



HILLINGDON
LONDON

RESIDENTS' AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY
OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

2007/08

*REVIEWS OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION
AND ENGAGEMENT
AND
CLEANLINESS OF THE ENVIRONMENT*

Members of the Committee

Cllr Shirley Harper-O'Neill (Chairman)
Cllr Janet Duncan
Cllr Janet Gardner
Cllr Graham Horn
Cllr Allan Kauffman
Cllr Andrew Retter
Cllr Kay Willmott-Denbeigh



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Appendices 1: Chrysalis projects in 2007/8 and approved for 2008/9 [to be added]



The Committee discusses problems of graffiti and litter at the Greenway, Hayes with Paul Naylor, Green Spaces Manager and Colin Russell, Waste Division Manager

Chairman's Foreword



This report combines the findings of two interlinked reviews by the Committee. Our first review focused on community consultation and engagement, with an emphasis on environmental improvements, e.g. through the Streets Champions and Chrysalis programmes. Our second review looked at how our services respond and achieve cleanliness of the environment.

The community plays a vital part in guiding the Council towards services that are closely attuned to what people want. Through a variety of media, the Council regularly consults individuals, groups and businesses on their priorities and needs. It also recognises that asking too often, or insensitively, can be counter-productive.

The consultation strategy agreed by the Cabinet in June 2007 set out a framework for successful consultation. Our review was able to consider how the strategy is developing and seek advice from City of Westminster Council, whose consultation strategy is further ahead and generally regarded as a model of good practice.

In Hillingdon, we are building strong resident engagement in environmental improvements. Street Champions, Chrysalis Grant recipients and the officers working on those programmes told us about their experiences and future plans, helping us to see how these successful and expanding programmes can develop.

Our cleanliness review looked at whether changing the way resources are used might achieve higher standards for residents and improved ENCAMS survey ratings. This is timely as the Council has approved an injection of extra funding for street cleaning in the 2008/9 budget. We have also asked the Cabinet Member for Environment to consider how the Council can respond to residents helping to keep Hillingdon tidy, for example, via a reward scheme for those organizing regular litter picking, and by providing bags for litter, gloves and litter picking tongs.

From our investigations, we have identified a number of potential improvements that we recommend to the Cabinet for consideration.

Cllr Shirley Harper-O'Neill



Discussing Hillingdon Homes' Visual Standards Guide with (standing left to right) Colin Russell, Waste Division Manager, and Rod Smith, Head of Estate Management, Hillingdon Homes, at Harlington Road Depot.

1. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Committee reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of community consultation and engagement currently undertaken, especially in relation to environmental improvements, and the services for achieving clean streets, parks and open spaces. A summary of the Committee's conclusions and recommendations are below. The evidence for these can be found in chapter 3 and the appendices.

The Committee's conclusions and recommendations are:

1. Community Consultation

A residents survey has been carried out every three years and consultations have been undertaken frequently, e.g. via the Council's website, Hillingdon People and the Cabinet's Question Time.

Recommendations

1.1 Continue to survey residents regularly and ideally annually to ensure the Council benefits from knowledge of what residents want and can check service priorities and performance against these.

1.2 Allow Directorates to "buy" extra questions in a regular council survey. Directorates will value questions that they purchase and this could cut down on duplication of consultations.

1.3 Develop locality profiling and engage Ward Councillors in identifying the diversity of needs within their wards. Consider better use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to map needs and issues.

2. The Chrysalis programme

The recent increase in grant funding for 2008/9 approved by the Council is welcomed and demonstrates that this is a valued programme.

Recommendations

2.1 Speed up the process for considering applications and notifying applicants for Chrysalis grants. This is aimed at reducing delays between needs arising and funding being granted, so speeding up environmental improvements. Currently six months elapses between the close of applications and approval of grants. Consideration might also be given to a second application round within year.

2.2 Develop better publicity about the improvements delivered by the Chrysalis Scheme, so that its benefits are more widely appreciated by residents. This might be through posters, articles, website entries and information events.

2.3 Send information about the scheme directly to community groups annually and continue outreach work to ensure that all new and existing groups that might benefit from the Chrysalis scheme are aware of it and consider applying.

