

Overview and Scrutiny 11 September 2008

Key issues briefing

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LOCAL DEMOCRACY & MEMBER SERVICES

Responding to Government legislation: The Empowerment White Paper - "*Communities in Control: real people, real power*" published in July 2008 builds on the previous local Government White Paper, "*Strong, prosperous communities 2006*", the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and commitments contained within the Governance of Britain Green Paper. It also picks up several of the recommendations from the Councillors' Commission which reported in December 2007. The measures requiring primary legislation will be contained in a Community Empowerment, Housing and Economic Regeneration Bill which will be introduced during the 2008-09 Parliamentary session.

Officers are preparing a series of briefings for Members on key elements of this legislation. The briefings will explain each element and set out what the Council is required to consider, timescales for implementation, work the Council has undertaken so far, and which aspects that will require a decision.

Councillor Census 2008: The LGA and IDeA are conducting the fifth census of all councillors in England. The Councillors' Commission highlighted the importance of councillors reflecting the diversity of the communities they represent. Conducting the census was one of the Commission's recommendations.

Haringey's Members have been encouraged to participate and the deadline for responses was extended to September. Haringey Council had one of the highest response rates for the 2006 Census - 26 members replied, and we are hoping to exceed that this time.

Civic Engagement – 'Get Involved' : In April 2008 the Haringey Strategic Partnership agreed to promote civic engagement activities under the banner of '*Get Involved*' to encourage Haringey's residents to consider roles such as magistrates, councillors, trust board members and NHS non-executive directorships. The public are also encouraged to get involved in local residents' associations, charities and voluntary, community and formal groups across the borough.

Civic Engagement will be highlighted at events arranged by the Council and strategic partners in the lead up to Local Democracy Week in October. Articles about civic engagement will be included in Haringey People and Area Assembly newsletters.

Local Democracy Week 2008: This year Local Democracy Week takes place during the 13th -19th October 2008. It has been agreed that Local Democracy and Member Services take the lead in facilitating events. All members will be circulated with the programme of events when confirmed.

Ward Members' Toolkit: This new toolkit will be distributed to all members in early September and will be available online as well as in hard copy format. The purpose of the Toolkit is to assist members in their casework, ward, surgery and community leadership role. The toolkit sets out what information, services, support and development opportunities are available to members to support them in carrying out the key tasks of a ward councillor and was developed in response to feedback received from councillors.

Member Learning and Development (MLD): 2008/9 Member Development Programme and Annual Report for 2007/8 – these were formally agreed at the July 2008 meeting of the MLD Working Group and will be circulated to Members this month as well as being posted on Modern Councillor website.

Modern Councillor website/portal for elected members: this new facility is a dedicated electronic information resource for Members as well as a learning and development tool. Planned roll-out to members is scheduled for September 2008.

Member Development Plans (MDPs): of the second phase of MDPs, 44 have been undertaken so far. The MDP process enables officers to take account of Members' preferences in terms of learning styles and delivery methods and times. It is also an opportunity for each councillor to examine their learning needs and priorities. The introduction of FACET and Thinking Styles has proved to be very popular.

Member Activity Log: following agreement at the MLD Working Group in July 2008, a Member Activity Log will be introduced. This activity log will be for Members to individually record their learning activities, formal and informal, in addition to the more formal records kept within the Council.

Working at the political interface: In July 2008 the MLD Working group agreed to lead member input into the development programme for officers working at "the Democratic and Political Interface". Under the current decision making structure officers below second tier level have very little exposure to members, the council's democratic structures and the political environment of the Council.

This development programme is the Council's response to addressing this skills and experience deficit. Its objectives will be to improve officers':

- understanding of the roles and function of the modern member
- understanding of the complexity of the political environment including the purpose of political groups on the Council; the difference between executive and non executive councillors and the legal framework that councillors operate within.

- ability to behave in a way that demonstrates good political and organisational awareness
- ability to behave in a way that demonstrates good skills in communicating effectively and of appreciating diversity
- Increase levels of respect for the officers and member role
- Increase officers understanding of the decision making process and the information members need to make effective decisions
- Increase officers exposure to members and the political arena

COMMUNICATIONS AND CONSULTATION

Media and PR: 652 press releases were issued in 2007/8. This year we have set targets to increase coverage in trade and minority ethnic media. We are currently preparing for an editionised (local content) version of Haringey People in November.

Consultation: We will be running the Place survey from late September and are working with a pan-London consortium to bring costs down for this mandatory survey. We are also supporting research on channel migration.

