

Update for Overview and Scrutiny Committee – December 3 2007

Cllr George Meehan, Leader of the Council

Portfolio areas covered:

- **Communications: Media and Public Relations**
- **Partnerships (HSP)**
- **Performance**
- **Policy Team**
- **Legal Services**

Communications and Consultation Unit (CCU): Media and Public Relations

CCU's primary function is to inform residents and stakeholder groups about the policies and work of the council. It does so through the full range of media channels in support of every council service area.

The Media & PR Team provides information equally to all local media, both in terms of pro-active output and answering enquiries as quickly as possible. We continue to achieve a very high news release take-up rate (86% in the period January to May 2007), which reflects our focus on providing newsworthy stories.

The consultations service is going from strength to strength following the move to CCU. There are now some 127 consultations in the consultation management system and latest developments include the launch of online consultation. CCU is continuing to work closely with all business units to drive consultations to consistent best practice.

Following extensive consultation with residents we continue to improve the website. This has resulted in page impressions increasing by 18% compared to the same time last year.

CCU's marketing team continues to score very highly in customer satisfaction feedback (currently at 96%) by providing a wide range of useful and professional publications and other marketing materials. The recent short listing of the council A-Z for a prize in the Chartered Institute of Public Relations Excellence Awards is evidence of the quality of work in this area.

Partnerships : The Council working with Partners through the Haringey Strategic Partnership

The HSP

This year has been busy and demanding for the HSP. Following a detailed review, new structures have been put in place. There is now a small Performance Management Group to steer the work, and to ensure performance continues to improve so we deliver on our agreed targets in the current LAA. I have also pressed for more clarity in roles and responsibilities with the thematic boards and accountability by the Chairs.

Planning for the new LAA (2008/9 and beyond)

The Council and the HSP approved our new Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), covering the period from 2007 to 2016. This is built firmly on what residents and businesses told us in an extensive consultation across the borough. This new strategy sets out the 10 year vision for Haringey, and is the overarching plan driving the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and all other strategies.

Following the HSP approval of the strategy, the HSP awayday was held on June 29 at the Cypriot Centre. The main purpose of the event was to bring partners together to begin setting the key priorities which the Partnership would agree so as to meet the outcomes in the Community Strategy. This was a first and important step in planning for the new-style Local Area Agreement. (LAA) where the HSP will be working from 2008/9 to deliver outcomes against 35 key indicators which it can choose from a new national set.

The seminar was extremely well-attended and cross-agency and partner groups collectively identified the key priorities.

In September we held our opening negotiation with Government Office for London to begin discussing Haringey's new LAA which takes effect in 2008/9. The seminar and subsequent internal discussions meant that we were able to produce a first list for that meeting and maintain momentum on partnership working. GOL were very positive and since then we have begun the detailed work required for the new agreement.

In October the Government published the Comprehensive Spending Review and announced that there would be a new fund called Area-Based Grant. This draws together 39 disparate funding streams and removes the ringfences on funding. Linked to this shift is the publication of the new National Indicator Set – 198 indicators from a previous list of hundreds. We will be selecting our final 35 indicators from this list and they will be vital in shaping our new Haringey LAA and our key outcomes, projects and activities.

Because of our early start in June we are on-course in doing preparatory work for the new LAA which involves developing the 'story of place' setting out our key priorities and linking the indicators to these.

The LAA process is a real challenge for partnership working and is essentially a test of how agencies can pool their ideas and commitment to achieve the best outcomes for their communities. As both Accountable Body and 'first amongst equals' the Council's role and influence is critical in shaping joint priorities and outcomes.

The Local Government and Public Health Involvement Act reinforces this as it places a duty to work in partnership but is clear that the Council is the Lead Partner in this process, strengthening the Council in its partnership role..

We expect to hear the allocation of Area-Based Grant in early December. Meanwhile work is underway to begin shaping the new LAA.

The current LAA – 2007/8

In November 2007 we submitted our mid-year review and statement of grant usage (i.e spend) for the current LAA (2007/8). I am pleased to report that spend is on course and GOL has indicated they are pleased with our progress. To incentivise

joined up working, the current LAA includes both pump-priming grant and reward grants. The pump-priming funding of almost £1m has been received and it can be allocated over three years to support the work to deliver on our currently agreed stretch targets.

Corporate Performance Team

Mid Year Update 2007- Overview and Scrutiny 3rd December

Overall there has been significant improvement over the last three years in the majority of service areas. Haringey's performance information profile from the Audit Commission which measures progress against shared priorities, states that 81% of our performance indicators have improved in the last three years above the average for all single tier authorities.