3. Street Champions

Numbers of Street Champions have grown rapidly to approximately 3000 and are targeted to increase to 5000 by the end of this calendar year. The Committee's suggestions aim to help the continuing success of the scheme:

Recommendations

3.1 Explore means of improving the response to Street Champion reports without detriment to service delivery. Growth in the number of Street Champions is placing increasing demand on the contact centre and responding officers in Directorates. Street Champions usually know that a report has been action when they see matters have changed, but when action cannot be taken or is delayed, some feel left in the dark. Reviewing response standards and notification processes might identify improvements that would raise satisfaction levels.

3.2 Consider broadening the scope of the scheme. The Committee welcomes the extra resources agreed by the Council for 2008/9 to strengthen the central team in ECP that supports and promotes the scheme. The team's ideas of broadening the scheme by, for example, creating a "junior Street Champion scheme" for children or young people, are welcomed and should be developed for discussion with the Cabinet Member for Environment. Working with schools may be a practical way of taking this forward.

3.3 Take steps to ensure that Street Champions reflect the communities from which they are drawn. The scheme should aim to be inclusive and offer opportunities to all sections of the community.

4. Streets Ahead

These events co-ordinate action on an area and have been widely welcomed.

Recommendations

4.1 More information to be sent to Ward Councillors in advance of Streets Ahead events, so that they know what they can ask for. Based on the outcomes of past Streets Ahead events, an information pack should be sent in advance to the relevant Ward Councillors. This would add value to the Councillor briefings held a month before by the Community Leadership Team.

4.2 Take steps to improve pre-event publicity. Monitor whether communications reach residents and take action if delivery failures occur.

5. Encouraging community environmental action

Good in some areas but lacking in others, these proposals might help develop and sustain community environmental action:

Recommendations

5.1 Consider introducing a reward scheme for significant community environmental action. The Committee have asked the Cabinet Member for the Environment to reward residents who provide substantial help to keep Hillingdon

clean and tidy, for example, by organizing regular litter picking, and for the Council to provide bags for litter, gloves and litter picking tongs. An awards ceremony could take place during an annual event for Street Champions and others involved in environmental action.

5.2 Lobby the Government via London Councils to introduce civic pride legislation requiring premises holders to have a duty to keep the front of their premises clean. This type of legislation already exists in some other European countries.

6. Cleansing Services

A welcomed injection of £280,000 was agreed by the Council for the 2008/9 street cleaning budget to provide 10 extra solo sweepers (person with a broom) plus 2 mechanical sweeping machines with drivers. The evidence from experts and other local authorities confirms that solo sweepers are the most effective ways of keeping areas thoroughly cleaned. The service is already improving; additional changes are proposed:

Recommendations

6.1 Aim to carry out street sweeping the day after refuse collection in 80% of the borough by the end of the financial year. The recent increase in street cleaning resources offers the prospect of revising rotas to achieve this and so deal promptly with any litter arising from split rubbish bags.

6.2 Officers to investigate and report to the Cabinet Member on the costs of and potential for introducing uniforms and logos on equipment to raise public awareness of cleaning. Evidence from another borough is that this raises recognition of services and translates into higher satisfaction levels. This may need to be phased in to be achieved within the existing budget.

6.3 Take over the monitoring of our standards of cleanliness. This would replace the ENCAMS monitoring and reflect more accurately the views of residents. In the short term both ENCAMS and internal monitoring would be used in order to provide a comparison.

6.4 All types of Council land to have regular cleansing based on need and need to determine the frequency required. This would cover streets, highway land, green spaces, parks, car parks and housing land. It needs, over time, to be built into contractual arrangements and/or service level agreements.

6.5 Introduce strategically placed and suitable size bins near places that are now experiencing higher levels of litter since the smoking ban, e.g. pubs and clubs. Bins have already been placed at bus stops and stations where needed but the smoking ban has created new litter spots, especially in High Streets. New designs of bins are emerging to provide solutions.

6.6 More emphasis on raising the skills of staff in cleansing through training, good visual guides as to what is and is not acceptable and by reducing the size of patch covered by solo sweepers, so that it is cleaned more thoroughly. The latter should be possible with the increase in funding.

