

Portfolio briefing for Environment and Conservation

Highways

The Highways service has had a number of key successes in the last 12 months, with the number of road traffic accidents in the borough drastically reduced and the service being awarded the most improved transport borough at last year's London Transport Awards. We have been awarded over £5.3m of funding from Transport for London for highways and road safety improvements over the next financial year – an increase of 28% on the current year's allocation.

Recruitment of engineers continues to be major issues. The Highways restructure that is to be presented to General Purposes in March outlines recommendations on how the service should be structured in order to meet the challenges and priorities of the Council and addressing the recruitment issue.

Following the 'Road to Improvement' consultation, which was the most successful consultation exercise ever undertaken in this borough, with over 3,500 replies. An additional £200k has already been allocated for a blitz on potholes over the coming months. A dedicated telephone hotline will be created to allow residents to report pothole issues in their area.

The Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) is due to be presented to Cabinet in March 2008, the HAMP will provide the basis for fully understanding what assets we have, and how best to manage and invest in them to maximise their value and life cycle. The HAMP will be taken into account in the new Highways programme that is also being reported to Cabinet in March.

The HAMP will also identify key issues for the Council, such as on flood prevention by renewing gully pots to address localised flooding issues. Haringey has problems with the capacity of the storm water drainage system to drain water to the public sewers as quickly as possible during flash flooding from intense rainfall. Such flooding is becoming a more frequent occurrence and predictions are that this will be a feature of climate change. A proposal on how to address these issues are to be included in the Highways works plan, which would involve targeted replacement of the worst sites followed by an on-going replacement programme.

£1.45m has been spent this financial year in replacing street lighting infrastructure, with a total of £7 million spent on replacing lighting columns since the modernisation programme began. This has resulted in the successful replacement of just under 50% of the stock that needed replacing. A further £9 million is required to complete the programme.

Work on the Spine Road project to open up the Haringey Heartlands area for regeneration is progressing, but is highly dependent on favourable weather conditions in order for the work to be completed by the end of March 2008.

We are also implementing one of the biggest ever programmes of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) in the borough. Bruce Grove, Fortis Green and Highgate Station Outer CPZs have already been delivered this year, with the Tottenham Hotspur Matchday CPZ, Bounds Green and Wood Green CPZs all due to be delivered by the end of this financial year.

Following consultation with local users a Rights of Way Improvement Plan is currently being developed which will outline the council's approach to improving Rights of Way over the next ten years. Consultation will take place on the plan between March and June 2008.

New legislation will continue to provide opportunities for the Highways service over the next twelve months. The Third London Local Authorities and Transport for London Bill 2007 will help us to reduce street clutter by enabling the council to attach street lights and signs to buildings. It will also allow us to claim compensation for damage to carriageways caused by developers, and give us powers to install charging points for electric vehicles.

Waste Management

The amount of waste being recycled by residents is continuing to increase. Year to date performance for the amount of household rubbish that is recycled is on target at 25%. The launch of new services for blocks of flats and the continuing expansion of the Mixed Recycling Service across the borough will enable more residents to conveniently recycle more materials every week, helping to boost this performance.

The Reuse and Recycling Centre on Hornsey High Street is due to close this summer as the site is redeveloped as part of the Haringey Heartlands project. Waste Management is working with Property Services to identify a replacement site but there is a risk that a suitable location will not be found and developed in time for a direct transfer of service which could impact on recycling performance and resident satisfaction scores. The Western Road recycling depot will also be relocated in the near future as part of the Heartlands project.

An additional litter picking service was introduced to five wards in summer 2007 to improve street cleanliness. A letter will be sent out to all residents in these wards before the end of January to find out their views on the service before it is rolled out to at least a further five wards in April 2008.

An action plan has been developed with key partners to improve the cleanliness of streets in the borough. The implementation of actions in the plan, aimed at improving the council's BV199a performance indicator for reducing levels of litter and detritus, is already bringing about improvements in monitoring scores. Levels of litter and detritus on Haringey's streets have fallen substantially over recent months, with internal monitoring showing that our year-to-date performance is better than our target of 29%.

The action plan is currently being extended to improve performance on the BV199b and c indicators for graffiti and fly posting. Work is being targeted on the land uses that suffer from the worst levels of graffiti, while officers are working with Accord to ensure that fly posting and the strapping that is often used to fix it to posts is removed.

