



ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

INTRODUCTION

This report is the annual report of the Sub-Committee, summarising the Sub-Committee's activities during its year of operation ended May 2015.

It is planned for this report to stand as a public record of achievement for the year and enable Members and others to have a record of the Committee's activities and performance.

SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Ray Morgan (Chairman)
Councillor Carol Smith (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Alex Donald
Councillor Barry Mugglestone
Councillor Garry Pain
Councillor Patricia Rumble

WORK UNDERTAKEN

During the year under review, the Sub-Committee met on five occasions and dealt with the following issues:

1. Introduction to Overview and Scrutiny

At its July 2014 meeting the Sub-Committee received a presentation giving an insight into how Overview and Scrutiny worked in Havering. The difference between executive decision and those made by the Council. Overview and Scrutiny was the function by which Council decisions, or indeed any actions taken in connection with Council functions, can be reviewed and/or scrutinised. The factors for successful scrutiny Topic Groups were outlined and it was noted that the more tightly and realistically framed that the recommendations are, the more likely they are to be adopted/ implemented.

2. Introduction to service areas within the Committee's remit

A presentation was given to the meeting in July 2014 setting out the services covered by Streetcare, Public Protection and Energy Strategy. The Streetcare objectives were set out and the officers explained how the service operated in order to meet the objectives.

The Sub-Committee noted the areas within Streetcare included Street Cleaning and Street Scene, Waste and Recycling, Rivers and Water Courses, Highways, Street Lighting, and Traffic and Parking Control. The Energy Strategy Team were responsible for managing the Council's energy use, delivering energy saving projects in Council buildings, fleet vehicles, and street lighting, securing grants for insulation and boiler replacements for Havering residents and helping residents to lower their energy costs.

The main functions covered by Public Protection included, Food Safety; Health and Safety Enforcement; Licensing; Trading Standards; Metrology Service; Consumer Landscape Project with CAB; Private Sector Housing; Air Quality; Contaminated Land; Noise, odour, light and other statutory nuisances; Pest Control Advice; Financial Investigations and Stray Dogs Service.

3. Road and Pavements Topic Group

At its meeting in November 2015, the Sub-Committee agreed to established a topic group to look at the maintenance of roads and pavements in the borough. The Sub-Committee wished to understand all aspects of the maintenance of roads and pavements in Havering.

The group met with officers from Highways and the DSO together with a site visit to Central Depot to understand the step by step process for dealing with service requests for road and pavement defects, from first report to completion. The group were able to see the systems used from both the client side and the delivery side.

The group agreed that there were areas of the process that could be enhanced and a number of recommendations were discussed, which could enhance the whole operation.

Due to officers having to interpret survey data from United Kingdom Pavement Management System (UKPMS) it was agreed that the topic group would be deferred for 6 months to allow the data to be analysed more thoroughly.

4. Maintenance of greens and hedges in the borough

At its meeting in November 2014 the Sub-Committee received a brief on the maintenance of highway shrub beds and grass verges. It was noted that there were approximately 80,000 square metres of shrub bed throughout the borough roads, which were maintained. For the high priority areas, where shrubs were likely to grow and cause overhang to footpaths, carriageways and driveways, or were an obstruction on sightlines and road junctions these were pruned on three occasions. The remaining beds around the borough were pruned twice a year. The programmed pruning ran from March to December depending on the weather.

There were approximately 900,054 square metres of grass verge (including Rural Roads) throughout the borough. The grass was maintained by the In-

House Grounds Maintenance Unit on behalf of Streetcare. The grass verges were cut on nine occasions throughout the growing season from March until November.

5. Local Implementation Plan: Annual Spending Submission

A briefing paper on the Local Implementation Plan: Annual Spending Submission was received at the meeting in November 2014. Each year the council bid to Transport for London (TfL) for funding for its transport projects and programmes. It was noted that the submission had to comply with the Mayor for London's London Plan and his Transport Strategy, Council approved Local Implementation Plan (LIP) Strategy, the Council approved 2014/15 to 2016/17 Three Year Delivery Plan and the Latest TfL Guidance on preparing Local Implementation Plan.

Havering's funding from TfL has three elements:

- Corridors, Neighbourhood and Support Measures – these are comprehensive schemes and local area improvements including schemes to tackle congestion, assist freight, contribute to regeneration, controlled parking zones, cycling, walking, bus priority and bus stop accessibility.
- Principal Road Maintenance – this focuses on the improvement to the surface of Havering's Principal Road Network. This is dependent on the condition surveys which determine how much of the Principal Road Network across London requires structural maintenance.
- Local Transport Funding – This is £100k for projects of the Council's choice that support delivery of the Mayor's Transport Strategy.

6. Contaminated Land in the Borough

At its meeting in January 2015, the Sub-Committee received a presentation on Contaminated Land in the borough and the legal definition of what contaminated land was. It was noted that there was no land declared as contaminated in Havering; however there were sites that could potentially be affected by contamination. These sites were predominately in the south of the borough and contamination could come from old landfill sites or old factory sites of anything from 30 to 150 years old.