6.7 Officers to develop closer working between Councillors, street cleaning services and the enforcement service to deal more effectively with intractable problems, e.g. recurrent graffiti, fly-tipping and litter on land not owned by the Council. Solutions might include quicker identification of problems, publicity in relation to perpetrators or contacts with land owners to request barriers.

2. Background, Importance and Methodology

Background

In June 2007/8, the Residents' and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee choose to carry out as their 2nd and 3rd reviews, a review of community consultation and engagement and a review of cleanliness of the environment. The choice was made according to criteria that ensure reviews focus on locally important matters and cover topics where the Committee can add value. These reviews were planned to take place between December 2007 and April 2008.

Aims of the reviews

The aim of the community consultation and engagement review was to consider the strengths and weaknesses of community consultation and engagement currently undertaken, with special regard to Streets Ahead, Street Champions and Chrysalis, and identify improvements that will result in communities being better able to influence council priorities and shape council services.

The aim of the cleanliness of the environment review was to review Hillingdon's cleansing service across a variety of land types, e.g. streets, parks, open spaces and estates, and make recommendations to Cabinet which will improve cleanliness across the Borough and raise residents' satisfaction.

Terms of Reference (as agreed in July 2007)

The terms of reference for the two reviews were:

Community Consultation and Engagement

1. To examine the council's framework for community consultation and benchmark it against the practice of a local authority graded as 'excellent'.
2. To examine the measures taken to ensure that all communities are engaged with and consulted.
3. To review the process and effectiveness of the feedback provided to participants of consultation.
4. To examine how the Council uses community engagement and consultation to shape services by looking at Streets Ahead, Street Champion and Chrysalis programmes.
5. To review the work and resources of the Community Leadership Team and to identify areas for improvement
6. To make recommendations that will result in communities being better able to influence council priorities and shape council services

Cleanliness of the Environment

1. To clarify the Council's statutory duty towards cleansing.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of current operations and use of resources.
3. To review performance measurement and influences on performance.
4. To review proposed service improvements and seek feedback from stakeholders, etc.

5. To consider the Council's role in cleanliness of private land, particularly where this affects the street scene.
6. To consider the Council's current approach to the removal of graffiti.
7. To consider how the public can help to keep the borough clean.

Importance

Through consultation and engagement, the Council seeks to improve service delivery, policy-making and community leadership. By building strong relationships with residents – listening to their views, responding to their needs and preferences – the Council is most likely to achieve success. The standard of local cleanliness is high on the public's agenda and cleansing services play a key part in the Council's street scene approach and locality working. The Council has a statutory duty to conform to the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and public health legislation.

Reasons for the review

The pace of change in society is quickening and the diversity of residents is increasing. The range of needs is consequently growing, requiring an excellent Council to be proficient at community consultation and engagement. At the same time, pressure on resources is increasing, so that some services will grow more slowly than others – again an excellent Council needs to take decisions that are informed by residents' priorities.

Street cleansing has been given a much higher profile in recent years, mirroring residents' priorities. Publication of the Capital Standards performance league tables has also highlighted comparisons. The Council recognises the need for improvement following poor ENCAMS survey scores a couple of years ago and has already made changes aimed at improving cleanliness. Extra funding for street cleansing in 2008/9, the Environment and Consumer Protection Whole Service Review (recently completed) and this review can be catalysts for further change.

Methodology (documents, witnesses, visits)

Documents referred to:

- Hillingdon's Consultation Strategy 2007
- Westminster One City Consultation 2006 and related documents
- The Department for Communities and Local Government "The New Place Survey – Consultation", December 2007.
- Hillingdon's consultation log from November 2006 to March 2008
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Hillingdon Homes Estate Service Standards – a visual guide to standards
- Hillingdon – Street Cleansing Improvement Programme

Witnesses

Community Consultation and Engagement:

