

Report for: Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel - 12 October 2017

Item number:

Title: Review on Street Sweeping; Conclusions and Recommendations

Report

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Ward(s) affected: N/A

Report for Key/

Non Key Decision: N/A

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the main issues and evidence received by the Panel, with the aim of assisting Members in the reaching of conclusions and making of recommendations.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

N/A

3. Recommendations

That the Panel consider conclusions and recommendations for the review for inclusion in the final report for approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1 The Panel have been undertaking a review on street sweeping within the borough and have completed their receipt of evidence. Consideration therefore needs to be given to conclusions and recommendations for approval by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and referral to Cabinet.

5. Alternative options considered

- 5.1 The Panel could choose not to make conclusions or recommendations based on the work that it has undertaken but this would result in the review not delivering any outcomes.

6. Report

- 6.1 At its meeting on 27 March, the Council's Overview and Scrutiny agreed that its Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel would be asked to undertake a short in-depth review on the issue of residential street sweeping. This would include consideration of the following issues:
- Relevant performance data from Haringey, including resident satisfaction levels;
 - Volumes of rubbish collected in different parts of the borough;
 - Service models used by other boroughs and comparative performance levels; and
 - Housing estates and the work undertaken by Homes for Haringey; and
 - The outcome of the Team Noel Park pilot.

Terms of Reference

- 6.2 It was agreed that the terms of reference would be as follows:

“To consider and make recommendations on, within the current level of costs, the options available to improve the cleanliness of residential streets across the borough in order to achieve greater level of equality of outcome.”

Sources of Evidence:

- 6.3 Sources of evidence were:
- Performance data, including resident satisfaction levels;
 - Interviews with key officers, stakeholders and resident groups; and
 - Information and data from other London boroughs, particularly those using different models of service.

Introduction

- 6.4 The review was set up in response to concerns that were raised by some Members of the Council regarding the consistency of cleanliness across the borough following the reduction in the frequency that residential streets were swept from twice to once per week in January 2016.
- 6.5 The changes arose from the need to save £70 million from the Council's budget for 2015-2018. Proposals on how this might be achieved were outlined in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and included a cut of £2.8 million in the Integrated Waste Management Contract. The total value of the Integrated Management Contract with Veolia was £16.9m and this included £10.2 million for street cleansing.

- 6.6 The final decision to make changes to the service was taken in December 2015. Alternative options were considered and included the option of adopting a combination of litter picking and sweeping based on need. However, it was agreed to continue to have a standardised borough wide schedule but reduced to once per week, delivered over five days, for residential streets. This reduced frequency included Homes for Haringey property but did not include any reduction in frequency to town centres or main roads. It was envisaged that this would save £860,000.
- 6.7 This option was chosen as it was considered that it provided a consistent approach, with the same service being provided for all wards. It was also simple to explain and provided an equal opportunity for all residents to prevent litter. It was nevertheless acknowledged that there was a risk of reduced cleanliness as well as not meeting the Council's target of being in the top quartile for performance in London.

Performance

- 6.8 Street cleansing performance is measured using the strategic performance indicator and former national indicator NI195 for litter, detritus, graffiti, and flyposting. NI195 scores are derived through randomly monitoring different areas across the borough in three tranches per year. The rationale for a random sample is that it represents what a resident may expect to see. Not every ward will be included in every tranche of monitoring.
- 6.9 Each area is graded from A to D. Grade A means that an area has no issues whilst the worst affected areas will receive a Grade D. Grade B-minus is a part-fail and anything Grade C or lower is a fail. The NI195 figure is the percentage of roads sampled that have failed and poor cleansing standards are reflected by a higher NI195 score. NI 195 data will not show consistency of cleanliness nor necessarily be reflective of every area of the borough. It may also fluctuate due to which wards are randomly selected for each tranche. It nevertheless provides a general snapshot of borough wide performance.
- 6.10 Overall standards for litter and detritus remained high in both 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 (see Appendices 1 and 2) and stayed below the upper limit specified within the waste contract with Veolia. However, there was a spike in performance immediately following the implementation of the changes and a slight decrease in overall performance in the last year. The spike mainly affected the more challenging wards of the borough. Litter was 5% for both 2015-2016, compared to a contractual target of 7%. Detritus was also 5%, compared to a contractual target of 11%. The first tranche of monitoring for 2017-18 has now taken place. The results are still being challenged and verified so it is not yet possible to draw conclusions about overall performance at this point.
- 6.11 There was a gradual increase in resident satisfaction with street cleansing from 44% in 2005 to 75% in 2015 but a decrease in 2016 to 62%. Despite the drop, this is nevertheless the second highest figure ever recorded. Litter nevertheless continues to be a major concern among Haringey residents and was considered to be one of the biggest local issues by 51% in 2016, 43% in 2015, and 28% in 2012/13. Such levels are to be expected and common to most local authorities.

