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**Report of the Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods**

**Inner West Area Committee**

**Date: 17<sup>th</sup> February 2010**

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

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**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

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**Executive Summary**

**This report provides an overview of the production of a Health & Environmental Action Services report to area committees. The aim of the report is to provide information about the scope and activities of our service in particular areas of the City aligned to strategic outcomes. It seeks feedback on the value, level of detail and format of information presented in the report.**

**1.0 Purpose Of This Report**

To seek feedback on the content and usefulness of a 6 monthly Health & Environmental Action Service (HEAS) activity report to area committees.

**2.0 Background Information**

The 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 I was given a brief by the Health & Environmental Action management team to develop a 6 monthly report 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 attached report gives a brief description of the work undertaken by teams within HEAS and outlines the scope and demand for our services in particular areas of the City.

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 information is provided in tables and graphs by area committee boundary.

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. It can and is taken to mean pretty much anything from requests for telephone advice that take little time to process to complaints that may take months to investigate and result in a prosecution. 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. For example how do you compare issuing a FPN for littering, to inspecting a restaurant for food hygiene contraventions to investigating a work place accident? Each requires different skills, resources and personnel.

Nevertheless SR's do provide a useful indication of the types of issues that are most commonly dealt with in different areas.

This is the first edition of the report and consequently feedback is very much welcomed from committees regarding the level of detail, method of presentation and its overall usefulness as a method of reporting HEAS activities to the committees.

### **4.0 Implications For Council Policy and Governance**

None

### **5.0 Legal and Resource Implications**

None

### **6.0 Conclusions**

The 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. Until the report has been considered by members we won't know if we've got this right, if not there is scope to change its format.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

**Consider the format and detail of the report :**

- **Is the information presented useful?**
- **Is it understandable?**
- **Is the level of detail about right?**
- **Is the meeting the best forum to present the report?**
- **Is 6 monthly the right frequency?**

## **Background Papers**

Please see the attached "***Health and Environmental Action Service activity report to area committees Q2 2009-10***"