Neil Wholey Head of Community Consultation, City of Westminster
Street Champions – John Davies, Norman Lindores and Christine Taylor
Chrysalis Grant Recipients – Jeanette Docherty, John Echlin and Ahmet Moustafa
Hillingdon Council officers:
David Holdstock Head of Communications
Natalie Thridgould Consultation Officer
Ian Edwards Head of Partnerships and Business & Community
Engagement
Nigel Cramb Community Resources Manager
Tracy Waters Performance Manager
Maggie Allen Community Leadership Manager
David Frost Streets Ahead & Street Champion Manager

Cleanliness of the Environment:

Mark Beaumont MPM Graffiti Solutions – the Council's graffiti removal
contractor
Cathy Knubley Manager, Street Cleansing, Hounslow
Matthew Watts Delivery Director – Local Government, ENCAMS
Rod Smith Head of Estate Management, Hillingdon Homes
Hillingdon Council officers:
Colin Russell Manager, Waste Division, ECP
Paul Naylor Green Spaces Services Manager
Bernard Carlo Monitoring Officer, Waste Division, ECP
Dave Kenealy Street Cleaning Supervisor, ECP

Cllr Sandra Jenkins, Cabinet Member for Environment took part in the Committee's 7th February 2008 meeting, when evidence was taken on both reviews.

Visits

The Committee took part in:

Streets Ahead events

Street Champion scheme launches

A visit to sites within the borough that illustrated cleanliness problems and solutions – this took place on 14th March 2008.



Residents at an Information Fair, before a Council Question Time event

3. Summary of findings

1. This chapter explains the evidence and rationale behind the Committee's recommendations. It draws on reports to the Committee and witness sessions. Records of the later can be found in the Committee's action sheets published on the Council website.

Community Consultation and Engagement – Hillingdon's Approach

2. The Head of Communications attended the Committee's first evidence session and described three strands to Hillingdon's consultation strategy:

- Consultation on plans
- Priority-setting – where views are used, for example, to inform "Fast Forward to 2010"
- Intelligence – finding out what residents think about the Council

3. Consultation at both Directorate and Corporate levels was described to the Committee. At the Directorate level, a considerable range of consultation is undertaken to identify residents' preferences, priorities and perceptions. Some matters are very localized, such as the choice between two tree-planting schemes in an area, while others are about broader policy and service delivery, e.g. how to tackle homelessness.

4. At Corporate level, there are presently two main approaches to identifying resident priorities and satisfaction - qualitative information and feedback from residents comes through the Council's established forums and events, including the successful Question Time events, while quantitative information is obtained through a residents' satisfaction survey. This survey has been conducted every three years. There had been debate about the adequacy of this approach and work undertaken to review it. Drivers for change are the introduction of a new performance framework for local government and Government proposals for a new national "place shaping" survey to be carried out by local government.

5. To ensure the Council takes a strategic and corporate approach to consultation, a Corporate Consultation Strategy was developed and approved by the Cabinet in June 2007. As result of the strategy, the Council maintains a central database of consultations and seeks to ensure that:

- Consultation is relevant and required
- Quality standards are met, e.g. inclusive and meaningful
- Consultation is co-ordinated to avoid replication and 'consultation fatigue'
- Opportunities for joint consultation (for example, with partners) are exploited whenever possible to ensue value for money
- Feedback mechanisms are built into the consultation process
- Results are used effectively to shape services, polices and future Council activity

6. When approving the strategy, the Cabinet agreed to establish a new post in the Communications Team to coordinate consultation across the Council and manage the implementation of the strategy. This post was filled at the beginning of 2008 and work has started on an action plan. This post will also manage the Council's citizens' panel.

City of Westminster's approach consultation and engagement

7. The City of Westminster is further ahead with its consultation strategy, having invested in its approach over several years, and is a Council judged in the Audit Commission's Corporate Performance Assessment as excellent. As part of this review, Neil Wholey, Head of Community Consultation, City of Westminster, explained to the Committee the approach taken in their "One City" strategy.

