

London Borough of Hackney
Budget Scrutiny Task Group - Enforcement
Municipal Year 2015/16
Date of Meeting Wednesday, 9th September, 2015

Minutes of the proceedings of the
Budget Scrutiny Task Group –
Enforcement held at
Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street,
London E8 1EA

Chair

Councillors in Attendance

**Cllr Richard Lufkin, Cllr James Peters,
Cllr Caroline Selman and Cllr Peter Snell**

Apologies:

Kim Wright, Corporate Director Health and Community Services for late attendance

Co-optees

Officers In Attendance

John Allen (Assistant Director Planning and Regulatory Services), Sanna Johansson, Tom McCourt (Assistant Director - Public Realm), Jackie Moylan (Assistant Director of Finance CYPS and LHRR), Wayne Stephenson, Kevin Thompson and Kim Wright (Corporate Director Health and Community Services)

Other People in Attendance

Members of the Public Public In Attendance

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Cllr Selman in the Chair following Election

1 Election of the Chair

- 1.1. The Scrutiny officer opened the meeting and invited nominations for the election of the Chair. Nomination of Cllr Caroline Selman was made by Cllr Peter Snell and seconded by Cllr James Peters. Cllr Selman was elected as Chair.
- 1.2. The Chair welcomed Members and colleagues to the meeting.

2 Apologies

- 2.1. Apologies were received from Cllr Sophie Linden, Deputy Mayor, Corporate Director Legal and Regulatory Services, Gifty Edila, Steve Bending, Head of Safer Communities. Kim Wright, Corporate Director, Community Service, sent apologies for late attendance to the meeting.

3 Urgent Items/Order of Business

- 3.1. There were no urgent items.

4 Declaration of Interest

- 4.1. Cllr Peter Snell declared that he is a member of the Regional Committee of the Institute of Environmental Health.
- 4.2. Introductions were made around the table of all those present.

5 Terms of Reference (as agreed by Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission)

- 5.1. The Terms of Reference were introduced by the Chair noting that they had been agreed by Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission. Members noted the Terms of Reference.

6 Proposed Saving Areas for 2016 - 2017

- 6.1. The Chair introduced the item outlining the work of the Task Group to understand what the scope of the Enforcement Task Group and to gain an understanding of income and expenditure profiles and restrictions associated with income and expenditure streams.
- 6.2. The Programme Manager introduced the item noting that the current review was born out of an away with HMT and Cabinet in 2014 following a stock take of services and reviews.. There was an identification of need to review and re-shape services, take a step back to consider what services do and what their purpose is in relation to stakeholders and residents. To understand what the local authority is enforcing against and why and how is it undertaking this function. There were originally 15 services in scope; this has now been reduced to 11 service areas.
- 6.3. The programme started in December 2014 with a review phase to consider the existing structures and to consider the future direction. This phase was undertaken in the context of the Mayor's manifesto commitments and to undertake a gap analysis within this context. This first phase to June 2015 identified:
 - No overarching Policy of Enforcement Framework set by the authority to drive enforcement standards across the authority and provide structure to develop remit-related policies and strategies.
 - Enforcement service design and operating models hinders improved enforcement delivery.

- There are examples of best practice, however, performance is inconsistent and opportunities for joint working are not maximised with opportunities from the 2013 stock take and phase 1 work not adopted.
- 6.4. The review identified the need for a new operating model focused around customer needs and to deliver service improvements with quick wins that can help inform the way forward. It is proposed that a draft “Umbrella” Integrated Enforcement Policy be developed with a clear vision and service transformation to outline how the authority will undertake its regulatory and enforcement role across all remits.
 - 6.5. The review has identified a number of projects to deliver the required changes focusing on Function Redesign and Strategy, and Operational Improvements. Overall there is a target for savings of £1.3m or 25% of services, whichever is the greater.
 - 6.6. The Chair thanked the Programme and projects Officer for the presentation and invited officers from service areas to provide an outline of their service areas together with the key issues and opportunities identified.
 - 6.7. The Head of Private Sector Housing outlined that the service had 25 full time equivalents (FTE) incorporating Environmental Health Officers and Private Sector Enforcement Officers, noting that a third of all housing tenures in the borough are privately rented. The service also has a remit in relation to adaptations to enable people to remain in their own home.
 - 6.8. Enforcement is usually used as a last resort; it is expensive to undertake but the service does use this enforcement method when necessary. The service has a licensing function in relation to houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). This is a mandatory scheme which is being considered for a wider intelligence-based proactive service. The long term view for the service is to consider bringing back into use long term empty properties for homeless people and to support the public health agenda.
 - 6.9. The Assistant Director, Housing, noted further context in terms of the size, growth, and profile in Hackney of the private rented sector. Growth has doubled in the past 10 years and there is a growing challenge for enforcement in addressing issues of poor conditions.
 - 6.10. The Cabinet Member for Housing, Cllr Philip Glanville outlined the centralised anti-social behaviour service (ASB) in Hackney Homes. Housing Management was brought back in-house in 2011 and the team triages intervention and mediation to ensure consistency. The service is funded by service charges, not through the general fund and there are counterparts in housing associations. The team also work on Hackney Homes estates in noise-related matters.
 - 6.11. The Assistant Director, Public Realm outlined that there are 60 FTE in Parking Services. The service is driven by statute and regulation with ring-fenced funding and has been in continuous review since 2002. In 2010-2011 there was a review to ensure the service was seen as fair and was scoped end-to-end with the appeal service identified as poor and recovery rates low. In the past 3-4

