

Minutes of the Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel 9th July 2013

Present: Cllr Alexander, Cllr Bloch, Cllr Bull, Cllr McNamara (Chair) and Cllr Weber

1. Apologies for absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Gibson and Cllr Stanton.

2. Declarations of interest

- 2.1 None.

3. Deputations

- 3.1 None

4. Minutes and actions points of last meeting

Decent Homes

- 4.1 The Decent Homes procurement process for 2013/14 was discussed at the previous meeting (16th April 2013). The critical issue for the panel was the designation of confidential information that makes such information exempt. The panel indicated that there should be greater clarity or guidelines in dealing with confidential information and this will be requested from legal services.
- 4.2 It was noted that a briefing had recently been distributed to all members of the Council outlining various aspects of the tendering process for Decent Homes 2013/14 including, what error had occurred in the tendering process and actions had been taken to mitigate the consequences of this, and, what works were planned for completion 2013/14 and how these varied under the new tendering process. To further clarify what works were planned, the panel requested that a list of all the planned works for 2013/14 by ward should be circulated. It was noted that delays to works were minimal and no funding was lost as a result.

Action: Planned works for Decent Homes 2013/14 by ward to be distributed to the panel.

- 4.3 Given the complexity of the issues involved, it was noted that the item has been referred to the main Overview & Scrutiny Committee. It was noted that the Chair of the Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel would meet with both the Chair and Vice Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee to agree how outstanding issues would be dealt with by scrutiny. If a further meeting was to be held by Overview & Scrutiny Committee to discuss panel members would be informed and could attend accordingly.

Action: That the Chair of OSC and the Chair of EHSP would write to Head of Legal Services on confidentiality rules for Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Panels.

Previous panel reports

- 4.4 It was noted that both reports that were produced at the end of 2012/13 municipal year were being considered by Cabinet for approval on the 9th July. The panel noted

that all the recommendations for both reports (Strategic Parking Issues for Tottenham and Recycling from Flats) had been provisionally agreed by Cabinet with the exception of two items:

- Strategic Parking Issues for Tottenham: the recommendation to ring fence income from the special match day parking would contravene regulations and could not be implemented due to transport funding being agreed borough wide and not in specific schemes.
- Recycling from Flats: the recommendation to commission Our Common Place pilot project through Waste Watch was not agreed as it was felt that this service could be provided by existing partners.

- 4.5 The panel noted that the reports contained recommendations that were both practical and evidence based, and agreed this approach should continue to guide future work of the panel. In addition, it was agreed that where appropriate, the panel should continue to seek external opinion in developing its recommendations through consulting with specialist agencies or other local authorities.

Action: That a template is developed for thanking external participants in the work of the Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel.

- 4.5 The minutes of the meeting of the 16th April were agreed by the panel.

5. Terms of reference

- 5.1 The Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel terms of reference were presented and noted by the panel. It was agreed that Cllr Bull would be added to the membership of the panel and that Whips would be notified.

Action: That Cllr Bull is added to the membership of the EHSP.

6. Work Programme

- 6.1 The panel discussed the work programme report which set out agreed work priorities to date and how these were being scheduled in to a forward plan for the panel.
- 6.2 In discussing the suggestions put forward by partner agencies, community groups and members of the public for the EHSP to look at in 2013/14, it was suggested that it would be helpful if these were sorted in categories (agreed, planned, no decision taken).

Action: That qualitative suggestions put forward for review by EHSP be re-categorised.

- 6.3 The panel agreed that an interim follow up report is brought to the next panel meeting on recommendations it made concerning the roll out of the new waste and recycling collection system. In particular, the panel requested that evidence be provided of how recommendations have been implemented particularly in relation to bin rationalisation issues and how concerns raised in case studies have been resolved. The panel requested that Veolia be invited to attend.

Action: Waste and recycling update (26th September 2013) on report approved by Cabinet in December 2012 – the panel requested that:

- (1) A representative from Veolia also attends (with SF) to discuss the follow up waste and recycling issues
- (2) A particular focus is given to a) bin rationalisation issues b) how cases studies have been *resolved*.

- 6.4 It was noted that in its advisory capacity, that the Waste Management Group received quarterly statistical updates. It was requested that further information is obtained about the status of this group and that if in continued operation, waste statistics be regularly circulated to the panel.

Action: Clarify the role of the Waste Management Group and to ascertain possible reporting of data to EHSP.

- 6.5 The panel noted that recommendations for the Strategic Issues for Parking in Tottenham report would be implemented. The panel requested that parking services be invited to attend a future panel meeting to provide a short update on this work as well as other broader work it is undertaking in the area (e.g. Tottenham CPZ consultation).

Action: Parking services invited to attend a future meeting to update the panel.

- 6.6 The panel noted that although savings proposals for 2013/14 had already been released in the July Cabinet papers, Budget Scrutiny was still planned to take place in December 2013. This will give the panel further time to plan those issues it wishes to scrutinise as part of this process. It was also noted that Zero Based Budgeting was being introduced across the council and that training for members on this process would be provided.

Action: Budget Scrutiny training and Zero Based Budget Training be organised for panel members ahead of Budget Scrutiny Process in 2013/14.

- 6.7 The panel noted that the Corporate Plan had recently been published and was being agreed by Cabinet. This was a two year plan for the Council, setting out key priorities and how these would be achieved. It was noted that this would be an important document for the EHSP not only in guiding future work plans but also in monitoring relevant areas of implementation.