67% of residents agreed public services were making the area cleaner and greener in 2016, compared to 70% in 2015.

Consistency

- 6.12 Notwithstanding the good overall standards, there are clear differences in cleanliness between different areas of the borough and the Panel noted the view of Andrew Reidy from Veolia that certain areas of the borough are not up to standard.
- 6.13 Further analysis was undertaken for the review on the variation between areas. The monitoring was limited as not every ward and every land type is monitored on every occasion but it nevertheless allowed comparison to be made between ward performance:
- Every ward has on at least one occasion since 2015/16 achieved a pass grade (i.e. Grade B+ or Grade B);
 - At least 12 wards have not achieved a Grade A for litter and 4 wards for detritus;
 - Most wards have received part fails for litter and detritus; and
 - 8 wards have not received a complete fail for litter and 7 wards for detritus.
- 6.14 Some wards are cleaner than others and remain clean for longer. Alexandra was the cleanest ward surveyed and poorer cleanliness scores are evident in Northumberland Park. Standards in some wards vary from year to year, for example Highgate and Crouch End, and some wards also show consistent mixed standards, for example Northumberland Park and Woodside. Not all wards were surveyed. The quality of ward performance data depends on the number of visits that have been taken and a higher number of monitoring visits provides more robust data.
- 6.15 Performance on detritus showed a similar picture to litter. There was a 5% score in 2015/16 and 3% score in 2016/17 against a contract target of 11%. However, as was the case with litter, there was clear variation in standards between wards:
- A grade A had never been scored in 4 of the 19 wards;
 - All 19 wards had achieved grades B+ and B during the time period;
 - Only one ward had never been graded with a part-fail (B-);
 - A complete fail grade (grade C, C-, D, D-) had not been awarded to 7 of the 19 wards; and
 - Only one ward had been awarded a grade D or below.
- 6.16 The Panel felt that performance data appeared to be strongly influenced by when streets were inspected. It noted that 70% of inspections were not on the day that sweeping took place. Streets are unlikely to remain at Grade A for long but Grade B is still likely to look acceptable. Andrew Reidy from Veolia felt that what needed to be monitored was how long it took streets to deteriorate to the extent that they needed sweeping again but producing better data is likely to have resource implications. Veolia also do their own monitoring and this could be added in. In addition, Keep Britain Tidy have been commissioned to undertake some monitoring.

6.17 The Panel noted that It was noted that, under the previous system where all streets were swept twice per week, some were being cleaned when there was no need. In such areas, the reduction in frequency had made very little difference.

Lessons Learnt from Homes for Haringey and Team Noel Park Pilot

6.18 Homes for Haringey accounts for approximately 20% of the borough housing stock. Tenants receive an estate cleaning service via Veolia through the Council's integrated waste management contract. When the change to a weekly sweep was introduced, Homes for Haringey also agreed to change its sweep frequency in line with the wider contract.

6.19 Homes for Haringey undertake monitoring that is similar to the NI195 regime and which also offers tenant satisfaction feedback. It also has well established tenant engagement and feedback mechanisms. The introduction of the changes coincided with a notable decrease in satisfaction levels. Homes for Haringey put in extra services to increase the sweep frequency in response to this. Following the reversion to twice weekly sweeps, tenant satisfaction levels recovered and estates have now been scored at 99.4% for litter and 100% for sweeping in recent monthly reports. The reversion by Homes for Haringey had had no impact on the achievement of savings by the Council.

6.20 The Team Noel Park pilot had been set up with the aim of making Noel Park a cleaner and safer place and increasing satisfaction and pride in the area. Although success had been achieved through residents being more engaged and having increased pride in the area, street cleansing/fly-tipping issues were even more entrenched and there were lower levels of satisfaction at the end of the pilot than at the start. It had been learnt that behaviour change took time and could not be achieved in a year.

6.21 The pilot also sought to strengthen community capacity and ownership of issues. The Panel noted that the project had demonstrated that behaviour change took time. It nevertheless had yielded some benefits. Stronger community links had been developed and resident satisfaction and engagement had increased. However, Noel Park still remained one of the areas of the borough with the greatest challenges around street cleansing and, in particular, fly-tipping.

6.22 The Panel noted that it is clear from the different experience of Homes for Haringey tenants that greater investment can bring better results. The Noel Park pilot shows that some of the issues and behaviours around fly-tipping are entrenched and require longer term strategies. This is particularly challenging where there is a high turnover in tenancies.