The consultation team are working with Neighbourhood Management and Highways on the next Area Assembly in West Green/Bruce Grove consulting the community to identify Parking Issues and community led solutions.

A great place to be consultation campaign began with a postcard competition in the September issue of Haringey People and will continue throughout the October and November issues with the results of the consultation and the prize winners announced in Haringey People December issue.

Web: Haringey Council's website is one of the easiest to use in the country, according to a 2008 survey. The Council's site shared the top spot with Clackmannanshire and Greenwich in a survey by web usability agency Webcredible. 17% of residents questioned in 2007 said the website was the source most often used to obtain information about what the Council is doing.

Marketing Communications: Over 2000 jobs completed in 07/08 which included advertising, distribution, graphic design, display graphics, promotional items and printing. Annual Report just published and Admissions booklets in the pipeline. We are working on a range of campaigns from fostering & adoption to Green Champions and work has started on the production of the Greenest Borough Strategy. Work is also about to start on the new Better Haringey Outdoor campaign of which the last campaign received a Bronze award at the recent LG Communications Reputation Awards 2008.

Translation and Interpreting: Market research is currently being done to evaluate the effectiveness of our current communications and to determine how our community prefers the Council to keep them informed. The results of this research will inform a Translation and Interpreting strategy.

CUSTOMER SERVICES

Performance: Customer Services achieved its performance targets for quarter 1 of 08/09. Quarter 2 performance, to date, has been equally strong with a projected positive end of year outturn.

	Target	Apr	May	June	July	Aug (MTD)	Year to date
Call Centre: Calls answered as a percentage of calls presented	90	95	96	96	90	95	94
Call Centre: Telephone answering in 30 seconds of all calls presented	70	82	87	84	68	79	80
Customer Services Centres: Personal callers seen within 15 minutes	70	75	78	83	83	86	80

IDEA – Customer Services Peer Review: The review was completed in June 2008. The final report will be presented to the Council at the end of August 2008. Officers will be reviewing the report during September and developing an action plan for consideration by Lead Members in October / November 2008.

PARTNERSHIPS - NEIGHBOURHOODS

Area Assemblies: are in their 5th year and are a well established and key component of democracy in the borough. Average attendance continues to increase with over 150 people attending some meetings. We will be holding three outdoor Assemblies in local parks in September in Couch End, Muswell Hill and Wood Green. These are being held at the weekend to appeal to a wider audience. From November the quarterly Area Assembly newsletters will be incorporated into Haringey People. This will ensure a significantly increased and locally targeted distribution to the whole of Haringey.

Making the Difference: is in its 5th year and provides funds of £50K for each neighbourhood. The short listed projects for each of the seven neighbourhoods have now been approved with residents confirming their priorities on the shortlist. Work is ongoing to deliver the projects.

Access to Services: In 2007- 2008 we delivered a series of three Access to Services events aimed at the Polish, Somali and Kurdish communities. Each

event worked closely with service providers and the targeted community to provide information and workshops around making better use of local services and rights and responsibilities. Over 700 people attended the three events. Neighbourhoods were invited to speak at the Front Office Shared Services (IDEA) Conference in May and showcased our Access to Services community empowerment initiatives. We plan to hold a further 9 events over 2008-09, involving a wider range of Haringey's communities including Turkish, Somali, Orthodox Jewish, Polish, Francophone, and Greek speaking elders. The first event is scheduled for October and is aimed at Greek speaking elders.

Green Lanes HMO Working Group and Myddleton Road Strategy Group:

Neighbourhoods co-ordinates the work of these two groups. Action plans for the two areas will be developed and implemented to address HMO issues. The work will be fully supported by Urban Environment. This work also feeds into Area Based Working – see below.

Area Based Working (ABW): Neighbourhoods co-ordinates ABW meetings with partners: Homes for Haringey, Urban Environment, and Safer Neighbourhood Teams. It focuses on targeted areas to improve operational performance and service delivery of environmental management and safer neighbourhoods. ABW is established in six of the seven neighbourhood areas.

Wicks Problem Solving Initiative – migrant workers – inter agency partnership working to address anti-social behaviour;

Muswell Hill Problem Solving Initiative – addressing anti-social behaviour associated with pubs and night club using an inter-agency approach to join up enforcement and licensing action.

CUSTOMER FOCUS

WOW! Awards: The WOW! Awards continue to be a great success. So far, council staff have received over 1800 nominations from our customers in recognition of the great customer service they received. This has resulted in 118 national awards – achieved in competition with the private sector - so this is especially commendable. One employee has collected an incredible 6 national awards and is a finalist in the WOW! of the year category of the National Customer Service Awards.

