

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON THURSDAY, 8TH DECEMBER, 2016, 6.30 - 8.30 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Clive Carter, Bob Hare, Stephen Mann (Vice-Chair, in the Chair) and Anne Stennett

6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barbara Blake and Gunes and Mr Sygrave.

7. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

9. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

10. MINUTES

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of 4 October 2016 be approved.

11. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS; CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

Councillor Peray Ahmet, the Cabinet Member for Environment, reported on key areas within her portfolio;

- The Council's new Kingdom enforcement team had recently begun their work within the borough. They had issued 198 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) so far and 47 of these had already been paid. There had only been 4 appeals to date, which compared well with the figure of 586 FPNs which were issued in the whole of last year. The FPNs had mainly be served in the Wood Green, Tottenham and Turnpike Road areas and covered issues like spitting and dropping cigarette ends.

- It had been agreed to reinstate twice weekly street sweeping on housing estates in the new year. Homes for Haringey were working with the Council to implement this.
- In respect of the Council's contract with Veolia, savings proposals were due to be consulted upon shortly. Walkabouts with Veolia had recently been introduced and ward Councillors had been included in these. The feedback in respect of these had been very positive and they provided a useful opportunity to build relationships.
- She had attended the Friends of Parks Forum on 5 November. She would be holding a specific discussion on the regeneration of parks.
- She had visited Channing School regarding parking issues that had been raised by residents in relation to the Bank.

Panel Members welcomed the increased level of enforcement and requested details of the nature of appeals received. The Cabinet Member stated that she was not party to that level of detail. Steve McDonnell, the Assistant Director of Commercial and Operations, reported that Kingdom obtained a recovery rate of 60-65% on FPNs that they had issued elsewhere. At the moment, Kingdom were just dealing with litter but their role was likely to develop. Specific consideration would be given to their use on housing estates. In other areas where Kingdom had worked, awareness of their presence had grown and resulted in a reduction in the amount of litter dropped, even though the risk of being fined was still small. The Cabinet Member commented that it was important that a similar awareness was developed in Haringey.

Panel Members commented that the black boxes that were being used to store refuse collected by street sweepers elsewhere in the borough might be suitable for use in Highgate. They had appeared to work well elsewhere in the borough. Officers agreed to contact ward Councillors regarding this issue.

12. STREET CLEANSING, WASTE AND RECYCLING: CURRENT PERFORMANCE

Tom Hemming, the Waste Strategy Manager, reported on the latest statistics for street cleansing, waste and recycling. Performance was measured using national indicator 195, which measured the percentage of streets that fell beneath an acceptable level of cleanliness.

In respect of street cleansing, current levels were within contractual targets. However, service changes had led to a negative impact on performance when they had been introduced earlier in the year and this had been particularly pronounced in some wards. However, the most recent data had shown levels had returned what they had been in 2015/16. Performance in respect of detritus had performed similarly.

Steve McDonnell, Assistant Director of Commercial and Operations, reported that the temporary drop in performance was probably due to the need to re-design the beats of street sweepers. This impacted on the service as it took time for staff to get used to their new beat and familiarise themselves with any problems.

Mr Hemming stated that there had not been a marked change in the number of complaints but it was still important that they were carefully monitored. Panel Members drew attention to the higher percentage of complaints that were either not completed or rejected. Mr McDonnell stated that this was probably due to the service changes. As there was a reduced level of sweeping in many areas, complaints were less likely to be the responsibility of the contractor.

Mr Hemming reported that resident satisfaction figures were the highest that they had been. However, survey data from the period after the service changes had been made would need to be closely scrutinised to see if there was any impact. The survey was of 1100 residents and cross borough in nature and required to be representative of the local population. The Panel noted that there were pockets of difference between wards including some between the east, west and centre of the borough. However, respondents were not necessarily evenly spread between wards.

The Panel expressed their appreciation of the efficient response to graffiti and thanked officers for this.

In respect of fly posting, Mr Hemming reported that performance for this had improved markedly after shop replacement window stickers were removed from the figures. In respect of posters advertising raves, it was noted that it was possible to prosecute. This could be done either through telephoning the number on the poster or attending the event in question. Prosecutions in respect of these events had gone down. Information on any hotspots within the borough would be welcome.

The figures for fly tipping highlighted that this was a continuing issue. There were around 3,000 incidents every calendar month. Work was currently taking place on a number of measures to address the issue. This was likely to include the use of Kingdom to levy £400 fixed penalty notices on offenders. The Council's anti social behaviour and enforcement teams were in the process of being restructured and it was hoped that this would give them a clearer focus on fly tipping. The aim was to increase the perception of risk.

In answer to a question, it was noted that there was an awareness of hotspots for fly tipping. In some areas, CCTV was used and it could be a useful means of obtaining intelligence but was less effective in assisting directly with prosecutions. It was acknowledged that further consideration needed to be given to the issue.

Mr McDonnell commented that there was a difference between covert and overt use of CCTV. Covert use needed to be agreed by a magistrate whilst overt use needed to be advertised by a notice. He felt that, whilst there was a role for CCTV when vehicles were being used, it needed to be borne in mind that the vast majority of fly tipping was done by local people.

In answer to a question, Mr Hemming acknowledged that the current target, which related to the number of fly tips reported by residents, was not the most appropriate and that a better measure needed to be developed. It was important that residents were encouraged to report fly tips. He reported that the largest categories of fly tips were black bags, furniture and white goods.