Practice in Other London Boroughs

6.23 A survey of London boroughs undertaken for the review showed that:

- 13 boroughs run a "flat" schedule of sweeps across their borough, where all street are cleaned a set number of times;
- 8 boroughs run a 'needs' based service, with the frequency of sweeps ranging from weekly to 12 weekly, according to need;

- 3 maintain to a minimum grade standard This system included frequent inspections e.g. weekly. There is frequent litter picking and cleansing frequency was based on need; and
- Two run a high frequency - near daily – sweep (Westminster and the City of London).

6.24 Individual borough performance data is no longer readily available as not all boroughs still use the NI195 measure. This means that it is not possible to monitor performance against the Council's target to be in the top quartile for London by 2018. Performance can also be affected by a range of factors in addition to frequency such as housing density and planning use type so it is difficult to compare the performance achieved by the different models.

6.25 The bench-marking exercise showed that boroughs which operated the 'needs' based model supported this with additional litter picks and regular inspections of all areas in order to maintain standards. Brent operates a needs based system which stated that no area should fall below Grade B-. There was still a schedule but this was based on footfall. However, it meant that some areas were being swept once every four weeks whilst others were swept three times per week. It effectively meant that areas in which people littered more got a better service.

Keep Britain Tidy

6.26 The Panel received evidence from Jonathan Gibbon from Keep Britain Tidy (KBT), who are currently working in the borough to assist with the monitoring of performance on litter, particularly in respect of NI 195. KBT had a number of aims, including reducing littering, improving local places and preventing waste.

6.27 KBT was involved in the development of the NI195 methodologies with DEFRA and had run the Local Environmental Quality Survey of England on its behalf from 2001-2015. They have now entered into a partnership with Haringey to monitor performance based on NI195. The partnership has provided the added benefit of giving Haringey access to the KBT network of authorities, where it is possible to share best practice and experience.

6.28 Mr Gibbon stated that, up to a point, more frequent cleansing generally leads to higher standards of cleanliness. With reductions in funding though, it was a challenge to allocate limited resources to the right areas. The use of mechanical sweepers was one option that could be effective but they could be less effective in areas where there were a large number of obstructions. It was important to ensure that frequency of cleansing was correct and a flexible approach could assist with this.

6.29 He outlined the experience of a number of local authorities who were members of KBT's network and had adopted a flexible approach to cleansing;

- Pendle operate on set routes but allow operatives to judge for themselves whether individual streets required sweeping. They had found that litter that was clearly evident was removed but operatives failed to sweep streets which did not have much litter. This had resulted in an increase in detritus and weed growth. In response to this, Pendle had changed the frequency of sweeps to concentrate on areas of need. They had described their experience of moving to a flexible approach as mixed.

- Camden had adopted a more flexible approach to cleansing under their new contract with Veolia. Operatives followed a schedule but were now allowed to move past a street if it appeared to be clean. There was a tendency for operatives to stick to schedule and the new policy had not yet been fully implemented. Camden felt that it was too early to judge the effectiveness of their new approach.
- Ashfield had combined street cleansing and grounds maintenance. They had upskilled operatives and created area-based teams to do what needed to be done rather than just following route sheets. Some staff had taken to this very well and had built good links with community and in-depth knowledge of their area. However, other staff had required more direction. Ashfield had judged the changes to be generally successful. The new approach had started in 2011 and was still in operation.
- Manchester used a flexible approach in residential areas. This had allowed them to cover cleansing across the city with limited resources. They had reported no issues with resident perception to date and were happy to talk to any other authorities considering this approach.
- Stockport carried out mechanical sweeping and litter bin rounds at night. Streets were no longer cleaned merely so that the public could see someone cleaning them. They worked mainly to a 14 day scheduled service (7 days in some places) and teams attended to areas that needed cleaning. They felt that this allowed them to use limited resources as well as possible. NI195 monitoring had been retained and there was a target of 12% for litter and detritus. Mr Gibbon commented that this target was relatively unambitious. Resident perception had not yet been measured but there had been no mention of complaints so it appeared that the changes had been successful.

6.30 In summary, Mr Gibbon stated that flexible approaches still require a schedule and there is a need to offer some direction to staff. It was important when visually assessing the street for all issues to be considered e.g. detritus and weeds, and not just litter. There also appeared to be a need to consider the frequency of cleansing in each area as well as flexibility. Consideration could also be given as to whether to adopt a flexible approach in retail areas as well as residential. There was a tendency to revert to schedules amongst authorities who had switched to flexible systems. A number of other authorities were considering making similar changes. A more flexible approach required strong leadership and a response to residents that adjusted their expectations.