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 Part 2a, Havering has three main responsibilities. These are:

- Land Quality Reports – these reports can be provided to potential buyers of land. Whilst they give no definitive answers they provide as much information as is available. The landowner is also able to test the land themselves.
- Contaminated Land Inspections – the Council has a legal obligation to investigate sites. There have been four investigations made in recent years. The sites are generally those that have the biggest

potential risk to properties close to or on the potentially contaminated land.

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – It is essential that the services consulted on planning issues so that where potential contaminations may be present; conditions can be attached to the planning application. These conditions ensure that the liability is passed from the council to the developer.

The Sub-Committee were given details of how an investigation is carried out from informing local residents in writing that an investigation will be undertaken to the actual process of investigating the land, which could include taking samples from residents' gardens.

7. Probation Service Information

A brief was received from the Head of Streetcare at the meeting in January 2015, as to how the Probation Services was used by the Council, what tasks they undertook and how this was monitored. There were a number of tasks that were packaged for the probation services to carry out in a three-month period. These included shrub pruning, cleaning and painting of rails. It was essential that the jobs were fixed tasks so that monitoring could be carried out. Regular monthly meetings were held with the supervisors to received updates on the package of works. The council provided the equipment necessary for the job; however these were generally low cost items such as brooms, paint brushes, hi-visibility jackets and shovels. The work was well co-ordinated and carried out to a satisfactory standard. It was noted that approximately 18,000 hours of work had been carried out by the Probation Service in respect of Streetcare duties.

8. Budgets

At its meeting in January 2015 the Sub-Committee received budget figures, within its remit from Period 8. The details shown the current budget, any spend and the remaining balance. Officers stated that there were no immediate concerns however weather damage from either winds or ice/snow could have impacts on the budgets. This could include fallen trees, highway defects i.e. potholes and gritting of the roads.

9. Council Continuous Improvement Monitor – Progress of cabinet reports

In accordance with the Council's Continuous Improvement Model the Sub-Committee received updates on the following reports in January 2015:

- Keeping town centre vibrant by reducing on street parking charges and maintaining turnover of visitors – The Head of Streetcare stated that this report had been approved to harmonise the charges for on street pay and display and outlying car parks. As well as Parks across the borough. The tariff of 20p for 0-2 hours and 50p for 2-3 hours was introduced. The scheme had been a success and had

boosted the local shopping centres as visitors were able to spend more time in one location.

- Neighbourhood Responsibility progress report – It was noted that the initial focus of the Neighbourhood Responsibility project was on the Briar Road Estate. Its main purpose was to bring one community together through partnership working with committed groups of local residents. A vacant shop had been used to combine services including Streetcare, Social Care, Housing and Community Safety into one location and to establish a “Neighbourhood Office”. A residents group was established which included representatives from LBH, HAVCO the Police as well as local residents.

At its March 2015 meeting, the Sub-Committee received the following update:

- Progress of the approval to access energy efficiency funding through the Green Deal & Energy Company Obligation (ECO) via a Greater London Authority (GLA) framework. - The Sub-Committee noted that there had been a rise in energy prices which had resulted in less people being able to heat their home in winter. The team’s role was to help residents improve their homes to help reduce energy costs, particularly for the most vulnerable residents.

Funding was secured which was given directly to Havering residents to improve the energy efficiency of their homes – wall insulation, loft insulation, new boilers, and repair heating systems. These grants were targeted towards those who could not afford these measures. As part of a new framework introduced by the Coalition government, Green Deal were loans for measures and the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) were grants with stronger criteria so they were going to those most in need. The Sub-Committee noted the number of measures that had been put to place over the previous year.

10. CRM Enquiries

In January 2015 the Sub-Committee received details of enquiries raised under the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. The information presented was for all enquires, within the sub-committee’s remit, for the period December 2013 to November 2014. It was noted that the most popular enquiries included fly tipping, highway defects, registration of births and deaths, street lighting and green bin requests. A further update was given to the Sub-Committee at its meeting in March 2015.

11. Streetcare Service Plan

At its meeting in March 2015 a report was received that detailed the service plan for Streetcare Services. A number of areas of performance were discussed.

12. Community Safety Role and Responsibilities

A presentation on the roles and responsibilities was given to the Sub-Committee at its March 2015 meeting. It was noted that the Community Safety section was responsible for the strategic development and implementation of work to address crime and disorder in Havering. This strategic role functioned via Council and partnership activity through the Havering Community Safety Partnership (Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership) which was a multi-agency group of representatives from the statutory, business and voluntary sector. The Sub-Committee were informed of the priorities for 2015-16.

13. Any other business

At the meeting of the Sub-Committee in March 2015, an issue was raised under urgent business relating to a new application that would be considered at the next meeting of Regulatory Services Committee. The issue related to the condition of the A1306 regarding lorry movements, mud, debris and enforcement. The Sub-Committee was informed that there were on-going complaints, enforcement and plans of action regarding lorry movements, mud and debris on the A1306. Various options were being considered for this site.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

None – narrative report only.

Legal implications and risks:

None – narrative report only.

Human Resources implications and risks:

None – narrative report only.

Equalities implications and risks:

While the work of the Committee can impact on all members of the community, there are no implications arising from this specific report which is a narrative of the Committee's work over the past year.

BACKGROUND PAPERS