

MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM 8 (d)

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD

11 NOVEMBER 2014

<p style="text-align: center;">ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL - PROGRESS REPORT</p>
--

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To provide members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board (OSB) with an update on the work of the Environment Scrutiny Panel.

BACKGROUND

2. Since the last report to OSB, and at the time of writing, the Environment Scrutiny Panel has met once, on 20 October 2014. The panel is scheduled to meet on 10 November 2014.
3. The scrutiny panel's investigation in respect of the Maintenance of Open Spaces is ongoing. At its meeting on 20 October the panel received an update from the Head of Operations at Thirteen in relation to how the Council's grounds maintenance standards compare with those of Erimus Housing.
4. Information was provided to the panel in respect of the service standards adopted by Erimus for both the summer and winter period. In addition a number of observations, as raised by Erimus' Housings Environmental Residents group, were presented to the panel. This included the views that there has been a recent increase in fly tipping on Erimus land, an increase in side waste and a noticeable difference in the standard of land managed by Erimus and the Council.
5. In examining the various service standards between the Council and Erimus the point was made to the panel that a straightforward comparison cannot be made. The Council is responsible for maintaining 10million square metres of land, which includes 7 million square metres of grass, 6 cemeteries and 3 formal parks. Erimus has responsibility for maintaining 463,000 square metres of land across the town. The demands and complexities of service provision are therefore entirely different.

6. In respect of the reported increase in fly tipping on Erimus land the panel requested that a piece of work be undertaken by the department to consider whether fly tipping has increased since the introduction of junk job charging and the introduction of a no 'side waste' policy. The panel was also keen to examine whether fly tipping in Middlesbrough is high compared to neighbouring authorities.
7. The information requested above is due to be presented at the panel's next meeting, which is scheduled for 11th November 2014. Information obtained in respect of sources of funding available for Environmental improvements across the town will also be presented.
8. Finally, the panel will consider the information submitted to date in respect of its review on the Maintenance of Open Spaces and a draft final report has been prepared. The panel will then form a view as to whether there are any further areas the panel wishes to explore prior to presenting its final report to the Board.

RECOMMENDATION

9. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board notes the content of the report and the updated position.

**COUNCILLOR PETER PURVIS
CHAIR OF THE ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL**

Contact Officer:

Caroline Breheny

Scrutiny Support Officer

Legal & Democratic Services

Telephone: 01642 729752(direct line)

e-mail: caroline_breheny@middlesbrough.gov.uk