- years savings have been identified and the recovery rate has increased significantly.
- 6.12. CCTV has been removed this year which was previously used to support complaints from the public. The Service use ICT to help the parking permits process and business intelligence to ensure robustness. The ambassadorial role of enforcement officers is crucial to maximising resources.
 - 6.13. Environmental Enforcement has 12 FTE and over the past 3 years has not achieved outcomes expected. Since 2013 the service has been looking at outcomes through enforcement and the use of intelligence and identifying hotspots is key.
 - 6.14. The Assistant Director, Planning, noted that Building Control is out of Scope for the Review. Planning Enforcement has 7FTE; currently 1500 enquiries/year. There is a high demand service with a desire for fast decisions as against the need for a long term review of technical and complex issues. The service is not always as responsive to the public; the service is seeking to improve responsiveness through the use of improved ICT. The service has a strategic function including regeneration and employment.
 - 6.15. Trading Standards have 8 FTE and are engaged in cross borough partnerships and responding to complaints. In licensing 4 of the 13 FTE are engaged in enforcement. Environmental Health enforcement of food premises is 13 FTE. Mortuary and bereavement services are not formally part of the review.
 - 6.16. The Assistant Director, Finance outlined that cashable savings are expected to be in the region of £1.3m and may need to be profiled across 2016/17 and 2017/18, and 2018/19 financial years to enable sound implementation of changes and to manage risks appropriately. The salaries of roles in scope have been identified and equate to approximately 25% of the salaries in scope. It is expected, however, that a proportion of the savings may be made by reducing non-salary costs.
 - 6.17. In response to a Member query that not all service areas have been covered so far the Assistant Director, Public Realm, indicated that Markets have very little enforcement function but some aspects of the Markets service are still under consideration.
 - 6.18. The Programme Manager noted that the Community Safety Team (crime, gangs, vulnerable people) work with Hackney Homes re ASB. The team undertake low level enforcement re night time economy through a small contingent of enforcement officers.
 - 6.19. The Director for Community Services indicated that 1.5 FTE have been identified in parks Services as contributing to the current enforcement process and Parks Service is currently undertaking a separate review.
 - 6.20. The chair noted that it is difficult to understand what is in scope and what is not in scope as the agenda report is different to what is in the Governance and Resources agreed Terms of Reference.

ACTION: The Programme Manager to clarify what is in scope.

- 6.21. The assistant Director, Public Realm indicated that Streetscene is not in scope as there are no enforcement powers. Licensing coordination re skips etc sits in the Public Realm remit but enforcement sits with Planning.
- 6.22. The Chair wanted to understand how officers have come to the £1.3m figure and the Assistant Director, Finance, indicated that it was not an exact science and potential savings would become clearer as the review progressed.
- 6.23. The Chair noted that the content of the report indicates more integration and moving towards an emphasis on prevention. The Programme Manager indicated that in terms of integration the review is considering what enforcement is currently in place and to consider frontline street services (wardens, environmental enforcement, and uniformed presence) and functions.
- 6.24. With the more specialist services it is suggested that there are opportunities for integration; there are no current proposals, however, the review is working towards the identified timeline. Functions with specialist skills and expertise may be able to integrate the management structure; it may be difficult to integrate the functions within a generic job description. The review is looking to maximise joint working opportunities based on configuration proposals.
- 6.25. The Chair wanted to understand if the review is still at a high level strategic stage and the Programme and Projects Manager indicated that there are some early findings with design principles.
- 6.26. A Task Group Member suggested it would be useful to have more information and suggested a meeting outside of the Task Group.
- 6.27. The Director of Community Services outlined that the report presented seeks to set out where services have come from and the direction of travel and the existing agreed timeframe for the review is working to tie in with the Task Group timetable.
- 6.28. Cllr Glanville recognised the potential for an inconsistent approach given the two timetables.
- 6.29. The Chair noted the group concerns that given decisions are to be made in November 2015 the Task Group need to have appropriate information about the current position in order to inform its work regarding future proposals.