A review of performance against the commitments made in our council plan showed good progress made against all priorities in the first 6 months of 2007/08. We are making very good progress on :

- **promoting independence** (all 15 indicators green or amber)
- **encouraging life-time well being** (93% or 13 indicators green or amber) and
- **delivering excellent services** (93% or 50 indicators green or amber).

Our latest performance report (September) shows that overall 90% of indicators in the basket are achieving or close to target and 83% have shown improvement on 2006/07.

There are a number of areas where performance has improved significantly in the first 6 months. Some examples include:

Cleanliness of our streets (as measured by BV199)

As at September 20% of our streets had unacceptable levels of litter bettering the 29% target and a 20 percentage point improvement from our position at the end of 2006/07.

Waste minimisation

Top quartile performance on kg of waste collected per head and improved recycling and composting at 24.3% on track to hit our 25% target for 2007/08

Street Lighting

Top quartile performance with an average 2 days to repair street light faults

Encouraging lifetime well-being

2007 results show :

- 57% of students gained 5 GCSE's at grades A*-C (6% improvement on 2006)
- including English and Maths figures has risen from 34% to 38%
- results for BME pupils are also improving with 54% achieving GCSE A*-C (up from 48% in 2006)
- Good progress on recorded and accredited outcomes for young people with 429 young people out of 649 achieving a recorded outcome and 393 achieving an accreditation.

Our combined results in English and Mathematics are amongst the most improved over the period 2004-2007 and we have continued to see a reduction in the number of schools with results below national floor targets.

Promoting independent living

Sustained good and improved performance in Adult and Community Services including waiting times for assessment, services for carers, items of equipment delivered in 7 days and older people helped to live at home.

Areas For Focus

Clearly there remain some areas of concern where further work is required. Some of these are as follows:

- **Graffiti**– challenging targets were set here but our 2006/07 outturn at 5% was close to top quartile performance for London. The service is working with the graffiti contractor who is carrying out pro-active graffiti removal in locations suffering the most from the problem.
- **Young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs)**- a review of this area is being undertaken and initial meetings with the relevant leads from each of the agencies involved have been set up as well as discussion with Lead Member for this Cllr Santry.
- **Number of residents on incapacity benefit helped into work** (LAA stretch target)- worklessness will be a key focus of our new Local Area Agreement and there is much work going on with Job Centre Plus to address this e.g. Northumberland Park project.
- **Average time for processing benefit claims**- dip in performance over the last 3 months, common following implementation of a major new IT System (Comino W2). Areas of delay have been identified and strategies are in place to address the dip in performance. Performance is expected to be back on track by December once the build up of claims has been cleared.
- **Call centre performance** – performance review carried out and service trialling new ways of working looking at how calls are processed
- **Sickness absence**- performance is above our 8.8 day target. This is being addressed particularly in the areas with the highest absence and levels are reducing. Performance remains in the second best quartile nationally.
- **7 week rent arrears**- . rent exercises are anticipated to have a positive affect on both the rent collection and arrears indicators by targeting resources on particular cases e.g. taking appropriate action on all cases owing between £200 and £500 and all cases with a possession order.

Corporate Policy Team

The Policy Team are:

- Continuing to arrange “Policy Conversation” events. Three events are now arranged between November and February.
- Preparing briefings such as the CSR briefing
- Setting up a cross council policy network

- Leading on the following projects and contributing to the following strategies:

Projects	Strategies
Strategic Audit	Greenest Borough Strategy
Borough Profile	Worklessness in Social Housing Review
Community Cohesion Review	Families at Risk review
User engagement and empowerment project	Community Safety Strategy
Innovation project (with OD)	Child poverty strategy
Behaviour change project	Housing Strategy

Legal Services

Introduction

This note is designed to summarise some achievements and issues in the financial year to date within Legal Services.

Achievements

Civil Litigation team - since April 2007 - have recovered £188,582.75 in commercial rent arrears, and £243,000 in residential / community care fees (as at 16th October 2007); assisted Homes for Haringey to achieve 2 star status by successfully obtaining unconditional dispensation from compliance with the consultation procedures in service charge cases in respect of approximately £200,000,000 of proposed works planned under the Decent Homes Standard.

Criminal Litigation team successfully resisted a challenge to enforcement action taken by Urban Environment in the 'Litvenenko case'; rolled out training for 80 Urban Environment enforcement officers on basic criminal procedure with a view to reducing Directorate spend on Legal Services.

