

MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE SELECT COMMITTEE
Wednesday, 24th June 2009 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Dunn (Chair), Councillor H B Patel (Vice Chair) and Councillors Ahmed, Butt, Mendoza and Pagnamenta.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bessong and Van Kalwala.

1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None declared.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 25th March 2009

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25th March 2009 be received and approved as an accurate record.

3. Matters Arising

Community Use of Council Owned Buildings Task Group

The Chair confirmed that the Task Group's report and its' recommendations were due to be considered by the Executive at its meeting on 14th July 2009.

4. Waste Contract Performance

Chris Whyte (Head of Environment Management) introduced the report and confirmed that an overall recycling rate of 28.2% was achieved for 2008/09, representing a significant improvement of 5.9% from the previous year. The recycling rate achieved in the first 2 months of 2009/10 was 33.5%, showing a further sizeable improvement and Chris Whyte suggested that this could be due to the cumulative effects of the introduction of Compulsory Recycling and an upturn in organic waste for compost. Turning specifically to dry recycling, Chris Whyte advised that a total of 1,892 tonnes had been recycled in 2008/09, whilst the first 2 months of 2009/10 had witnessed an improvement of 511 tonnes from the same period the previous year. For composting, 3,575 tonnes had been collected in 2008/09 and a 610 tonne increase had been achieved for the first 2 months of this year compared to the same period last year, illustrating residents' interest in recycling such material. Total tonnage of recycled waste for 2008/09 was 30,084 tonnes, 5,476 tonnes more than 2007/08 and a further increase of 1,124 tonnes had been obtained for the first 2 months of 2009/10 compared to the same period last year. Members were advised that there had been a reduction of 9,581 tonnes of waste sent to landfill in

2008/09 as compared to 2007/08, however there had been an increase of 837 tonnes for the first 2 months of 2009/10 compared to the same period last year.

Chris Whyte then drew Members' attention to the missed refuse, organic and green box collections and explained that the peaks of missed collections tended to coincide with change of collection days and the introduction of Compulsory Recycling. An average tranche score of 16% had been achieved for street cleaning in 2008/09, which easily exceeded the Local Area Agreement (LAA) target of 19%. Members heard that the 22% score for tranche 2 of 2008/09 was partly attributable to weeding problems. However, for 2009/10, it was anticipated that a new method of weeding involving pesticides would be effective in addressing this issue. Meanwhile, reported incidences of fly tipping had not been affected by the introduction of charges for collection of bulky waste items. Chris Whyte advised that the level of complaints in respect of waste services had peaked in Quarter 2 of 2008/09, at the same time as the introduction of Compulsory Recycling. However, there had been a marked downturn in complaints received in Quarter 4 due to better management of the demands of compulsory recycling and improvements in street cleansing.

Councillor Ahmed sought further explanation as to why the missed collection figures had stabilised in the last 2 quarters of 2008/2009 and whether these figures increased on bank holidays. Councillor Mendoza welcomed the improvements in performance, however he enquired what measures were being undertaken to address missed collections. Councillor H B Patel also welcomed the improvements, however he commented that attention needed to be given to improving recycling for estates.

The Chair sought details of the measures being taken by Veolia regarding refuse crews and missed collections, commenting that the increase in recycling waste should lead to less conventional waste to be collected. An update on the progress of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's task group concerning recycling, including recycling on Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) owned estates was sought. With regard to Compulsory Recycling, the Chair enquired whether Waste Watch was still being used to assist in the enforcement of the scheme and what other support was available. Clarification as to whether there had been any prosecutions for non-compliance of the scheme was sought. The Chair commented on the necessity to impress the need on residents to comply with Compulsory Recycling, particularly as Brent experienced a relatively high turnover of residents. He enquired whether any consideration had been given to the costs and practicalities of labelling bins, detailing what can and cannot be put in them, as carried out by other London boroughs.

