcement, but processes had to be followed which were labour intensive and time consuming. Joint operations were conducted with the Police and with the Environment Agency. Outcomes were highlighted over the past five years. Prosecutions were now able to be put through the Single Justice System electronically, but there was a limit to 140 per month, and a limit on the Council for all court prosecutions of 12 per month.
- There had been recent service changes including waste enforcement team posts, and new deployable CCTV cameras, and the move to a free bulky waste collection service to be implemented this month. Also, additional refuse collection crews to carry out refuse collection from Council Housing Estates, and additional refuse collection vehicles and flytip crews.
- Case studies were quoted from other local authorities' approaches.
- Officers would like to see banning of cash transactions for waste removal, and tougher sentences from courts, and as much court time as possible provided for prosecution of flytippers.

Committee Members provided the following comments and questions:

1. The Chair asked about education around dumping of rubbish. It was advised that there had originally been plans to provide talks to residents and pop-up events: these had been put on hold but could now be re-started, including visits to schools. Awareness of the amount of rubbish dumping should be raised. Social media was an important educational tool. There had been engagement with residents on street walkabouts.
2. In response to queries about the bulky waste collection service, it was confirmed that details were being finalised and the free service would launch formally in the next few days. The service would be able to do up to 50 pick-ups a day, each of up to 6 items. Residents could make a booking online. There would be a small charge to reserve a specific pick up time, and there would still be a charge to collect white goods as they incurred a cost. Residents were encouraged to use any retailers' services to take away old items where possible when buying new. The bulky waste

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collection booking system would be monitored to ensure it was used fairly and not abused.

3. In respect of assisting councillors to relay information to residents, it was advised that the form on the website had been kept simple and the process easy to use. Its functionality would be monitored, including the drop-down menu of items. For reporting missed collections or flytips, the online system was quick, and should be used rather than the Members' Enquiries system.
4. Councillor Hockney commented that flytipping had been getting worse over the years and was his constituents' most commonly raised issue. He highlighted the introduction of fortnightly waste collections and of the appointment system at Barrowell Green recycling site, and impact on parks and the street scene. Councillor Jewell did not consider that changes to residents' waste collections impacted flytipping, as items dumped were not ones which would be normally put in dustbins. Most London boroughs moved to fortnightly collections before Enfield did. Some boroughs, but not Enfield, were now considering moving collections to every 3 or 4 weeks.
5. Reductions in numbers of enforcement activities were questioned. Sue McDaid advised that this had been linked to staffing shortage when officers left, but that new recruits were now in post.
6. In respect of a recent flytip at Whitewebbs, it was advised by Councillor Jewell that it was cleared as quickly as it could have been, given that it was over a bank holiday weekend and that specialist equipment was required. The published service standard was removal within 5 days.
7. With regard to specific information where investment would be made, it was advised there would be re-investment of money in changes to waste services. There would be focus on areas with high demand / high case loads, mainly in the south-east of the borough.
8. Councillor Greer expressed support for the proposed strategy, and asked about ways of tackling flytippers. It was advised that there were regular stop and search of vehicles operations every 6 to 8 weeks depending on availability of Police and this would be given more publicity on social media. CCTV was also part of the strategy and would be used at hotspots, but help from local residents was also needed to help identify perpetrators. Legal Services colleagues assisted in putting through as many prosecutions as possible, but limitations were in place from the court system on case numbers which could be forwarded. It was recognised that the courts had a backlog caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and needed to catch up on a lot of serious cases.
9. Councillor Aksanoglu recommended that ward councillors were advised of the appropriate waste enforcement officer as a point of contact. Doug Wilkinson agreed to introduce the relevant officers and encourage a face to face meeting with ward councillors. In respect of the website effectiveness, it was advised that an upgrade of the platform was imminent and website reporting would be improved for the future.
10. Councillor Demirel asked how attitudes around flytipping could be changed. Councillor Jewell advised that he would like to 'name and shame' perpetrators wherever possible, but names cannot be publicised if persons pay the FPN as they have discharged their liability to prosecution.

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However, prosecutions via the court process were public and could be publicised. Greater engagement was being sought with residents on social media, and to show how hard the Council was working clearing flytips and bulky waste. Where identification was possible from flytips, it was important to follow up and deal robustly with perpetrators. Residents' understanding of the difficulties in prosecuting should be raised, as well as the importance of correct waste disposal. It was also recognised that lives had changed during the Covid-19 pandemic and the service was being re-examined as a result.