6.31 Mr Gibbon referred to a piece of research that had been undertaken on “beacons of litter”. There were prominent pieces of litter with well known brand names. It had been found that if just these were picked up, other littering was reduced.

6.32 Panel Members commented that a decline in complaints could be indicative of a lack of faith in the effectiveness of complaining rather than higher levels of satisfaction. Mr Gibbon stated that KBT would recommend engagement with residents. KBT also recommended a level of flexibility in approach. This was reliant on knowledge of hotspots and an understanding of where need was the greatest. The authorities that had tried such approaches had been generally positive about their experience to date.

Feedback from Resident Organisations

- 6.33 The Panel heard from representatives of resident associations. One had been involved in the Team Noel Park pilot project. The primary focus of this had been on fly tipping but he had hoped that it would also lead to greater co-operation between grounds maintenance and street sweeping. He was of the view that a model similar to that used in Ashfield would suit Haringey best as it was based on conferring with residents and involved an unscheduled approach. He could recognise the issues underlying the “beacon litter” theory. The condition of the pavements in Noel Park made street sweeping difficult. He did not feel that a lack of complaints was a useful performance indicator as the majority of residents were unlikely to report poor sweeping on-line. Some areas of the borough were remarkably clean though.
- 6.34 Another representative stated that she felt that Hornsey was very clean but there were others who were of the view that it was very dirty. It was likely that some parts of the borough needed sweeping more than others. In particular, wards in the east of the borough were more densely populated, had more young people and also had more people who were new to the borough. The frequency of street sweeping did not necessarily need to be completely fixed.
- 6.35 The Panel noted that there had been an “environmental champions” scheme within the borough but this had fizzled out. It had nevertheless been a worthwhile scheme and would be worth re-visiting. A resident representative commented there were already groups in existence that could be used to promote cleanliness, such a neighbourhood watch and resident associations. Engagement and information sharing could make a difference as attention could be drawn to problems at an early stage. Mr Gibbon reported that environmental champion schemes could be effective. Lambeth had a scheme called Community Freshview, which involved residents in improving the local environment by tidying and brightening up the area. This included installing planter boxes where fly tipping had taken place.
- 6.36 Resident representatives felt that access to information regarding littering would help to motivate residents to address the issues. The Panel noted that a range of performance information, including some relating to littering, was available on the Council’s website. In the first instance, performance information was discussed with Veolia, the Council’s contractor. In respect of beacon litter, Mr Gibbon reported that work was being undertaken by KBT with major fast food outlets, such as Subway and McDonalds.

Association of London Cleansing Officers

- 6.37 The Panel received evidence from Stephen Didsbury, the Head of Waste and Public Protection at the London Borough of Bexley and secretary of the Association of London Cleansing Officers.
- 6.38 He provided a case study of the approach followed by the London Borough of Bexley but stated that this would not necessarily be effective in Haringey. Bexley had been required to make similar savings to those made by other local authorities due to cuts in government funding and these had made changes to

their cleansing services necessary. Mitigations had been introduced in order to reduce their impact.

- 6.39 Bexley was a fairly densely populated area, with a population of around 250,000 and approximately 100,000 households. It was a unitary authority and responsible for both the collection of waste and its disposal which differed from the position in Haringey, where there was the North London Waste Authority.
- 6.40 A lot of litter was generated by shopping centres and therefore close attention was given to them. The main shopping streets were cleaned daily before 8:00 a.m. and, in addition, particular attention was also given to the first 100 metres of residential roads leading off these. If litter could be contained within these areas, other residential streets could be cleaned less frequently. The Panel noted that the first 50 metres of side roads off of main shopping streets received similar attention in Haringey.
- 6.41 The budget for the service was just below £3 million. Roughly one third of this was spent on shopping centres. There was an emergency response team to respond when cleansing was required urgently. Residential streets were swept every three weeks but consideration is now being given to a more frequent service as some streets were beginning to look dirty just before they were due to be cleaned again. There had also been reduced frequency in grass cutting but it had been found that litter was getting stuck in the longer grass so this change had been suspended.
- 6.42 Littering was a criminal offence and therefore needed to be treated as one. As part of Bexley's current enforcement policy, Kingdom had been commissioned and had now issued over 4000 Fixed Penalty Notices since October 2016. There was a payment rate of approximately 75%. There has also been over 150 successful prosecutions, with £50,000 of fines and costs. It was likely that the amount raised by fines would diminish in time as awareness of the enforcement action spread.
- 6.43 Mechanical sweepers are now heavily used and these tend to do a better job than manual sweeping. They produced straight edges, which looked cleaner. 75% of cleansing staff were now drivers. This approach contrasted with neighbouring Greenwich, who had three times as many staff but no equipment. Such an approach would not necessarily work in Haringey. Heavier mechanical sweepers could not be used where pavements were uneven.
- 6.44 The borough had also introduced Community Litter Picking, which aimed to bring community resources to help address litter. As part of this, groups of residents had assisted with litter picking. This had been used mostly in areas used for recreation and on grass verges. It was thought that people were less likely to litter if they could see their neighbours assisting in keeping the neighbourhood clean.
- 6.45 There was a programme in schools to promote recycling and this had been extended to include littering. The schools programme had started in June 2017. In first 6 weeks, there had been the following as part of this:
- 22 Litter picking activity sessions, with the litter collected sorted into waste and recycling to help the recycling message; and