In reply, Chris Whyte advised Members that Veolia had been requested to address the issue of missed collections through their refuse crews

and there was no reason why there should be more missed collections on bank holidays, with a suggestion that increases on these days may partly be attributable to residents assuming that collection would be deferred to the day after. He added that increased missed collections had also occurred during the period of heavy snow in early February and that this had affected collection for the subsequent 2 weeks. Chris Whyte acknowledged that recycling facilities for estates were not widespread and there was an issue with contaminated loads where there was such provision, however this was to be addressed as part of the drive to increase recycling and would be included in the Recycling Waste Strategy. The Select Committee noted that Waste Watch had been appointed on a 6 months basis to assist with residents in participating in the launch of Compulsory Recycling, however 1 member of staff had been retained whilst the Council had recruited another officer to assist and an increased budget had been allocated for this. A Communications Strategy was being devised that would address issues such as publicising and educating residents of the need to participate in recycling. Chris Whyte also advised that bins were embossed with instructions concerning what waste to put in, however a change in instructions would require new bins and therefore there would be cost implications.

Keith Balmer (Head of StreetCare, Environment and Culture) added missed collections could also be explained when additional bins were added to a round, or a vehicle taken off an existing round. The Select Committee heard that each wheelie bin was checked to see if there was any waste stored and Keith Balmer suggested that if collection was sack based, this could result in less missed collections.

Jacqueline Casson (Senior Policy Officer, Policy and Regeneration) advised Members that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee task group on recycling was in the process of finalising evidence and was meeting with tenants and landlords, including BHP and their tenants. The report was due to be finalised in September 2009.

In conclusion, the Chair reminded Members that Brent's Waste Strategy was due to be considered at a future meeting of the Select Committee.

5. Quarter 4 Performance Report of the Local Area Agreement 2006-2009 and Local Area Agreement 2008-2011

Cathy Tyson (Assistant Director [Policy], Policy and Regeneration) introduced this report and began by explaining that the LAAs of 2006-09 and 2008-11 were presently overlapping. The majority of the LAA 2006-09 priorities had met their stretch targets, including those on Reducing Domestic Violence, Reducing Accidental Fires, Street Cleaning, Housing and Council Tax Processing Times, Healthy Schools, Extended Schools, Children and Young People Sports Participation, Volunteering and Value for Money. It was expected that

the stretch targets for Improving Educational Outcomes for LAC would also be met, whilst provisional data was being analysed for Disadvantaged Groups into Employment. Members heard that there was no prospect of the Smoking Cessation stretch target being met.

Cathy Tyson then referred to the LAA 2008-11 refresh, which had been submitted to, and approved by the Government Office for London following a number of changes that had been negotiated, meaning that there were now a total of 29 indicators, with 7 of these being local indicators. The Select Committee noted that a change in the Performance Award Grant meant that, for example, 40% of would be received if an average of 60% across all LAA targets was met, placing more importance on individual LAA targets as a lower performance would increase the burden on other indicators. Quarter 4 of the LAA 2008-11 showed that 9 priorities in total were not meeting their targets and these were being addressed with the relevant service areas.

The Chair commented that some of the potential problem areas highlighted involved working with partner agencies and he enquired what measures were being taken to ensure these agencies also improved their performance and were they aware that this could affect funding. It was suggested that partner agencies could be invited to address the Select Committee at future meetings, whilst the Police could also be invited to respond to concerns such as youth crime prevention. The Chair asked what measures were being taken generally to address areas that were not reaching targets and he enquired what proportion of the Performance Award Grant was at risk. Clarification was sought concerning there being no prospect of the Smoking Cessation target being reached.

In response, Cathy Tyson advised that partner agencies performance was being monitored through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and its' 6 sub partnerships. At an operational level, this also involved working closely with project managers and it was essential to stress to partner agencies of the need to manage performance and to consistently reach targets. Cathy Tyson advised that if there was significant concern about performance in a particular area, it could be raised with the LSP or referred to the relevant scrutiny committee, such as Smoking Cessation which had been referred to the Health Select Committee. It was suggested that the Performance and Finance Select Committee could choose to focus on a number of issues. Liaison also took place between the Performance Team and Service Area heads to address performance issues and an evaluation policy had been agreed where there was continual underperformance. Cathy Tyson commented that the Borough Commander of Brent Police had attended a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2008/09 and the Police could be invited to meetings of the Select Committee too. With regard to the Smoking Cessation target, Members were advised that Brent NHS had acknowledged that the target would not be met, however there had been reinvestment in this area involving working

more closely with GPs and performance had begun to improve, which could also help improve performance in other areas such mortality and heart disease. Cathy Tyson advised that the Performance Award Grant that would be attained may be around £8 million out of up to £12 million that was available, although clarification of this would be confirmed.