11. Councillor Demirel recommended leaflets or publishing more information on the Council's website around how to dispose of unwanted items. Doug Wilkinson suggested that communications messages be tailored to more localised areas. During the Covid-19 pandemic and recovery period there had been changes in behaviour including shopping methods and disposal of waste. A strategic view was being taken on the way forward, as well as a localised view and bin sizes in certain areas would be reviewed, whilst also taking into account related issues including climate change and better recycling.
12. Councillor Levy considered that the document should include more details on the causes of flytipping, and on the costs of implementing the strategy. He recalled public education campaigns when service changes were made and wheeled bins were introduced several years ago. He was concerned that recycling rates had fallen. Flytipping had to be addressed; it had been impacted by Covid-19 but was not a new problem, and he questioned why it had taken so long to come up with these proposals. He was pleased that free bulky waste collection was being introduced, but that it came at not inconsiderable cost and he questioned where the funding was found, in addition to the additional vehicles and officers. Councillor Jewell acknowledged that despite the vast majority of people being respectful, there would realistically always be flytipping whatever the Council did, as some people did not understand or care about proper waste disposal. It was hoped that these proposals would have an effect. He wanted to demonstrate that there were consequences for flytipping and the Council would be taking action against perpetrators as far as it could. Communication campaigns had to reflect changing times and audiences and different approaches trialled to achieve results. Officers confirmed that recycling rates from residential properties were over 40%, but overall rates were affected by lower recycling from estates, and work would focus on communal bins to improve this in the longer term. Housing Revenue Account money would also be used to fund pick up of rubbish from Housing land.
13. In response to queries regarding how success would be measured, it was advised that once the bulky waste collection was running, it would be monitored how many flytips were being picked up, numbers of flytips being reported by residents, and whether pressure of user numbers at Barrowell Green dropped. Also, any patterns in properties or users repeatedly using the free bulky waste collections would be monitored to spot abuse of the service, and those who should be paying for a licence another way. In softer measures, officers would like to see more feedback on social media about an improved environment and fewer negative comments.

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14. It was confirmed that officers were in regular contact with their counterparts in other London boroughs and shared ideas and approaches which worked.

The Chair thanked Members for their comments and thanked the officers and Cabinet Member for their attendance and their detailed responses. Doug Wilkinson also thanked the panel for the comments confirmed that he had carefully noted all points raised by Members.

### 5

#### **BUILD THE CHANGE UPDATE**

RECEIVED the Build the Change Programme update, and presentation from Mark Bradbury (Director of Property and Economy) and Shafiara Muttalib-Mehra (Build the Change Programme Director).

Points highlighted included:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee had received a comprehensive briefing on this programme on 17/2/21, and there had been two reports to Cabinet in the last 18 months.
- The vision of the Build the Change programme was to improve working practices, the environment, modernising the offices and bringing services closer to people who needed it most.
- Pictures were provided of the old Housing office and the progress on the Housing Hub construction at Edmonton Green. The hub would bring together five different teams from across the borough. The contractor had been on site since June and was due to complete by the end of November, then networks and communications would be installed and staff moved in early in 2022. Different zones would provide for collaborative working areas, video and phone conferencing, quiet study areas, and modern breakout areas. Natural light would be maximised by the large windows and use of glass.
- The first and second floor layouts of the Children and Family Services Hub, at Thomas Hardy House, were shown. Work was on track to begin in January 2022 for completion by the end of that year. Teams from three current sites would be moved to this large office, and some multidisciplinary teams. A number of themed rooms would be provided, including interview rooms.
- Changes in culture arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, such as increased working from home, had made adaption easier. The principal focus of the office buildings was to be customer facing and to facilitate collaborative working.
- New furniture was being trialled in B Block at the Civic Centre and Members were invited to visit and take a look.

Members were invited to give comments and questions:

1. The Chair asked for an update on Civic Centre future plans. It was confirmed that tenants on the upper floors wanted to stay until the end of their lease and so the current focus was on the second floor canteen and increasing the efficiency of that floor, and of the Conference Room, the ground floor and B Block South. A ground floor meeting hub was

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proposed, with better committee rooms, conference room and greater public accessibility. This would free up the first floor for re-fitting. A report to Cabinet was planned in late 2021 / early 2022 in respect of the business case. Layout styles and furniture were being trialled in B Block, where light refurbishment, repairs and redecoration were proposed.

2. Councillor Levy asked about the improvements for service users at the hubs. It was clarified that at Thomas Hardy House the first floor layout would be different from the second floor, which would be predominantly offices. There would be clear delineation between front of house and back office functions. Service users would be received at the first floor. The design was user-led, with service users having had input.
3. Councillor Greer asked about implications for staff with access needs. It was confirmed that there had been full engagement with the disability working group. An example was quoted in respect of personal evacuation plans from the Civic Centre, and that B Block would have a new lift direct to the outside. Additionally, there had been input from the LGBTQ community in respect of toilet provision. There should be no barriers to anyone coming into the Civic Centre to work.

Officers were thanked for the informative and useful update.

### 6

#### **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

NOTED the dates of the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee business meetings.