



Report of the Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods

Inner West Area Committee

Date: 20th October 2010

Subject: Reporting Health & Environmental Action Service activities to the area committees.

Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council
Function



Delegated Executive
Function available
for Call In



Delegated Executive
Function not available for
Call In Details set out in the
report



Executive Summary

Following consultation and feedback from area committees and sub-groups, appendix 1 is a revised version of the Health & Environmental Action Services activity report first presented to members in January of this year. Information is now presented at ward level and includes some data mapping. The aim of the report is to provide members with information about the scope and activities of our service with particular focus on enforcement action and the work of the Environmental Action Teams aligned to strategic outcomes.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

To provide information for members on the demand for services provided by the Health & Environmental Action Service (HEAS) with particular focus on the enforcement activities undertaken by the Environmental Action Team (EAT) and Highways & Environmental Enforcement (HEE) team. The report known as the 'HEAS Activity Report' (appendix 1) was first introduced to members in January and the subsequent feedback has been integrated into a revised report which now provides data at ward level. This particular report is a half year report for 2010-2011 as it was agreed that reports would be produced on a 6 monthly basis.

2.0 Background Information

HEAS has been operational since May 2008 when it was created out of the former Enforcement Division and Environmental Health Division. Part of its remit is to consider how best to report on its activities and maintain effective communication with area committees particularly in relation to locality working. Mindful of this Graham Wilson the Head of Environmental Action & Parking produced a pilot report for North West inner area committee in February 2009 which was well received. It subsequently created a lot of interest and enquiries from a number of other area committees who felt this sort of information would be valuable to them. Consequently the attached report was developed to present information that would be interesting to members and encourage debate about the nature and demand for our services.

3.0 Main Issues

The report gives a brief description of the work undertaken by teams within HEAS and outlines the scope and demand for our services in the West North West management area.

Information has been grouped according to the strategic outcome that a teams activities most significantly contributes to. Data is provided in relation to service requests, fixed penalty notices, enforcement notices, premises inspections, private sector housing inspections, licenses issued, homes improved and adapted.

The report must be read with a health warning in that it relies heavily on service request (SR) volumes to demonstrate the demand for particular services. In reality its not feasible to draw accurate conclusions about the productivity of teams based on SR's alone because we're not comparing like with like. The notion of SR's is a broad one, ranging from requests for telephone advice that take little time to process to complaints that may take months to investigate and resolve. Consequently there is a wide variation between the type of job undertaken by teams and the time taken to complete each job, neither of which are reflected by counting SR's. Nevertheless SR's do provide a useful indication of the types of issues that are most commonly dealt with in different areas.

The report currently provides information not just on teams involved in crime and grime issues but also on the work of some of our city wide teams such as food, health and safety, housing regulation and regeneration etc There are a number of ongoing projects that have been instigated to review the councils provision of services in light of the difficult economic climate that now exists. In particular these include locality working and the regional provision of regulatory services. The findings from both will shape future provision and could result in significant changes in the orientation of services which will need to be reflected in future issues of this report.

In the meantime information in the report as well as feedback received from members via area committees and/or sub groups will be taken into consideration and used in tasking reviews as well as to shape the drafting of next years service plan. Additionally the report will be used to inform locality working and facilitate communication between members, area management and relevant Health and Environmental Action Service functions. The latter being particularly important in the times of change that we inevitably face over the coming months.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy and Governance

None

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

None

6.0 Conclusions

HEAS collects and has access to a wealth of data. Conscious of the need for a relatively concise report we've had to be fairly selective about the information that has been included and how it is presented. The revised format has been developed as a result of feedback from members following presentation of the initial report earlier in the year.

7.0 Recommendations

Members are asked to note and consider the information provided within the attached report (appendix 1) in order to facilitate decisions about work priorities as part of the intensive neighbourhood management process. Of particular interest is likely to be the work of the EAT's whose staff include the newly appointed Community Environment Officers and Community Environment Support Officers who's posts are partly funded through the area committees.

Background Papers

Appendix 1 - please see the attached "***Health and Environmental Action Service activity report West North West Management Area April 2010- September 2010***"