The Chair indicated that the Police be invited to a future meeting of the Select Committee to discuss youth crime prevention and other issues and he welcomed any suggestions from Members to invite other partner agencies on particular issues.

6. Report on Progress Against the Local Area Agreement Stretch Target: Adult Participation in Sport

Gerry Kiefer (Head of Sports Service, Environment and Culture) presented the report and confirmed that the LAA target of 2006/09 was to increase the percentage of adults undertaking 30 minutes of physical activity on 3 or more occasions per week (3 x 30 minutes) by 4%, representing 22% of the total adult population. In order to help reach this target, new facilities had been provided, including the opening of Willesden Sports Centre which was recording on average nearly 1,700 visits per day and visits to sports centres overall had increased from 584,00 in 2006/07 to over 1.1 million in 2008/09. Several schools had built new sports halls or multi use games areas, some of which were available to the public outside school hours and integrated basketball/football/multi game use areas had also been installed in the Borough's parks. Gerry Kiefer advised that a broader programme of activities at sports centres was offered and Vale Farm and Willesden Sports Centres had developed Exercise Referral schemes in partnership with local health centres and GPs. Members noted that the Sports Service had developed a programme of activities at various locations across the Borough, such as the healthy walks programme which had proved extremely popular. Gerry Kiefer then referred to a number of other initiatives as detailed in the report, such as leisure discount schemes and marketing and promotion, for example including a series of campaigns on J.C. Decaux boards, advertising on buses and encouraging physical activity in the local papers and the Brent Magazine.

Gerry Kiefer advised that the Active People 2 survey results at the end of 2008 indicated that 19.5% of Brent's population were undertaking 3 x 30 minutes, representing an 1.5% increase but short of the LAA target of 22%, although this represented the 4th best improvement in London overall, with London boroughs experiencing little increase in this indicator. In order to gain further improvements, Gerry Kiefer stressed the need to try and persuade a number of people to change their lifestyles and the Select Committee was advised that the Council had until October 2009 to obtain the stretch target. Some measures that had been considered, such as providing free swimming for all

adults, would prove costly, with an estimated expenditure of around £350,000, or provide reduced gym fees, and there was no guarantee or evidence that such measures would encourage a significant number of additional people to undertake 3 x 30 minutes swimming every week. However, NHS Brent would continue to be encouraged to promote regular physical activity to address conditions such as obesity, diabetes or general poor health and to continue with the Exercise Referral programme. Promotion and provision of a wide range of activities to residents would also continue.

During discussion, Councillor Mendoza commented that there were no sports centres in his ward. He enquired whether private companies had been encouraged to provide sports facilities and were there any plans to provide sports facilities in Wembley. Councillor Ahmed stated that gym facilities had been provided in parks in Camden and she enquired whether Brent was considering such provision. Councillor H B Patel emphasised the need to educate residents of the medical risks posed by the lack of exercise and he suggested that presentations be given at community centres to raise awareness. Councillor Butt commented that the impetus to undertake regular physical activity was difficult to maintain.

The Chair commented that the City Corporation had provided gym facilities in Queens Park that had proved popular and he suggested that this could be looked at further. He felt that using GPs to refer patients to sports centres was a good scheme. He enquired what details were available regarding those who used sports facilities and were the sports centres linked to the Client Index System. The Chair acknowledged that encouraging people to change their lifestyle was difficult and would take a while to achieve.

In reply, Gerry Kiefer advised that there was an overall lack of facilities in the Borough, and in particular there was a need for a third swimming pool. Private facilities could help meet some demand but in some areas residents would not necessarily have the disposable income required to pay for private sports facilities. She stated that sports facilities in Wembley would be desirable in view of the regeneration of the area and the increase in population and the Select Committee noted that a private gym had just opened on Wembley High Road. With regard to gym facilities in parks, Members heard that these were expensive and there was no evidence to suggest that this would increase the number of residents undertaking 3 x 30 minutes. However, officers were investigating the level of participation being achieved by this measure in Camden and Gerry Kiefer added that more evidence was needed to justify providing such a facility. Members heard that there had been an increase in sports and physical activity and facilities for this in the Borough's parks overall. With regard to the Exercise Referral scheme, Gerry Kiefer warned that the biggest challenge was encouraging such customers to maintain their visits, as evidence suggested that their initial enthusiasm often waned. The

Select Committee was advised that MOSAIC had been used to help identify and target sections of the population to increase sports participation and physical activity.