National Customer Service Awards: We are also finalists in another category. Our Bereavement Service is in the running for the Front-line Customer Service Team of the Year. These awards are open to all organisations but are dominated by the private sector, so getting through to the finals is a great result in itself. Results will be announced in September.

Institute of Customer Service qualifications: Following the 100% success of the pilot, a second programme is underway with 42 staff from a wide range of services taking part – ably supported by 42 volunteer coaches from within the organisation and Homes for Haringey.

Customer Charter: The Council's new Customer Charter was launched in May. It was put together by a group of front-line staff drawn from the Customer Focus Network. The Charter, which was endorsed by customers last year, is a list of pledges making clear what we can and cannot do for our customers and being equally clear with staff about what is expected of them.

COMPLAINTS AND MEMBER ENQUIRIES

Complaints: In 2007-08

- we had slightly fewer new complaints at stage 1 of our corporate procedure, and fewer of these complainants than previously progressed to stages 2 and 3
- we improved our performance in responding at both stage 1 and 2: at stage 1, we replied to 88% of complaints within our 10 working day timescale, ahead of our target of 80%, and at stage 2 we responded to 84% within the 25 working day timescale, against an 80% target.
- we improved our average completion time for stage 1 complaints from 10 to 9 working days
- customer satisfaction with our handling of stage 1 complaints increased by 5% to 51% [a high rating for complaints]
- we received one WOW nomination/compliment for every 1.8 complaints, compared with one for every 11.8 the previous year
- we continued our excellent response times to Ombudsman enquiries – the second best of all London boroughs.

For 2008-09, we increased our targets to 90% at stage 1 and 85% at stage 2. We are currently just below those levels but anticipate meeting the more demanding targets for the year overall.

Haringey Strategic Partnership: In July we introduced a complaints protocol for the HSP. This means we now have an agreed mechanism with our partners for dealing with complaints about all services, regardless of whether the responsibility lies with partners or the Council.

Members' enquiries: In 2007-08, we had slightly fewer enquiries than the previous year. Performance in replying within the 10 working day timescale increased from 84% to 88%, just below the 90% target. In 2008-09, we are currently just below the 90% target, but anticipate meeting the target for the year overall.

EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION

Community Cohesion Forum: After the launch of the Forum in March a further meeting was held in July. Following discussions at the July meeting, we are planning a conference addressing intergenerational issues in October.

Preventing Violent Extremism Delivery Fund: The Muslim women's project is continuing for 2008/09, funded by the Government Office for London. The project builds on work from last year by providing a programme of courses for Muslim women in Haringey, run by voluntary organisations. In June 2008

Secretary of State, Hazel Blears MP, visited one of our PVE projects, the JAN Trust, and is considering this as an example of a successful project engaging with Muslim women.

Equalities Events: We commemorated UNESCO International Day for Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition on 22 August at Bruce Castle Museum. We have a comprehensive programme of events for Black History Month in October about to go to press. We are already planning events to commemorate International Day Against Violence to Women (Nov), World Aids Day (Dec), Holocaust Memorial Day (Jan) and celebrate Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History Month (Feb) and International Women's Day (March).

Equality Standard for local Government (ESLG): The ESLG (2007) has been revised and there is now a requirement for an external assessment at Levels 3 and 5. We are aiming to be confirmed as level 3 & 4 by March 2009. To achieve level 3 & 4, the Council will need to go through peer challenge undertaken by another authority, and after that an external assessment by the IDeA. The process will involve interviewing councillors, managers and front line staff. The IDeA assessment is planned for January 2009. The Equalities & Diversity Team is working with services on preparing for this assessment.

VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Haringey's Compact - Compact Proofing: In partnership with HAVCO and the Haringey Compact Implementation Group we have developed a Compact Proofing Toolkit. The aim of the toolkit is to assess how well the Compact is working, to identify best practice, where we can improve the Compact and address any issues or challenges related to its use. It will also support the effective use of the Compact and raise understanding.

The HSP are piloting this tool in the review of the Area Based Grant and the development of the HSP Commissioning Framework. The BBC has asked the Council and HAVCO if they can pilot the toolkit in their work with young people. The Toolkit will be made widely available to all partners on completion of the pilots.

Funding Review of Infrastructure and Client Specific agencies: 21 voluntary agencies are in receipt of core grant funding and are in the last year of their 3 year funding agreement. An independent assessment process has been put in place to evaluate the success of these agencies over the last 3 years and to assess the value of continuing support for the next 3 years. Agencies will be measured against the impact and contribution they are able to make to LAA targets and the Sustainable Community Strategy.