

**Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel
Evidence Gathering Session – Strategic Enforcement
7th November 2013 (Haringey Civic Centre)**

Session 2

Present: Cllr Brabazon, Cllr Bull, Cllr McNamara (Chair) and Cllr Weber

Also in attendance: Mike Bagnall (ASBAT), Andy Briggs (Parks and Open Spaces), Bob McIver (Building Control) and Gary Weston (Highways and Parking Enforcement)

Key emerging issues (recommendations):

1. New technology is assisting the reporting and enforcement functions of the council with the development of the new reporting app. A range of enforcement issues can be reported from potholes, dumped rubbish, street lighting and street furniture. This is primarily a public reporting app, though there is the potential for other front staff to use this (though not with current Blackberry platform).
 - Recommended that this is supported by training to allow and enable staff to make the cultural change necessary to ensure the app is used to its potential.
2. Enforcement data mapping within the organisation, what data is held, where it is held, who has access to this. Such an exercise would help provide a framework for collaborative partnerships and may assist operational and strategic (intelligence) enforcement work.
3. To what extent are there data protection statements (or notification usage and sharing within the organisation) across all council documents (e.g. on forms, licences and applications etc). Would this support further data sharing across the organisation? Would help to notify public that we do share information where possible across the council? Standard information sharing statement / policy?
4. Parking Service is about to commence procurement for a new IT system as the current contract with Civica will expire in 2015. Therefore there is an opportunity to ensure that new system can integrate with other relevant enforcement or regulatory services which could help coordinate enforcement action. Coordinated enforcement and data sharing should figure within procurement?
5. Access to information was only the first step, there is an evident need to support this with appropriate officer training to use specific databases or software so as to ensure data viewed or extracted can be interpreted correctly and meaningfully.
6. There is a common theme of services not utilising current software or databases to their optimum capacity (e.g. M3), mainly as a result of staff training staff. The full capability and potential of existing software or IT is being fully utilised for the service it was designed, let alone for other services use for intelligence or information sharing.
7. There was a perception that the Council was risk averse in developing new technology or systems to support services. Whilst the need to deliver stable and secure systems was acknowledged, it was felt that more could be done to update

and renew existing technology. This being said, it was also acknowledged that in some fields (such as planning) software company's were not developing as many new systems and there were not many new systems coming on to the market.

8. Staff groups that have front line access to the community and local residents could be the 'eyes and ears' for a number of services to develop local intelligence and inform practice (e.g. carers). There are opportunities for selective and appropriate training of specific groups who could be made more aware of more aware of what to look for, record and report.
9. Parks are often presented as the 'crown jewels' of boroughs assets and worth preserving, yet are overlooked in enforcement issues. More concerted effort to link and recognise enforcement issues in parks is needed to reflect the status and value to the community in general.
10. Securing positive enforcement outcomes is problematic when involving people with mental health problems and a more supportive or holistic approach may be needed. How can Council enforcement services work with local MHT services to develop balanced but effective approach?
11. M3 database used for regulatory services, there are a number of issues around this particular database which is used for all of regulatory services:
 - Not enough use is being made of this database by existing regulatory services
 - it is clear that a number of services would benefit with access to this service
 - more training is needed for its use.

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Parking enforcement and highways

- 1.1 CEOs are currently equipped with analogue radios and although these are not digital (and multi channel), reporting of wider enforcement issues can still be supported through the current system. It is clear that parking envisages a role in using the APP to report issues and enabling CEOs to report and monitor other enforcement issues is practicable, though this should not detract from officer's core activity and that training and guidance is given to support this change.
- 1.2 There was some concern that the use of multiple front line officers to report enforcement issues may generate duplicate reports which may overload the system.
- 1.3 It was noted however, that in the experience of other Local Authorities, the development of joint reporting arrangements has brought improvement in job satisfaction for CEOs. Such an arrangement may also improve the public perception of CEOs role of community enforcement rather than solely parking enforcement.
- 1.4 Picture and location (GPS) facilities are available on the new APP, though it was clear from a traffic enforcement perspective, this could not be used as evidence to support any enforcement action as this is not part of the statutory base.
- 1.5 There is a good relationship between SNTs and local CEOs.

- 1.6 Legislation has recently changed to allow more extensive checking of Blue Badges used in the borough. This will allow Blue Badges issued in other boroughs to be inspected by local enforcement officers.
- 1.7 The parking service provides information to a number of other services and is broadly happy to do so long as the relevant AD line management is copied in to the request (to ensure that the information is being used for a work role).
- 1.8 There were questions about the practicability of enforcement of 8.30 to 6.30 CPZs across the borough and whether other hours such as 10.00-12.00 and 12.00-2.00 would offer a similar deterrent to commuters and be easier to police/ enforce. It was noted that the current hours 8.30 to 6.30 offer more effective use of enforcement officers.
- 1.9 The Parking service links with pan London and sub regional parking groups, London Councils and North London Parking Managers Group respectively.
- 1.10 Parking in parks and open spaces was highlighted as an area of recent collaboration between these two services. This had previously been operated by parks dept but through a service level agreement, enforcement and back office support (administration of penalties etc) is now provided through the parking service.
- 1.11 Parking on Homes for Haringey and other RSL estates was known to be an area of local contention in the management and enforcement of parking options. Haringey provides administrative support for the visitor permits.