- 17 Litter school assemblies, with over 3000 schoolchildren reached and littering messages taken back to parents.

- 6.46 In answer to a question, Mr Didsbury commented that the three weekly frequency of residential street sweeping generally worked well although streets to the north of the borough tended to look a bit dirty towards then end of the period. There were two litter patrols though and these visited some roads half way through the period. There were also two mobile response teams to deal with emergencies. A lower level of frequency had been considered but it was felt that this might cause problems. Whilst it seemed to work in Bexley, he felt that only sweeping every three weeks would probably not work in Haringey due to its greater density. In answer to another question, he stated that NI 195 monitoring was no longer undertaken by Bexley. However, complaint levels were monitored and the number of these that related to street sweeping had dropped by 20%.
- 6.47 Mr Didsbury commented that the cleaning that was undertaken was very intense and streets therefore took longer to deteriorate. At one stage, intermediate litter picking had been removed but this had not been successful. There had recently been a change of leadership within the Council and a change of philosophy and street cleansing was now assuming a higher level of priority.
- 6.48 The Panel noted that Haringey had commissioned an education and outreach function from Veolia but this had been scaled back due to the need to make savings. Education was effective but it could take time before the benefits were realised. Technology could now be used to get the message through. The Council was keen to maintain the outreach function and this would be discussed with Veolia. It was noted that needs or outcome based models could bring flexibility but required a robust level of monitoring. However, both flat schedule and needs or outcome based models tended to be hybrids of each in practice.
- 6.49 Panel Members felt that each system had its advantages and disadvantages but that a greater element of flexibility needed to be built into the contract. It was clear that some roads needed more cleaning than others and this needed to be recognised. It was felt that the switch from weekly to fortnightly cleaning had not worked in all areas of the borough. It was noted that the frequency of street sweeping could be set to whatever level it was felt was appropriate. It was also noted that officers would welcome greater flexibility. Haringey also had a mobile response team to deal with any emergencies although this was not as developed as Bexley's. It was likely that a flexible system could be structured so that there was also a minimum level of sweeps per week.
- 6.50 It was noted that officers would also be interested in providing a more mechanised service. However, Haringey's streets were different to Bexley and a significant number would not be suited to mechanical cleansing due to their condition. Panel Members felt a flexible approach should be recommended and that this should be underpinned by minimum standards. It was agreed that final recommendations would be made following the Panel's visit to Camden.

7. Contribution to Strategic Outcomes

- 7.1 Priority 3 - A clean, well maintained and safe borough where people are proud to live and work;
- Objective 2: To make our streets, parks and estates, clean, well maintained and safe.

8. Statutory Officers Comments

Finance

- 8.1 Provided any recommendations arising from the review are consistent with its terms of reference and therefore based on the current levels of cost for the service, there should not be any direct financial implications.

Legal

- 8.2 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations.

Equality

- 8.3 The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

- 8.4 The three parts of the duty applies to the following protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy/maternity; race; religion/faith; sex and sexual orientation. In addition, marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.

- 8.5 The Panel should ensure that it addresses these duties by considering them during final scoping, evidence gathering and final reporting. This should include considering and clearly stating: How policy issues impact on different groups within the community, particularly those that share the nine protected characteristics; Whether the impact on particular groups is fair and proportionate; Whether there is equality of access to service and fair representation of all groups within Haringey; Whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people, are being realised.

- 8.6 The Panel should ensure that equalities comments are based on evidence, when possible. Wherever possible this should include demographic and service level data and evidence of residents/service-users views gathered through consultation

9. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1: Street cleansing performance between 2015/16 to present.

Appendix 2: Performance by Ward for Litter and Detritus

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985