Housing team produced a range of unit costs for routine work carried out for Homes for Haringey, to be implemented in the next financial year. The idea was hailed by Homes for Haringey as being "ahead of its time" in terms of practice elsewhere, and revealed "significantly cheaper" rates than other ALMOs / private solicitors approached to provide costings.

Anti-social Behaviour team successfully obtained injunctions to stop ASB by youths in and around the Selby Centre; obtained praise from a county court judge for important work the council was doing in tackling ASB.

Social Care team have in place a rolling programme of training for children & families social workers, planned and delivered by in-house lawyers, on the legal framework for care proceedings, planning and preventing delay, and preparation for court. Client feedback has been excellent. In addition one-off training for relevant social workers on other legal topics, as needed e.g. local authority services for people from abroad, general children law update, etc.

Employment Education and Corporate team produce a bi-monthly bulletin which is supported by a briefing session for clients. The numbers of personnel officers attending are uniformly high. The team have also expanded and developed a

training programme for personnel clients, including one session solely dealing with maternity rights.

Employment Education and Corporate team have boosted the engagement with schools by a successful seminar held for all secondary schools on pupil exclusions. This was well received and good feedback was obtained.

Employment Education and Corporate team recent casework includes a successful education judicial review case in the Court of Appeal undertaken for Park View Academy, which was widely reported. An employment case in the Employment Appeal Tribunal on the status of agency workers was also reported in employment law publications.

Contracts team have been advising on all aspects of the council's BSF programme including the Construction and ICT Procurement projects; negotiated, drafted and completed the contracts on the Heartlands Spine Road construction; involved in the negotiations and completion of the Decent Homes Strategic Alliances Agreement between the council, Homes for Haringey and the four preferred constructor partners; and completed the contract for the Oliver Tambo Memorial.

Private Sector Leasing team, this work was transferred to Legal Services in June 2007 with a backlog of more than 200 leases. By October the backlog has been reduced to less than 100 and the team hopes to conclude all the leases by the end of this year.

Right to Buy team have collected more than £45,000 in suspended rents which were required to be cleared before completion of the RTB sale providing unexpected receipts to the client. The sale of a commercial property, 9 Cavendish Road N4, was a particularly difficult freehold reversion sale which involved a claim from the buyer for adverse possession which had considerable financial implications for the council. The council originally acquired the property by way of compulsory purchase and the original owner had right of first refusal which they decided not to take up.

Projects lawyer has been involved in the Growth Area Funds Projects Board and the acquisition of land for the new Heartland School project; the Heartland Spine Road and the GLS site in Tottenham; the Funding Agreements for the refurbishment of Windsor Parade in Tottenham as part of the Bruce Grove Regeneration project funded by ERDF and Heritage Lottery Fund; the Development Agreement for the re-development of Tottenham Town Hall site; the negotiations with Sainsburys and Inner Circle on the re-development of Hornsey Depot; the empty properties initiative; the proposed Compulsory purchase of 115 Tower Gardens which has recently been the subject of press releases by the council and 80 Beaconsfield Road.

Planning team

Has a 100% success rate for completing major application section 106 Agreements within the statutory 13 week of receipt of planning application period. This contributes to the council successfully securing the Planning Administration Grant. Over the last year, the team has also had a 100% success rate for the dismissal of Planning and Enforcement appeals heard by way of Public Inquiry, the national average is 58%.

Planning team were closely involved in the negotiation and completion of the Hale Village (GLS site) section 106 Agreement. This entailed negotiations with the Lea Valley Estates, the developer and TfL.

Planning team ensured the smooth running and successful implementation of the Gambling Act 2005 by providing general advice on gambling and advising on the council's Statement of Gambling Policy.

Planning team have been assisting Urban Environment in the preparation of the Definitive Map and Statement which records all the public footpaths in the Borough following an extensive public consultation process.

Registrars

510 marriages ceremonies conducted from April to 31 October 2007

14 Civil Partnerships from April to 31 October 2007

1556 people attended Citizenship Ceremonies from April to 22 November 2007 which earned £68,128 income (payments received up to September 2007)

630 Nationality Checking Service checks from April to 22 November 2007 which earned £ 22,520 income

Two new services, Renewal of Vows and Baby Naming Ceremonies, were introduced in April 07.

Business Unit

Continuing to support the service with the new case management system, Visualfiles.

Features of the system include

Officers can access colleagues' cases and answer queries from clients without having to retrieve a physical file.

Real time recording

Additional notes against each time-recording enable admin to respond to more clients requests about charges without having to disturb the case officer.

Clients can receive more information regarding the work done on individual cases.