

Meeting: Better Places Partnership Board**Date: 7th July 2010****Report Title: Overview and Scrutiny Work update****Report From: Cllr David Browne****Purpose**

To feed back to the Better Places Partnership Board on the review outcomes from 2009/10.

To update the Better Places Partnership Board on the draft work programme for 2010/11.

Background

Under the Local Government Act 2000 local authorities were required to set up an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This committee is able to scrutinise the decisions or actions taken by the Council or partner organisations or indeed, assess any matter that affects people living in Haringey.

In this context, the primary role of Overview and Scrutiny is to hold the Executive to account and to support the policy making function of the Council. As such, Overview and Scrutiny has a number of distinct roles to:

- review and challenge decisions taken by the Council and its partners
- investigate services or policy areas which are of interest or concern to people in Haringey
- make evidence based recommendations to help improve services provided by the Council and partner organisations.

In 2009/2010 Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee aligned themselves with the Theme Boards of the Haringey Strategic Partnership. The aim was to assist in building close working relationships between the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Haringey Strategic Partnership.

To help the Council and its partners achieve the objectives set out in the Local Area Agreement, members of Overview & Scrutiny have been aligned to the theme boards within the local strategic partnership. It is anticipated that this alignment will bring building close working relationship between the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the strategic partnership.

Specifically, this alignment between the Committee and the Board may help to:

- identify areas where it may be beneficial for scrutiny involvement

- achieve goals set by the local strategic partnership
- prevent duplication of work
- provide an independent and objective view of what needs to be done
- improve the quality of services provided to local people.

It is anticipated that improved liaison will ensure that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissions task and finish reviews that add value to the work of the Board.

Financial Implications

This report does not give rise to any immediate financial implications. However, it should be noted that where possible all scrutiny reviews undertaken will aim to provide a value for money assessment of the service/policy area under investigation.

Legal Implications

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has powers to scrutinise decisions taken in the discharge of the Council's "executive" and "non-executive" functions and to make reports and recommendations to Cabinet and Full Council. This includes making reports and recommendations on matters relating council and other partner services or other matters affecting the Borough or its inhabitants. The annual work programme for Overview and Scrutiny Committee is determined locally by non-executive members.

Recommendations

- That the Better Places Partnership Board notes the content of this report.

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1. Update from reviews completed in 2009/10

1.1 The Council has very ambitious targets to reduce carbon emissions: it has signed up to reduce carbon emissions by 40% by 2020. Transport is a significant cause of carbon emissions, therefore promoting more sustainable forms of transport (i.e. walking, cycling and public transport) can help to reduce local carbon emissions.

1.2 Councillors Beacham, Mallett (Chair), Santry and Weber completed a review of sustainable transport in 2009/10. The review assessed the ways in which car use could be reduced and other sustainable forms could be promoted, in particular:

- how barriers to cycling and walking could be removed

- the use of smarter travel initiatives (i.e. provision of travel advice and information, travel planning, car clubs) can encourage more use of sustainable transport
- how demand management techniques impact on sustainable travel (i.e. traffic calming).

1.3 To help develop its recommendations the review panel undertook a detailed investigation which involved:

- taking evidence from a wide range of transport/ travel organisations (e.g. Transport for London, Sustrans and other London boroughs)
- taking evidence from specialist transport advisor (University of Westminster)
- visits to two sustainable transport demonstration towns in Sutton and Peterborough
- survey of partners activities in developing sustainable travel
- engaging local community and travel groups (Haringey Cycling Campaign, Haringey Living Streets, Sustainable Haringey and Haringey Transport Forum).

1.4 The panel drew a number of conclusions from its work. The most prominent conclusion drawn from this work was that promoting sustainable transport and reducing car usage can help to meet a number of local policy objectives and produce widespread benefits for the local community, which include

- improved local air quality through a reduction in local emissions
- improved physical and mental well being through the use of more active forms of transport (walking and cycling)
- more attractive and enjoyable places to live by reducing local traffic congestion/ blight.

1.5 The panel made a number of recommendations (44 in total). Some of the key recommendations from the panel include:

- There is the potential for greater involvement and coordination across the HSP to help achieve sustainable travel objectives. For this purpose, the panel recommended that partnership sub-group be established to:
 - support the delivery of sustainable transport priorities
 - identify ways in which local agencies can work together.
- The Local Implementation Plan (2011) will be central to local transport plans for the future. The panel felt that it should be supported by a broad community consultation process and contain:
 - explicit targets for modal shift
 - a commitment to smarter travel measures
 - detail how inequalities in sustainable travel will be addressed.
- The panel noted that there was already good work being undertaken locally to promote sustainable travel. The clear lesson from other authorities however, is that a balanced programme of initiatives need to

be developed which is branded and actively promoted to the local community.

- The panel concluded that smarter travel initiatives presented the most cost effective way in promoting sustainable travel. In particular travel planning directed at trip generators such as schools, workplaces and leisure events should be developed more widely.
- The panel concluded that it was important to develop local measures to lock in the benefits of modal shift, to ensure that car usage does not increase. Here the panel suggested that the Council consider a wide range of options including a 20mph speed limit across residential areas and other traffic calming measures.

1.6 The scrutiny review report was agreed by the Overview & scrutiny Committee in March. The report was subsequently sent to Cabinet, where all but three of the recommendations were approved. The transport service will lead on implementation and report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee in 12-18 months on progress.

2. Overview and 2010/2011 work programme

2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is in the process of agreeing a work programme for 2010/2011. The Committee plans to carry out one 'Task and Finish' review linked to each of the theme boards within the local strategic partnership.

2.2 The Committee recently met informally to discuss topics proposed for review and to short-list two topics per theme board area. The reviews currently being considered linked to the Better Places Partnership Board include:

- Corporate carbon reduction (NI 185)
- Community transport

2.3 The Lead Scrutiny Member for the Better Places Partnership Board is due to meet with executive leads and relevant officers to further consider the above options (i.e. the benefits of scrutiny involvement). As this is an on-going process, the Lead Scrutiny Member will be able to give a verbal update on progress and other areas linked to the Better Places Partnership Board which will form part of the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2010/11.

2.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee expects to finalise and commission its work programme at the Committee meeting, due to be held on the 28th July 2010. A copy of this work programme will then be circulated to the board Members.