Building Control

- 2.1 All information is stored on a (iLAP) Northgate software systems.
- 2.2 Building Control is a Responsible Authority and is routinely consulted on planning and licensing matters.
- 2.3 It would be useful to have access to Electoral Register and Council Tax records to assist in the identification of building owners. There was a perception that Data Protection was a barrier in the access to this information.
- 2.4 It was noted that whilst there was more dialogue between services nowadays (Council Tax, Planning etc.) these relationships were predominantly informal and centred on individual staff within the service.
- 2.5 There have been examples of where access to data would have improved response. A derelict house came to the attention of building control, however, access to land registry and council tax records would have shown that this was actually occupied by a 98 year old lady, who may have needed other support other than house repairs. More shared access to databases.
- 2.6 iLAP system is an old DOS based system which feels antiquated – also does not help the ability to integrate this system with other systems and databases.

- 2.7 It was felt the number of Haringey Council staff that visit homes locally and failure to record other data (such as state of house repair, safety issues etc) that there were real opportunities missed for improved working and enforcement. For example, carers go in to elderly peoples houses on a daily basis and could be the eyes and ears of Building Control (or indeed pte rented sector housing) to ensure that accommodation is safe.
- 2.8 Building Control does not have access to M3 - the regulatory services database. Access to this would help develop and extend service.

Parks and Open Spaces

- 3.1 Manage 152 green spaces ranging in size from Finsbury Park to small micro-green spaces across 6 zones and employs approximately 50 staff. 14 parks are locked overnight.
- 3.2 The public use parks in great numbers, in summer on a hot weekend, in excess of 8,000 can access the park in a day. The public are the main source of information for enforcement issues arising from parks.
- 3.3 There are three key enforcement issues for parks:
- Litter – over 600 bins are emptied daily or weekly by the parks service. There is lots of rubbish left at the end of the day in the summer. Enforcement is in operation as a visible deterrent.
 - Dog fouling - new Dog Control Orders are now being used
 - ASB – 225 crimes reported in the park, the perception is that there is a significant level of under reporting in local parks. 25% of all crimes reported relate to Finsbury Park.
- 3.4 Two enforcement issues that are of concern for parks and open spaces for which more coordinated enforcement or support is needed are:
- Rough sleepers - growing number using the park and there needs to be more coordinated support for such people to ensure that they are safe, well and getting appropriate support. The service will link up with A&H.
 - Encroachment – appropriation of land where property owners whose property backs on to parks or other council owned land. In parkland Walk there were 55 cases alone.
 - Responsibility for particular green spaces is not always clear in public perception , which can give rise to enforcement issues where problems occur (e.g. fly tipping, poor land management etc)
- 3.5 Parks are often presented as the ‘crown jewels’ of boroughs assets and worth preserving, yet are overlooked in enforcement issues. More concerted effort to link and recognise enforcement issues in parks is needed to reflect the status and value to the community in general.
- 3.6 The panel noted that the service operated in partnerships with local community groups, residents and local businesses for the maintenance and upkeep of certain green spaces e.g. Green Lanes Traders Association and hanging baskets, partnerships with schools and local older peoples groups (Elizabeth Place).

- 3.7 There was a concern that the Council was under valuing the use of the park for private hire, and these charges did not reflect the work needed to clear up afterward or the loss amenity by local residents. £130k was gained from letting our 28% of Finsbury Park for the Stone Roses gig, though parts of the park was out of usage for 10 days in summer when people most want to use it. Loss of amenity is more palatable if residents can see where income is being reinvested.

ASBAT

- 4.1 Although the volume of referrals has gone down, there has been a 6 fold increase in the number of higher level ASB reported (e.g. Violence, threats, hate crime etc).
- 4.2 Coordinated enforcement is central to ASBAT team operation as frequently numerous agencies are involved in finding solutions for ASBAT problems. It was noted that up to 10 agencies can be involved with working to find a resolution for some ASBAT cases.
- 4.3 ASBAT role is different in a number of ways, its role is to stop behaviour which is anti-social, and secondly there is a responsibility to the wider community rather than any individual eliminate the ASB. Enforcement action may not be the only remedy available to the team to secure behaviour change – joint working can also achieve similar outcomes
- 4.4 A particular challenge that the service has to face is engagement and response of mental health services. The MHT is part of the [partnership of local services that deals support coordinated action, but is less responsive than other agencies or timely in providing reports. It was noted however that this was not a Haringey specific problem.
- 4.5 ASBAT service Data is recorded on the Open housing Management System (OHMS) which is used by HfH, which accounts for 80%v of referrals.
- 4.6 ASBAT service does not have access to M3 the regulatory service, though it would be useful to have access to this database.
- 4.7 Registered Housing Providers have the same powers as the Council in respect of ASB. There is a local RSL ASB Forum (Community Safety) to help develop and share good practice. But perhaps more could be done to work with local tenancy officers (training) to support effective ASB action.