



Overview and Scrutiny Committee 10th February 2009

Report from the Director of Policy and Regeneration

For Action

Wards Affected:
ALL

Overview & Scrutiny Task Group Updates

Forward Plan Ref:

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report provides an update on the work of the current task groups that have been commissioned by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. These are:

- Climate Change
- Increasing Participation in Recycling in Flats
- Services for Women Exiting Prostitution

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to comment on the work of the task groups

3.0 Detail

Climate Change

3.1 At its meeting on the 18th June 2007 the Executive agreed to ask the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to establish a task group to review the Council Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan 2007-11.

3.2 In October 2007 the Overview and Scrutiny considered a draft scope for the review and agreed to set up a climate change task group. The following members agreed to take part in the review:

Cllr D Jackson
Cllr HB Patel (Chair); and
Cllr H Singh

- 3.3 The Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan(CMS&IP), was agreed by the Executive in June 2007. It outlines how Brent Council will achieve its Corporate Strategy commitment to reduce the council's emissions of carbon dioxide by 20% by 2011. The CMS&IP contains 37 projects that need to be delivered by different services from across the council.
- 3.4 The CMS&IP is solely focussed on Brent Council's own emissions of carbon dioxide. A carbon management strategy differs from a climate change strategy in that it does not attempt to address adaptation to climate change but focuses on the management of emissions of green house gasses, specifically carbon dioxide and in particular how these can be reduced by each of the council's services.
- 3.5 The task group will be considering projects within the CMS&IP under the following themes:
- Improving energy efficiency in council owned buildings
 - Raising awareness for staff and members of the public on climate change issues
 - Training for staff and members on climate change issues
 - Improving sustainability in the councils fleet and among staff
- 3.6 The task group has taken evidence from:

Environmental Projects and Policy Manager
Deputy Head of Property and Asset Management
Head of Asset Management, Children and Families
Network Manager, ITU
Director of Planning

Members have also visited Howe Dell and Wembley Park Primary schools. Both schools have implemented a wide range of sustainability measures including; using wind turbines and locally sourced materials.

4.0 Task Group's emerging findings

- 4.1 Data within the CMS&IP indicates that, 83% of the councils total carbon dioxide emissions are from council buildings. This includes offices, schools and housing stock. The task group found that there are a successful range of projects are tackling this issue. For example the 'switch off policy' which the ITU unit has developed means that office computers are automatically turned off at the end of the working day. This project has already completed its targets. The same is true of the Brent Housing Partnership boiler replacement project which installed new boilers in 451 properties over the last year.

- 4.2 Energy management is a new area of work for the council and more needs to be done to build up expertise. This work would benefit from a single point of contact and a strategic approach. An energy manager could make a considerable significant contribution and would be an invest to save measure as the post holder should yield real savings for the council in energy costs over the short to medium term. The task group will recommend that an energy manager is employed by the council
- 4.3 The CMS&IP includes an Energy Efficiency Fund of £600,000. This provides loans for energy efficiency projects in schools and council buildings. The task group were informed that in the first year, funding for lighting and loft insulation projects had been committed but overall it has been difficult to identify projects for the fund. This was partly because more needed to be done to raise awareness of the fund. There has been an improvement recently with the temporary employment of a support officer who was actively working to promote the fund. The task group feel that this funding presents an important opportunity and more needs to be done to ensure that its benefits are maximised. The final report of the task group will contain recommendations on how we can improve the take up of this fund.
- 4.4 The task group found that emissions from school buildings are a major problem. Members were told that many schools in the borough were in need of repairs such as to roofs and water systems, which significantly contribute to reducing their energy efficiency.
- 4.5 Building Schools for the Future is a government initiative to rebuild or modernise every secondary school building in the country. This will provide a major opportunity for the borough as sustainability measures will be at the forefront of the proposed new buildings. Developers will be required to make significant savings in carbon dioxide emissions. The task group is aware that in light of national legislation which requires all local areas to cut emissions by 80% by 2050, local targets will need to be in line with this. The task group will be receiving advice from the Environmental Policy and Projects Manager on guidelines for local carbon emission targets.
- 4.6 Planning requirements are a key consideration when looking at energy efficiency in buildings. The task group met with the Director of Planning to consider how sustainability measures are embedded within planning in Brent. A key theme to emerge from the discussion is that while a range of measures are in place to influence sustainability on large capital projects, smaller projects are far more difficult to influence as they may not require planning permission or be subject to planning regulations. The task group will be considering ways to ensure that smaller developments take sustainability measures into consideration.
- 4.7 The task group has almost completed its investigation and aims to bring the final report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on May 27th

Increasing Participation in Recycling in Flats

5.0 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed to set up a review into increasing participation in recycling in flats in July 2008. The following members agreed to take part in the review:

Cllr HB Patel (Chair)
Cllr Clues
Cllr Thomas

5.1 Members met on the 8th September to receive some background information about the current situation in Brent and best practice elsewhere before agreeing the plan for the review. Members agreed to:

- Visit sites in the borough to look at current practice.
- Visit other local authorities who have had some success in increasing participation in recycling in flats.
- Talk to tenants and residents to identify issues and potential solutions
- Talk to registered social landlords to identify their role in increasing participation in recycling in flats

5.2 On 7th October members of the group undertook a tour of flats in Brent and identified a number issues: These included:

Education – to reduce contamination and develop commitment to recycling
Siting and number of bins provided – mess and vandalism
Signage / information at sites
Capacity issues – types and numbers of collection vehicles
Buy-in of Landlords
Ensuring recycling facilities are designed into new developments

5.3 On 9th November members met with officers from Streetcare including the Head of Environment Management and the Waste Policy officer to find out more about the different types of systems that could be used to collect recycling from flats and to raise the issues discussed above.

5.4 During December visits were made to Westminster Council and Islington Council to identify any best practice that would be useful in Brent.

5.5 The group will be meeting with Landlords and Tenants during February and hope to report back to the Overview & Scrutiny committee in March.

Services for Women exiting prostitution

6.0 On 10th December 2008 the Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed to set up a task group to look at services for women exiting prostitution. It was agreed to seek nominations from each political group and to invite nominations from

the Police and NHS Brent to contribute to the work of the task group. The following Members have agreed to be part of this review+:

Councillor Clues
Councillor John
Councillor Mistry

Nominations from the Police and NHS Brent are as follows:

DCI Kevin Conannor
Andy Brown Head of substance misuse NHS Brent

7.0 Background Papers

Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan 2006-11.
Overview & Scrutiny Minutes July 2008
Overview & Scrutiny Minutes December 2008

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