

## **Report of the Environment & Housing Scrutiny Panel 24<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

A summary of the draft minutes of the Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel are given below. This summary includes the main items of discussion and recommendations of the panel.

### **1. Terms of reference**

The panel **AGREED** that all scrutiny meetings should be webcast and that necessary adaptations should be made to appropriate committee rooms to enable future webcasting of scrutiny panel meetings.

### **2. Budget monitoring**

The panel noted the budget monitoring report. The panel noted the main budget pressures within Environment and Housing portfolio area included: housing repairs, the increased cost of landfill and a projected shortfall in income from parking.

The panel noted that that there would be additional and significant (but as yet unquantifiable) pressures within the housing budget resulting from the introduction of welfare reforms in 2013 (e.g. welfare cap and housing benefit changes.)

The panel **AGREED** that a Cabinet report on the impact of welfare reforms (due November 2012) should also be noted at a future meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The panel also **AGREED** that, once the scope for scrutiny involvement in this area has been agreed at Overview & Scrutiny Committee, it should be communicated to other members of the Council.

The panel **AGREED** that it would like to focus on 5 areas within the forthcoming budget scrutiny process (December 2012):

- Impact of Council savings (2013-2015)
- Impact of housing welfare reforms
- Other items (e.g. concessionary fares)
- Waste collection/disposal costs
- Existing (2012/2013) budget plans

It was **AGREED** that Finance Officer for Place & Sustainability would provide further budget information prior to the special budget meeting in the form of a short summary to the panel.

### **3. Waste and recycling**

A new waste and recycling service is being introduced in Haringey in 3 geographical phases during 2012. This new service includes the introduction of recycling wheelie bins (collected weekly), the fortnightly collection of residual waste, weekly collection of garden and food waste and free collection of bulky items.

#### *Terms of reference*

The panel **AGREED** the terms of reference for this project which in summary were: (1) to provide feedback that could assist the phase 3 roll out of the new service and (2) to identify how the Council could encourage more people to recycle.

#### *Panel Visits*

The panel reported back on the visits made to areas where the new waste and recycling service had been introduced (phase 1 and 2) and where this was planned (phase 3) which took place on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2012.

#### *Evidence to the panel*

At this meeting, the panel heard evidence from Single Front Line Service (Haringey Council), Private Sector Housing Improvement (Haringey Council) and Veolia (waste and recycling collection contractor).

The panel discussed a number of case studies in relation to the introduction of the new waste and recycling service, these related to properties without a front garden, in conservation areas, that were houses of multiple occupation (HMO) or where there was a proliferation of bins.

The panel noted that:

- the level engagement prior to implementation of the new waste and recycling service was higher in Haringey (property by property) than in other boroughs (street by street);
- Veolia doubled call centre staff to respond to the high volume of calls during Phase 2 of the roll out;
- Veolia would use pictorial flash and Language Line (a telephone translation system) to assist with resident engagement in Phase 3;
- bin proliferation on certain streets was unsightly and contributed to resident dissatisfaction;
- in Phase 2 roll-out to 44,000 households, there were approximately only 400-450 problem properties (of which 20% were HMOs);
- HMOs presented issues in relation to engagement, bin capacity (overflowing) and enforcement;
- opportunities to enforce compliance with waste and recycling service among HMOs would be extended upon the introduction of the licensing scheme (June 2013);
- application of the HMO licensing scheme would require a multi-disciplinary approach to ensure the collation and cross-reference of enforcement data across the council;
- to assist the final Phase 3 rollout additional call centre staff would be maintained, additional vehicles would be in operation and crews hours may be extended (Saturday);
- the introduction of five collection zones in Phase 3 would be more efficient and offer greater back up for crews, though this would necessitate a change in collection day for many households. This would be the first time that street collections would be arranged in clusters.

The panel **AGREED**:

- Single Front Line Service to include local ward councillors in engagement strategies ahead of the planned roll out.
- Local services should liaise to link enforcement data with HMOs in a pilot area (Harringay ward) for possible action under the HMO licensing scheme.
- Single Front Line would report back on preliminary work to integrate enforcement functions at a future meeting (January 8<sup>th</sup> 2013).

**Cllr McNamara**  
**Chair of Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel**