In order to meet the council's priority of becoming one of London's Greenest boroughs the roles and responsibilities in the Waste Management team will be developed so we are best placed to achieve this challenge. £250k has been allocated for the establishment of a new Environmental Resources team that will provide leadership in the council for carbon management, climate change and environmental sustainability.

Contractual arrangements with Haringey Accord are due to be replaced by December 2009. One option is for this contract to form part of a Public Realm contract that would join up contractual arrangements throughout the Urban Environment directorate. A number of other options are being considered, an evaluation of which will be presented to Members in May 2008.

A new integrated contract will take into account the government's Waste Strategy which sets out the future of waste management, including the potential to expand commercial waste collection. It will also take into account the procurement process of a new waste disposal and treatment contract to begin in 2014, part of which includes an assessment of the number and type of waste management facilities to understand the needs of all councils in the group. Another factor that will be considered is the scrutiny review of Waste and Recycling which will report in March 2008.

Officers will continue to keep abreast of changes to the WEEE regulations which came into force in 2007 to ensure that the council meets its requirements and that we continue to work with the NLWA to ensure that the legislative requirements are adhered to by residents and electrical retail outlets.

We will also be evaluating the possibility of introducing a Community Toilet Scheme following pilot schemes in other London boroughs. The scheme encourages businesses to open up facilities on their premises for public use.

Parking

The Parking service has continued to play a key role in the achievement of the council's priorities over the past 12 months, as demonstrated by the implementation of emissions based charging for parking permits and its work with Highways to implement and enforce new Controlled Parking Zones.

The next year will see the service making more changes and improvements by looking at new legislation, likely changes in the market and innovations to make our team more effective, efficient and customer friendly.

The parking provisions in Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act come into force on 31st March 2008 which will bring about changes to the way in which Haringey Council enforces parking contraventions. The TMA is designed to ensure that there will be a consistent system of enforcement throughout the country, that it is transparent and professional, and public understanding of parking enforcement is improved.

The new legislation will bring about certain changes:

- A change in terminology, including for Parking Attendants who will now be known as Civil Enforcement Officers.
- In line with Haringey Council's recent change in parking policy, clamping has already ceased. Vehicles parked in parking bays will be subject to a 30 minute observation period prior to removal, except persistent evader vehicles which will be removed in 15 minutes. Vehicles parked on yellow lines or disabled bays will still be removed instantly.
- Penalty Charge Notices can be served by post if the vehicle is driven away and the CEO has started to issue the ticket.

- Office staff will run two legislative systems concurrently from 31st March while PCNs issued under the Road Traffic Act prior to that date continue to be processed through that process.

A key risk to the service over coming months that officers will be closely monitoring is that agreed cashable savings and service funding is not met due to changes in the statutory guidance and increased parking compliance reducing the number of PCNs issued.

The service is currently in discussions with Haringey Primary Care Trust about the use of Occupational Therapists for the assessment of Freedom Passes & Blue Badge applications. The current arrangement with General Practitioners is producing assessments that are inconsistent and of variable quality. The use of Occupational Therapists will ensure that passes are issued fairly and consistently and allow expenditure to be more effectively managed and potential savings to be realised. A report will be submitted to the Cabinet in Spring 2007 should the PCT agree to our initial proposals.

Over the next year the service will be investing in cashless parking and paperless permits. This will address not only the Council priority of being one of the Greenest Boroughs but also improve customer service. Cashless parking will enable motorists to pay by mobile phone instead of inserting coins into a pay and display machine. Users will also have the option to receive reminder texts to remind them when their parking session is about to end, and also to top up from wherever they are and not have to return to their car.

Paperless permits will provide customers with easier access to the service by making it easier to apply for and renew their permits. Customers will no longer have wait to receive their paper permits through the post and parking attendants will be able to access secure, up-to-date information on their handhelds about the status of each permit.

Streetscene contractual arrangements

Several key contracts are due to expire over the next couple of years. Arrangements with Haringey Accord are due to be replaced by December 2009, while the Highways contractual arrangements with Crowley and EDF Energy are due to be replaced by March 2009. The Nuisance Vehicle contract will also be re-tendered before the current contract ends in March 2009. The Urban Environment directorate will be looking to take a more joined-up and strategic approach to the commissioning of services over the coming months and years. New contractual arrangements will be re-commissioned to secure continuous service improvement and value for money and to secure inward investment in these critical customer services.