It was noted that there was a downwards trend for missed collections. However, there was a noticeable seasonal effect when staff were on annual leave and their shifts were covered by other staff. Mr McDonnell commented that there was a need for Veolia to train staff covering for annual leave appropriately to ensure that collections were not missed. The majority of the refuse fleet was tracked by GPS but, although this was a useful management tool, it was unable to tell if collections had been missed.

In respect of recycling, Mr Hemming reported that the target was just above 40%. Last year was the first that the target had not been reached. There had been a change in the law regarding standards and sorting of recycled items was now a lot stricter. More was being rejected than ever before and this had reduced recycling levels by approximately 1.5 – 2%. A number of actions were being taken to address the issue. Communication and engagement with residents was being used to address this. In particular, stickers were being placed on bins to encourage residents to put refuse in the right bin to reduce the amount of contamination. However, these had not proven to be very effective. A staged enforcement approach was now being trialled, with engagement, education and visits used. Community Protection Notices could now be used address the issue. Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) tended to be the worst offenders and letter could be served on residents and landlords.

In answer to a question, Mr Hemming stated that the service aimed to keep messages simple regarding what could be recycled. Containers could normally be recycled but the many different types of plastic available was a challenge. The biggest challenge was communicating the fact that garden and food waste need to be recycled separately from packaging. Mr McDonnell commented that residents often felt that they were doing the right thing and this had been taken into account in addressing the issue. However, there was now an element of enforcement.

Mr Hemming reported that action had been focussed on the 100 properties which were the worst offenders. Action had proved to be quite effective and the threat of enforcement had helped reduce those that could potentially face action to single figures.

The Panel noted that there were different systems for recycling and there had been considerable debate about the respective merits of source separation and co-mingling. Although source separation provided had previously provided better quality, new technology had led to improvements in co-mingling. The decision on which system to use was down to local circumstances and collection costs. Mr McDonnell commented that when the recycling contract had been tendered, the quote given for source separation had been prohibitively high. In addition, it also required special vehicles. It was also wished to ensure that recycling was as easy as possible. The Cabinet Member stated that Haringey nevertheless had one of the highest rates of recycling in London.

Mr Hemming stated that whole loads could be rejected. In such circumstances, the Council incurred additional disposal costs.

AGREED:

That the report be noted.

13. PREVENT STRATEGY UPDATE

Christina Andrew, Prevent Policy Officer, provided an update to the Panel on progress with the Prevent initiative.

She stated that she was unable to share data regarding referrals with the Panel as this had been deemed sensitive. Haringey had become a Prevent local authority in 2012 and the scheme was currently funding the post of Prevent Co-ordinator, which she was covering at the moment. The Home Office had also recently announced funding for a schools officer who would assist in providing support for training in schools.

Prevent was funded by the Office of Security and Counter, Terrorism (OSCT) which had an oversight of annual delivery plans, funding, monitoring and evaluation of projects. Prevent work was led locally by the Haringey Prevent Delivery Group (HPDG) which was a partnership group and reported to the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

Haringey had been selected to take part in the Dovetail Pilot. This provided the Council with greater responsibility for the functioning of the Channel Panel, which brought together a range of partners, including the Police, health and schools. It also now included a psychiatric nurse as many people referred had mental health issues. However, few referrals came directly from mental health services. The Channel Panel was considered to be working well.

Ms Andrew reported that there had been an increase in hate crime in the last quarter. There were a number of factors that were felt could have contributed to this, including Brexit, and these were being investigated. Training on third party reporting had been delivered to several faith institutions, Registered Social Landlords and voluntary and community sector organisations in Haringey. More sessions were being planned to ensure that there was a range of organisations able to support people and to provide additional options for people not comfortable with reporting directly to the Police.

She stated that Haringey was receiving funding from the Home Office to deliver two community based projects in 2016/17:

- Web Guardians was a scheme delivered by the Jan Trust that aimed to build knowledge amongst mothers of internet usage and online safety of their children; and
- The Young Leaders Project was being delivered in CoNEL and Haringey Sixth Form College and aimed to build young people's leadership skills whilst educating them on the Prevent strategy and related issues such as community cohesion and engagement.

Training has been delivered to schools and governors across the borough as well as refresher sessions were being delivered to school senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding officers. In addition, all schools and council services were required to have a Prevent specific section in their policies.

Although she was not at liberty to disclose the number of referrals, Ms Andrew reported that they had been lower in recent months than those of other Prevent boroughs. Most referrals came via schools. In addition, significant numbers were received from the Police and Homes for Haringey.

In answer to a question, she reported that project with the Jan Trust was aimed at reducing the risk of children and young people being groomed on line through providing mothers with basic IT skills. She stated that clusters of intolerance could be followed up on as well as situations where people had expressed sentiments that could be interpreted as inflammatory.

AGREED:

That the report be noted.

14. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Panel noted that the current review on fear of crime was likely to be completed by March. Once this had happened, it would be possible for the Panel to start work on a review of one of the two issues that it had been agreed work would take place. Panel Members expressed the wish that in-depth work be undertaken on the issue of parks and that at least the scope and terms of reference for this be completed by the end of the municipal year. It was noted that there was currently a Parliamentary Select Committee looking at the future of parks in the UK. It had received over 300 submissions so far, including one from the Friends of Finsbury Park.

AGREED:

That, subject to the above mentioned comments, the work plan be approved.

CHAIR:

Signed by Chair

Date