Action: (1) Electronic copies of the Corporate Plan are emailed to members of the panel.

7. Integrated enforcement - scoping

- 7.1 The panel received a presentation of the proposed aims, outcomes, and work plan for the work on integrated enforcement. These are summarised below.
- 7.2 The aims of this review will be to:
- To investigate the coordination, consistency and effectiveness of enforcement functions across the Council;

- Assess public awareness of, and engagement with enforcement functions across the Council including clear criteria.

7.3 The work of the panel will be to:

- Conduct an audit of enforceable functions across the Council and its partners;
- Consult with specialist agencies and other local authorities to guide and inform policy and practice in Haringey;
- Assess local community perceptions of enforcement functions.

7.4 It is anticipated that the work of the panel will produce evidence and recommendations to:

- Support the development of an overarching enforcement policy or approach to enforcement across the Council;
- Establish criteria for enforceable actions (for example, fairness, proportionality, public safety, costs, public interest, when/ where enforcement can take place and by whom);
- Identify how enforcement functions can be supported to work together (e.g. IT systems, protocols, data sharing, partnership working);
- Ensure that there is an effective process for public involvement for enforcement processes (awareness, engagement and notification).

7.5 The panel agreed that there would be 5 stages for this work:

- Clarification of Council role in this area (Dir. A/D Environment)
- Survey of officers with enforcement functions - July /August. (Initial data gathering e.g. functions, enforceable actions, resources, data sharing, IT, proactive/active, perceived effectiveness).
- Evidence gathering sessions with officers managing enforcement functions - internal and local partners (September – November '13) Key themes:
 - Examples of effective coordination of enforcement action
 - Barriers to cross departmental working for enforcement
 - What actions could be taken by the Council to support more effective coordination of enforcement functions (e.g. data sharing, protocols, models of working etc)?
- Evidence gathering session with specialist agencies and other local authorities (November/December) - to identify best practice elsewhere.
- Public survey / evidence gathering session
 - How to improve awareness about what the Council will and will not enforce;
 - How are enforcement policies or approaches communicated to the public?
 - How can local people (residents, community groups) be encouraged to assist within enforcement role (e.g. reporting offences such as fly-tipping)?
 - How should enforcement successes be communicated to public?

7.6 A scoping report for the above will be produced for the next meeting of the EHSP in September 2013.

8.0 Community engagement with planning and licensing – scoping

8.1 The panel noted that Regulatory Committee are involved in the Development Management Improvement Programme throughout 2013/14. In work programming

consultations, it was noted that the EHSP could contribute to this process, particularly in relation to the policies and practice that other authorities have developed to support community engagement.

Planning

- 8.2 In respect of planning service, it was agreed that the panel involvement would aim to deliver the following outcomes:
- Provide an assessment of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which is a statutory requirement
 - Provide comparative assessments of other SCIs and other community engagement techniques within other authorities that may guide and inform policy and practice locally.
 - Contribute to the overall Development Management Improvement Programme
- 8.3 The panel discussed the work plan for this project and agreed the following outline for this:
- Panel meeting (Nov 2013)
 - Question Planning Officers
 - Assess Haringey Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
 - Assess SCI's from other LA (published)
 - Question Licensing Officer
 - Statement of Licensing from Haringey
 - Assess Statement of Licensing (Licensing Act 2003)
 - Evidence gathering (x2) (Jan/Feb 14)
 - Other LA's to share their experiences SCI's and community involvement (planning)
 - Other LA's to share community engagement with licensing processes
 - Public evidence gathering session – feedback on current engagement and consultation systems.
- 8.4 The panel discussed what local stakeholders were consulted upon (e.g. local policy development, service changes). It was not clear if there was a centralised list of local stakeholders (i.e. community groups, residents associations) or whether individual departments maintained their own discrete databases. The panel agreed that it would be helpful to ascertain ahead of the project.

Action: Community engagement – to ascertain how lists of community and residents groups are maintained and updated across the council, and to receive a list of local stakeholders.

Licensing

- 8.5 The format for the licensing side of this project would run concurrently with that agreed for planning services (above). With officers attending at the November meeting and external agencies consulted in early 2014.
- 8.6 A scoping report for the above project work would be produced and presented at the next meeting of the Environment and Housing Scrutiny panel (26th September 2013).

9. Registered Housing Providers – scoping

- 9.1 At previous panel discussions, it was agreed to assess the performance of Registered Housing Providers, particularly in relation to repairs and void turnarounds.
- 9.2 The panel indicated that it would like to survey local RHPs to support this work. Engagement with local RHPs though this work would also provide an opportunity to question RHPs in relation to the welfare changes, benefit entitlements and the potential impact this may have on local tenants.
- 9.3 As a precursor to this work, it the panel agreed to take an update from a previous scrutiny review which was completed in April 2012 (Cabinet response June 2012). This report prepared recommendations to support the council's preparations for the new regulatory framework for social housing and on improving partnerships, joint working and stock transfer (ownership and management) with and among local RHPs. It was agreed that the Chair and Cllr Alexander (who chaired this previous review) would meet with the Head of the Enablement Team to discuss progress on implementing the recommendations and to scope possible work in this area.

Action: That the Chair and Cllr Alexander meet with the Head of the Enablement team.

Action: That the Housing Enablement Service be invited to attend the EHSP in September to provide an update on recommendations from the previous scrutiny report on RHPs completed in 2012.

10. Date of next meeting

- 10.1 The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 26th September 2013.

11. Meeting closed

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.