8. Westminster's consultation strategy has as its core principal the aim of finding out what residents want and what they think of Council services. This is done through:

- **A face-to-face residents survey every year**, covering corporate issues and with high buy-in from Council departments so that other consultation is kept to a minimum. This started by covering 1,000 residents, and has been extended to 3,000 residents, in order to contribute to a new initiative for neighbourhood plans and £100,000 budgets for each ward to spend, giving Councillors the power to respond to their communities' needs.
- **Quarterly telephone interviews of 500 households**, mainly on performance issues, but with ad hoc questions placed by and recharged to Council Departments.
- **Area Forums and ad hoc consultations** – for ad hoc consultation Westminster has a stakeholder database which it uses to target invitations effectively.
- **A specialist research company** which is used to contact and research the needs and views of the local minority ethnic communities, who might otherwise be under-represented in findings.

9. "One City" is Westminster's way of communicating its five-year plan and making sure it focuses on what people want. The process starts with the Leader's mid-March annual public speech. Themes are identified and the Leader selects around 15 to 20 One City projects on the basis of the residents' survey results or ideas put forward in staff consultation or as a result of proposals from departments. The One City team monitors progress on these projects in-year, and organises an end of year event with stakeholders at which they assess what has been achieved

and pick up new ideas.

10. Satisfaction levels in Westminster are high – around 77% overall – and priorities come through clearly. In the last survey, 41% of Westminster residents put street cleaning as their highest priority for action. A crucial factor in linking consultation and service performance is that the results of the survey and telephone interviews are fed back directly to Council departments and challenge takes place in meetings where the survey results are compared to performance data.

11. Research at Westminster indicates about 60% of residents say they want to be more engaged with the Council. When this is researched further about 60% of those people say the involvement they want is more information. Substantial involvement in meetings is unlikely and an unrealistic expectation. The key to increasing resident satisfaction is to focus on communications and recognition, so that residents are more informed about and aware of Council services.

12. While Westminster's approach is very comprehensive and has been successful for the borough, it comes at a price. The "one city" consultation has a substantial budget – confirmed to the Committee as in the £100,000s.

Conclusions on Community Consultation

13. The Committee concluded that the consultation strategy agreed by the Cabinet in 2007 had laid good foundations for developing effective consultation, and with the appointment of a Consultation Officer early in 2008 work has started to move forward. Westminster's approach is impressive and has informed the development of Hillingdon's strategy, but in terms of resources is beyond the current capacity of the Council and represents the position of a Council after several years of developing a consultation strategy. The Committee felt that there were some aspects of Hillingdon's strategy that could be developed further and agreed the following recommendations to the Cabinet:

- **To continue to survey residents regularly and ideally annually** to ensure the Council benefits from knowledge of what residents want and can check service priorities and performance against these.
- **To allow Directorates to "buy" extra questions in a regular council survey**, as they will value questions that they purchase and this could cut down on duplication of consultations.
- **To develop locality profiling and engage Ward Councillors in identifying the diversity of needs within their wards.** To consider better use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to map needs and issues.

14. Taking these actions should provide information to help services improve their response to local needs and strengthen ward Councillors' community leadership role.

The Chrysalis Programme

15. The Chrysalis Programme funds community-proposed environmental improvement projects and is aimed at improving Council land and facilities and working towards a safer, healthier environment. The programme was established in February 2000 when £750,000 in the capital programme was earmarked each year for 3 years to be shared across Chrysalis projects in the borough. Following its early success, the programme has continued with a budget increased to £900,000 in 2007/08 and to £1,000,000 for 2008/09. The Project Manager Community Leadership, who is based in the Deputy Chief Executives' Office, manages the programme, with delivery of agreed projects primarily undertaken by Environment and Consumer Protection Group.

17 The range of projects has included community safety schemes to provide gates at the end of alleys (alley-gating); improvements to play areas; fencing around community facilities; extra lighting and installation of CCTV. Appendix 1 lists projects approved for 2006/7, 2007/8 and 2008/9 by the borough's three parliamentary constituencies.

18. Bids for Chrysalis funding are invited annually. Applications have to be in by September and are considered in December by a panel of Members covering the 3 parliamentary constituencies who submit their views to the Cabinet for decision. Following agreement of the programme budget in February, projects are notified of approval in March, and can start from April onwards. The process is a competitive one, with the fund over-subscribed.

