



Havering

LONDON BOROUGH

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 March 2014

Subject Heading:

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL
REPORT June 2013 to March 2014

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Policy context:

Under the Council's Constitution, each
Overview and Scrutiny Committee is
required to submit an annual report of its
activities to full Council.

SUMMARY

This report is the annual report of the Committee, summarising the Committee's activities during the past eight months.

It is planned for this report to stand as a public record of achievement for the year and enable members and others to compare performance year to year.

There are no direct equalities or environmental implications attached to this covering report. Any financial implications from review and work undertaken will be advised as part of the specific reviews.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Committee note the 2013/14 Annual Report and refer to full Council

REPORT DETAIL

During the period under review, the Committee met on four occasions and dealt with the following issues:

1. ROMFORD MARKET

At its meeting in June 2013, the Committee received a presentation on Romford Market. The Committee noted that according to the conditions of their license some traders were expected to turn up every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. There were casual traders who paid a higher rate, but were not tied to appear every week. The rental costs included the removal of rubbish at the end of the day.

The Committee raised concerns about the drop in licensed traders in the last 5 years. A number of initiatives and options were discussed about how the market could be better utilised, including speciality markets, promotions and events. The Committee was informed that marketing and advertising were carried out at different location and through different group, including the visitor centre, Living magazine, visitors guide to Havering as well as other websites and newspaper articles.

At its meeting in October 2013, the Committee received a progress update on the initiatives that had been carried out. The Committee were pleased that the specialist market and one-off European Market had been successful, but felt that if they had been held on market days, the traders would have benefitted from the additional footfall.

2. WASTE STRATEGY

The Committee received a briefing on the Waste Prevention and Reward Campaign at its meeting in June 2013. Through the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Weekly Collection Support Scheme, Havering had been awarded £1 million for a reward and incentive scheme and £350,000 for a waste prevention campaign. The prevention activities that were in place, included the Home Composting Bins, Love Food Hate Waste campaign, Real Nappy campaign as well as Give and Take days which took place once a month at Central Library.

A specification had been written for a reward and incentive scheme. The key objective was to encourage residents to reduce their waste, primarily by increasing recycling. Residents would be asked to sign up to the scheme and would be awarded points on a loyalty card, which dependant on the tonnage of recycling produced, would be converted into points which could then potentially either be donated to local charities, schools or used as discounts in local retailers.

3. FOOTWAY PARKING BAYS

At its meeting in June 2013, the Committee received a briefing on the footway parking bays. It was explained that not all footways and carriages were suitable for parking bays. There were some bays in place where there was no programmed regime for re-lining. Streetcare were looking at getting a regular programme in place which would be a 4-5 year rolling programme. This would not only be the checking of the markings, but also that the time plates were in place and accurate.

There were only four officers who dealt with requests or enquiry for footway parking. Every request was logged, inspected, a report drawn up and if necessary, a drawing put together, before any instructions could be passed to the contractor to carry out the works. Therefore the timescale for each request from start to finish was approximately three months.

4. RIVER INGREBOURNE UPDATE

At its meeting in October 2013, the Committee was provided with details of the environmental improvement works which had been completed over the previous year. This included the stretch of the River Ingrebourne between Hacton Lane and Squadrons Approach. It involved the installation of flow deflectors to protect banks, introduction of wetland shelves to encourage ecology and improve flow. Back waters had been installed to assist ecology and flood storage.

The next stage was similar works from Squadrons Approach to the River Thames. This was a very large project and required discussions with the Environment Agency and Natural England as it had been agreed in principal that silt removal would be necessary to alleviate flooding upstream at Squadrons Approach and Hacton Lane. This was a very sensitive area of river and including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which required many approvals prior to the commencement of work.

5. FINANCIAL STRATEGY

At its meeting in October 2013, a brief overview of the current financial position for those services that fall under the committee's remits was provided. By period four, Trading Standards and Environmental Health were looking at an over spend of £40k. The position for Streetcare in period four was an under spend of £100km. However, by the beginning of period six this had been reduced.

The Committee noted that winter was the most difficult time for Streetcare. Expenditure was increased with gritting, call-out fees and overtime, however excessive snow reduced the parking income as people stayed at home, rather than go out shopping. From November onwards, it was not possible to carry out yellow lining or road repairs, unless it was an emergency.

6. UPDATE ON TRACKER SYSTEM OF FLEET VEHICLES

At its meeting in January 2014, the Committee received a demonstration of the GPS tracker system, Baktrak, which was installed on all fleet owned by Havering, this included PSV buses, freight vehicles and Streetcare vehicles.

The Baktrak system was a web-based system which updated every 30 seconds and was therefore “real-time” data. The system was used to ensure that routes are being carried out correctly and if vehicles are needed urgently, officers can see where the nearest vehicle is. It was able to be utilised for any claims of damage, where operators can look back at old data to see if a vehicles was in the vicinity. It was also invaluable for if a vehicle was stolen as the tracker would trace it.

7. SCOPE FOR VARIABLE SPEED LIMITS

The Committee receive a report on the variable speed limits at its meeting in January 2014. The officer explained that the main operation of variable speed limits was on motorways, where conditions create an increased safety risk in the event of poor visibility or congestion.

Members raised concerns about the 20mph zones, which were in operation around schools and other areas of the borough. They felt that these should revert back to 30mph zones outside of school hours and during the early hours of the morning. Officers explained that that the zones that were in place were generally in smaller side roads where traffic calming measure had also been put in place. Variable signs would be very costly and would need Government approval, which was unlikely to be granted.

After further discussions, officers agreed that they would look at the costs of variable signs, road markings and other signage together with a possible pilot location, which they would bring back to the committee in the future.

8. OTHER ITEMS

At its meeting in October 2013, the Committee were provided with the Annual Corporate Performance indicators for 2012/13. It was also informed that a report would be submitted to Cabinet seeking approval for expenditure to replace existing sodium street lights with LED street lights. This was part of the Council’s commitment to reducing its carbon footprint.