ACTION: Officers to provide information outlining the context and proposals with costings and potential income generation, together with potential associated savings.

- 6.30. The Chair wanted to understand the process being followed and what are the priorities and how they are being identified.
- 6.31. The Programme Manager indicated that the Programme Board is currently doing detailed work with services to identify potential efficiencies and tasks and activities using audit methodology which includes 100 officers. Workshops are underway to consider what service outcomes are and requirements from enforcement functions. The service functions are being scored using criteria to drill out the functions that are costly, have little impact or both costly and little impact. The approach is to identify services with the potential for greater impact

from investment. There are statutory services that have to be undertaken, however, the local authority may have discretion about the nature of provision. There are a range of services that are discretionary and are of high value to residents. The Programme Board are also reviewing the measures by which service performance is reviewed and there is potential for certain activities to be de-prioritised.

- 6.32. Members of the Task Group consider that this may not be the most appropriate approach and want the opportunity for ideas from the Task Group to inform the Executive's decision-making process.
- 6.33. The Chair noted that 6 quick wins have been identified and it is unclear what these wins are. The Chair indicated that the Group has been given a specific task and want to be clear about what contributes to this process; how and why they contribute and what benefits they bring. A Members indicated that a number of documents are identified in the report as part of the review process to date.

ACTION: Programme Board to circulate available reports.

- 6.34. The Chair wanted to understand what process has been undertaken to ensure robustness of the approach and the Programme Manager indicated that benchmarking, consulting, and customer insight and communications are ongoing.
- 6.35. The Chair wanted to understand which other local authorities Hackney is working with and the Programme Manager indicated that they are working with a range of authorities including Haringey, the programme Manager's experience from work at LB Westminster, and the CIPFA benchmarking process. There is little evidence of other local authorities drawing all their enforcement services together; there are local authority examples of frontline services coming together in one directorate but not necessarily integrating processes and structures. Questions regarding how Hackney is exploring this work have come from other local authorities who are waiting for the outcome of Hackney's approach. High profile examples such as London Borough of Newham and London Borough of Tower Hamlets offers varied success.
- 6.36. A Task Group Member suggested the Chair meets with officers to take the work of the Task Group forward.

ACTION: Meeting between Chair and officers in the next week.

- 6.37. The Chair wanted to understand what customer insight was being captured as part of the review and the Programme Manager indicated that the Board is working with the Policy Team to undertake an analysis of demand and a workshop with officers is taking place on the 10th September 2015. The Chair wants to understand the mapping of the customer insight information.

ACTION: mapping of customer insight information to be included as part of the meeting to be set up in the next week.

- 6.38. In response to the Chair's query regarding the process for identifying areas of priority e.g. vulnerable people the Programme and Projects Manager indicated

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that the review is capturing work taking place within service areas and there is a need to join up the intelligence across service areas. From an ICT perspective re intelligence there are two projects; to improve efficiency of mobile working and developing a council-wide system that can interrogate back-office council systems.

ACTION: Officers to provide information to the task group on the 2 projects.

- 6.39. In response to a Member query the Programme Manager indicated that in assessing impact and value of services there is pro-active work taking place. Data across services is critical to be considered notwithstanding the prioritisation process. There is also a balance to be had between pro-active and reactive services.
- 6.40. A Member wanted to understand the quick wins and the Programme Manager indicated that they are currently considering how noise complaints are managed and analysing the number of complaints and cases to build a demand map. Key issues include, for example, time of day and resources available to tackle the complaint, and partner involvement out of hours. Budget targets have not been assigned to quick wins. The Programme Manager indicated that the review is working with Planning Enforcement and using intelligence to prioritise services; how service requests and responses are handled currently and identifying realistic performance measures.
- 6.41. It is hoped that by improving the management processes for highways licensing the end-to-end process will improve. In relation to night time and weekend economy related issues the testing of different approaches will, it is anticipated, encourage behaviour change. Working to further develop business partnerships and how the Council engages with businesses to ensure compliance is ongoing. In addition, there is ongoing work to complete the transfer of pollution policy officers, previously sitting with community safety functions, into the Public Realm Policy Team.
- 6.42. The Chair wanted to consider what value the Task Group can add regarding income generation, staff turnover in specific service areas.
- 6.43. The Chair thanked officers for attending the meeting.

7 Date of Next Meeting

- 7.1. The date of the next meeting is to be agreed.

8 Any Other Business

- 8.1. There was no other business.

Duration of the meeting: 8.55 pm