19. The Committee heard from three Chrysalis grant recipients:

John Echlin applied for a Chrysalis grant to provide extra security around the car park of a community centre. There had been a lot of unsavoury use and litter, so the centre decided to try to obtain a steel fence. He had first approached the Youth Section as the centre provided activities for young people, and they had suggested applying for a Chrysalis grant. As planning permission was needed, the process took some time. He applied for a Chrysalis grant in September 2006 and in February 2007 was advised that funding was approved. He then obtained a revised estimate that was agreed in April 2007 and the fence was erected in July 2007. The centre had previously tried unsuccessfully for a lottery grant.

Ahmet Moustafa spoke about the problems of fly-tipping and nuisance that had plagued the backs of homes in his area before a Chrysalis Grant had enabled him and his neighbours to have alley gates installed. These had been in place for three months and seemed to be working well. He felt the process of applying for a grant had gone smoothly.

Jeanette Docherty spoke about her experience of problems in Thurlstone Road, Rusilip Manor, with alley nuisances and the improvement that came from alley gates erected in 2007 as a result of gaining a Chrysalis grant.

20. The key improvements to the programme that recipients said they would like to see are: speedier approvals so that the time from application to fulfilling the need is reduced; twice rather than once yearly approvals of grant and more flexibility to carry over to the following year a grant if, for unavoidable reasons, it cannot be spent in the current year. Officers advised that there is some flexibility in this latter respect for exceptional cases. There was also strong support among witnesses for greater publicity to communicate the benefits of the Chrysalis programme to residents across the borough.

Conclusions on the Chrysalis Programme

21. The Committee concluded that this is valued programme, much in demand as evidenced by the regular over-subscription of bids. The increase in funding for 2008/09 is welcomed. It seems that many applicants are hearing about the programme through recommendation, and while this was clearly a successful method of generating bids, an annual direct notification to all community groups would also ensure inclusivity. The Committee shared concerns raised by grant recipients about the time taken from application to spend (8 to 9 months or more). They also agreed that the programme's public profile could be higher so that the wider community are aware of its benefits: The Committee therefore recommends:

- **Speeding up the process for considering applications and notifying applicants for Chrysalis grants**, with the aim of reducing delays between needs arising and funding being granted. Consideration might also be given to a second round of applications in-year.
- **Developing better publicity about the Chrysalis Programme**, to raise its profile with residents. This might be through posters, articles, the Council's website and information events.
- **Sending information about the scheme directly to community groups annually and continuing outreach work** to ensure all types of groups are aware of the Chrysalis programme and consider applying.

Street Champions

22. Street Champions are the eyes and ears of local communities and assist the Council in its aim of better provision of street services, ranging from street cleaning and refuse collection to road maintenance and grass cutting. The role involves reporting residents' concerns and environmental problems in and around their street, such as graffiti, abandoned cars, noise, damaged pavements and litter. Street Champions make reports to the Council using email, the Council's website, Council-supplied reply-paid Check Cards or by fax, phone or text message.

23. A borough-wide roll out of the Street Champions scheme was approved on 10 October 2006 following a review of Street Champion pilot schemes in Hayes End, South Uxbridge and Heathrow Villages. The pilot schemes demonstrated an overall increase in resident satisfaction with Street Scene services of 7.8%. An earlier exercise found that Street Champions themselves identified a very high level of satisfaction with the scheme (combined Good or Excellent score - 87.5%)

24. Street Champion recruitment and locality working has been planned around 7 areas, based upon Ward clusters:

- **Ruislip, Eastcote & Northwood Hills** (based upon Eastcote & East Ruislip, Northwood Hills and West Ruislip Wards) - launched
- **Hayes & Harlington** (based upon Botwell, Heathrow Villages and Pinkwell Wards) - launched
- **Brunel, West Drayton & Yiewsley** (based upon the same Wards) - launched
- **Harefield, Northwood & Ickenham** (based upon the same Wards) - launched
- **Hayes & Yeading** (based upon Barnhill, Charville, Townfield and Yeading Wards) – launched
- **Uxbridge** (based up on Hillingdon East, Uxbridge North and Uxbridge South Wards) – launched
- **South Ruislip** (based upon Cavendish, Manor and South Ruislip Wards) – Scheduled for Q2 of 2008/09

25. Recruitment uses a number of methods but principal among them is delivery of an A4 Street Scene leaflet to all properties within the target Wards of the locality, generally in the region of 12,000 to 15,000 properties. The quality of this process has been refined through successive launches, as has the effectiveness of the delivery method. The key change has been the insertion of a return address and postage onto the document, making it easier to complete and return.

