

## Performance and Finance Select Committee

July 29th 2008

### Audit Commission Inspection of Waste Management Service

#### SUMMARY:

This purpose of this Report is to inform the Performance and Finance Select Committee (PFSC) of progress in developing an Action Plan to implement the recommendations of The Audit Commission's inspection of the council's waste management service.

#### **Introduction**

**A full Action Plan is yet to be developed. There are two principle reasons for this:**

- 1. Officers have been fully committed in the period since the last meeting to planning and implementing the 'compulsory recycling' initiative.**
- 2. Actions to address some of the recommendations may be heavily influenced by the outcome of the council's ongoing transformation agenda. A range of service and VFM reviews will be undertaken by the consultancy group RSe. It is expected the waste collection and street cleansing service will receive early scrutiny and officers are keen not to prejudge their findings. Some of the Audit Commission's recommendations relate very directly to assessing value for money, particularly with respect to 1. Trade Waste Enforcement and 5. the current ward-based approach to service delivery.**

**Officers are keen to discuss the recommendations at this meeting and seek the views of Members. Permission is sought to present a full and detailed Action Plan at a subsequent meeting.**

**The recommendations are set out below.**

#### **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

- We need to make a decision on including internal waste management issues in this strategy.

FOR DISCUSSION