Cathy Tyson added that sports centres now kept more accurate data with regard to their visitors, although they were not necessarily linked to the Client Index System. However, where postcode details of visitors to sports centres were available, these could be analysed using MOSAIC. It was likely that there would be sports provision included in the regeneration of Wembley, although this could not be confirmed.

The Chair concluded by acknowledging the difficulties faced in increasing adult participation in sports and that it would continue to be a challenge to achieve the stretch target.

RESOLVED:-

that the report on Progress Against the LAA Stretch Target: Adult Participation in Sport, be noted.

7. **Comprehensive Area Assessment**

Cathy Tyson gave a presentation on the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) which was replacing the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). Members heard that the CAA would differ in how the Council and its partners were assessed in that the Area Assessment in November 2009 would consist of a narrative of the performance and would not include a rating. The CAA assessment of the Council in November 2009, however, would include an overall score of between 1 and 4 in the performance assessment and the Council would also be assessed on its use of resources with a particular focus on outcomes. An important area of the assessment would be the ability to undertake well-managed risk-taking, whilst it was also essential to ensure that data returns were accurate as there would be no opportunity to correct them. Partnership delivery and value for money were also critical components of the CAA. The CAA was very much customer focused and the Place Data Survey was a key piece of work which all local authorities were currently analysing. Members heard that a Residents' Attitude Survey was also being undertaken, with the results due in September/October 2009 and the Client Index System would help in gaining an in-depth understanding of the data.

Cathy Tyson then stressed that the CAA also emphasised the importance of places shaping with focus on delivering major capital projects, which presented a challenge in difficult economic circumstances, however it was important to remain focused and be ready to take advantage once the economy recovered. Governance issues needed to be considered concerning the self evaluation that would be undertaken in terms of the LSP, whilst the Audit Commission

would be looking closely at the requirement to develop a new Consultation and Engagement Strategy. Cathy Tyson advised that service planning would require tangible actions to be drawn up to ensure delivery. The role of scrutiny would continue to be very important in delivery of the Community Strategy and LAA outcomes by the Council and its partners and that scrutiny of organisations contributing to public services should not be restricted to LSP partners. Cathy Tyson stated that the Place Survey national results were due to be released soon and warned that it was anticipated that overall the results were likely to show that public remain unconvinced, despite the actual improvements that had taken place and this emphasised the need to engage with residents more. Nevertheless, Cathy Tyson felt that large improvements that had been achieved under the CPA could be sustained with the CAA, whilst the LAA had also been seen to have a beneficial impact.

The Chair acknowledged the gap in how the Council and its partners were perceived by the public compared to what was actually being achieved. He commented that the Institute of Fiscal Studies, in producing its' Green Budget Paper for 2009, had predicted that there would be decade of minimum or zero growth in public expenditure because of the financial gap and in view of this, the Chair stressed the need to make best use of its assets. He sought clarification as to when the Audit Commission would provide feedback in terms of the CAA.

In reply, Cathy Tyson stated that the Audit Commission were still at the information collecting stage, however initial feedback was expected in September 2009, with the formal feedback provided in November 2009.

8. Performance and Finance Select Committee Work Programme

The Chair introduced this item and welcomed any suggestions from Members. The Select Committee agreed to his suggestion that the programme include consideration of the Brent Housing Partnership's Repair Service performance. Members also discussed the issue of examining senior officers' pay and the appropriateness of this being included in the Work Programme.

9. Items Requested onto the Overview and Scrutiny Agenda

None.

10. Recommendations from the Executive to be considered by the Performance and Finance Select Committee

None.

11. **Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Performance and Finance Select Committee was scheduled for Tuesday, 8th September 2009 at 7.30 pm.

12. **Any Other Urgent Business**

None.

The meeting ended at 9.35 pm

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Chair