

## Performance and Finance Select Committee – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2008

### Audit Commission Inspection of Waste Management Service

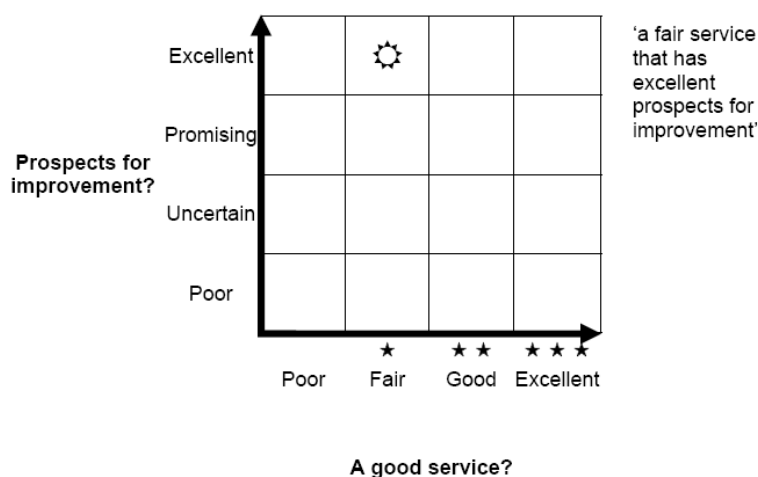
#### SUMMARY:

The purpose of this Report is to inform the Policy Co-ordination Group (PCG) of the outcome of the Waste Management Inspection.

#### Introduction

The Audit Commission inspected the Council's waste services and sustainability strategy in December 2007.

Our rating is "Fair Service with Excellent Prospects for Improvement", with five recommendations for improvement.



At a post-Inspection meeting with the Audit Commission Inspectors, Brent officers challenged the reason why it was rated only a one-star "Fair" service despite the Inspection Report recognised significant improvements during the inspection.

A major factor in determining the service to be one-star was that the Audit Commission needed to be able to compare BVPIs across other authorities. Whilst Brent were able to provide robust performance information that demonstrated significant improvement since the start of the Waste Services Contract on 1 April 2007, it was too soon to have comparative information from other authorities, and thus it was not possible to compare our rate of improvement with others.

This paper presents the key recommendations, with suggested owners at senior management level to oversee improvement work. Recommendation 3 suggests that

the Director of Finance & Corporate Resources is the 'owner' as that person is responsible for Facilities Management who are key to extending internal recycling facilities to all Council buildings.

The end of the paper also gives a summary of current work that fits in with the recommendations.

### **Audit Commission Recommendations**

The inspectors left us with five recommendations for improving our waste services and our internal approach to environmental sustainability. These are:

#### **Recommendation 1**

**R1** Develop a strategic approach to enforcement activity. In particular the Council should:

- identify all available staff resources that might contribute to enforcement activity;
- engage all relevant regulatory services to ensure all sources of intelligence are used;
- ensure resources are deployed in a targeted manner to deliver an annual enforcement programme; and
- ensure appropriate links are made to educational programmes.

#### **E&C comments:**

Suggested owner (waste & flytipping enforcement): Michael Read

Relevant forum(s): Regulatory Services Group

Relevant existing projects and work streams: Common Compliance Project (lead: Environmental Health)

Suggested owner (graffiti): Irfan Malik

Relevant forum(s): Graffiti Partnership Board

Existing projects and work streams: Graffiti Project Board (lead: StreetCare / Community Safety)

#### **Recommendation 2**

**R2** Give greater priority to tackling the problem of trade waste in the borough.

In particular, the Council should:

- work with the Council's own household waste contractor to explore what support they can provide;
- engage local groups representing businesses, including private landlords, small and medium enterprises (including those from black and minority ethnic communities) building on environmental training and advice planned in Town Centres, and larger businesses, to identify solutions specific to each of their sectors; and
- focus on action to minimise waste, including promotion of the business benefits of producing less waste, reusing materials and recycling.

**E&C comments:**

Suggested owner: Irfan Malik

Relevant forum(s): Town Centre Management Groups, Waste Services Contract Partnership Board

Relevant existing projects and work streams: Common Compliance Project (lead: Environmental Health), Harlesden Town Centre Strategy development

**Recommendation 3**

**R3** Increase the pace of implementation of waste minimisation across the Council. In particular:

- provide internal recycling facilities in all buildings occupied by the Council; and
- ensure all Council services implement waste minimisation practices.

**E&C comments:**

Suggested owner: Duncan McLeod (Finance / Corporate Property)

Relevant forum(s): Improvement Board, Carbon Management Steering Group, ISO Reps group

Relevant existing projects and work streams: Office recycling project, ISO14001 in Environment & Culture, Improving Brent Action Plan

**Recommendation 4**

**R4** Ensure consistent monitoring of the profile of customers by ethnicity, age, disability and gender to:

- identify any specific groups who are not accessing the service or participating in initiatives in the numbers expected; and
- enable targeted promotion and other action to be taken to address any issues identified.

**E&C comments:**

Suggested owner: Keith Balmer

Relevant forum(s): Environment & Culture Equalities Steering Group

Relevant existing projects and work streams: StreetWatchers development strategy, Local Government Equalities Standard

**Recommendation 5**

**R5** Evaluate whether the investment in StreetCare's ward-based approach to service delivery represents value for money, by:

- undertaking a rigorous analysis of the costs and benefits.

**E&C comments:**

Suggested owner: Keith Balmer

Relevant forum(s): none

Relevant existing projects and work streams: none

## **Update on other relevant work**

### **1. Compulsory recycling**

- StreetCare is project managing implementation of the approved policy for compulsory recycling.
- Extra collection vehicles have been ordered, delivery date mid July
- Publicity starts early July, with most promotional work completed that month, including mailshot to affected households
- An external company (WasteWatch) will provide recycling advisors to follow collection crews, noting households not recycling. Non-compliance will initiate a visit by a recycling advisor to discuss recycling. Further compliance monitoring will take place, with further visits to persistent non-recyclers. There is an agreed enforcement model for those who do not start to recycle after a number of opportunities.

### **2. Municipal Waste Management Strategy**

- Draft project plan developed to revise the existing strategy, needs finalising.
- The revised strategy should be the main vehicle for delivering longer term strategic work on trade waste enforcement, improving recycling levels, identifying workforce development requirements, addressing service provision inequalities.
- Planning issues and LATS issues will underpin this document.
- We need to make a decision on including internal waste management issues in this strategy.

**FOR DISCUSSION**