26. Other methods of recruiting Street Champions include recruitment stands at monthly Streets Ahead events and Council Question time sessions, through meetings with community groups and residents associations, via the Council Web site, publicity in libraries, sports centres, etc, articles in Hillingdon People, promotions in local papers and via Neighbourhood Watch. The scheme has successfully recruited approximately 3,000 Street Champions. Equality data has been collected at recent launches and recruitment is being monitored to enable action to be taken if some groups are under-represented. Presentations have been given to organisations for disabled people and to the older person's assembly.

27. The Committee heard from two Street Champions at their January meeting:

Christine Taylor had been one of the original people involved in the pilot version of the Streets Champion scheme from 2002, as result of involvement with a local Residents Association. She has stayed involved with the scheme and has seen the benefit in areas such as Harlington where residents associations are lacking.

An example of achievement was obtaining bollards near a school to stop inappropriate parking. She recommended that people coming forward to be a Street Champion should see it as a partnership role, not a policing role. Local issues of concern to her were dealing with crime and nuisance and the threat of the third runway at Heathrow. After the pilot, Street Champions had been grouped together over larger areas for quarterly meetings, and she was concerned that some might feel their voices would not be heard or that commonality of interest would be reduced.

John Davies said he had been a reluctant, more recent volunteer to be a Street Champion but felt that as he had complaints, he should volunteer. He had heard good feedback from other volunteers about the scheme. His experience was that the Council was good at dealing with routine street problems but if something needed money, there might be a delay. He was concerned about the lack of feedback if there is a delay or if nothing, for understandable reasons, can be done.

Conclusions – Street Champions

28. Members of the Committee have attended Street Champion area launches and knew of the work of Champions in their wards, as well as hearing first-hand from officers and Street Champions about experiences and developments. The programme has been very successful with approximately 3,000 Street Champions recruited and a target to achieve 5,000 by the end of calendar year 2008. The Committee welcomes the extra resources agreed by the Council for 2008/9 to strengthen the central team in ECP that supports and promotes the scheme. The Committee's recommendations are aimed at helping achieve continued success:

- **Explore means of improving the response to Street Champion reports without detriment to service delivery.** Growth in the number of Street Champions is placing increasing demand on the contact centre and responding officers in Directorates. Street Champions usually know that a report has been action when they see matters have changed, but when action cannot be taken or is delayed, some feel left in the dark. Reviewing response standards and notification processes might identify improvements that would raise satisfaction levels.
- **Consider broadening the scope of the scheme.** The Committee welcomes the extra resources agreed by the Council for 2008/9 to strengthen the central team in ECP that supports and promotes the scheme. The team's ideas of broadening the scheme by, for example, creating a "junior Street Champion scheme" for children or young people, are welcomed and should be developed for discussion with the Cabinet Member for Environment. Working with schools may be a practical way of taking this forward.
- **Take steps to ensure that Street Champions reflect the communities from which they are drawn.** The scheme should aim to be inclusive and offer opportunities to all sections of the community.

Streets Ahead

29. 'Streets Ahead' is a programme that involves Council departments and partners¹ in days of action. Activities on the day may include truancy sweeps, graffiti removal, community litter picks, street cleansing, removal of fly tips and bulky waste, park patrols, trading standards inspections, vehicle stop searches, food outlet and health & safety inspections and parking, highways and utilities enforcement. Aimed at engagement, education and enforcement - the programme has been rolled out across the borough.

30. Leading up to events, the input of local people is gathered and is used as a determining factor in what to target on the day. Often these are longstanding complaints that have not previously been addressed. The programme stages are:

- **Stage 1 – Involvement of Groups:** Three months prior to the event, community groups, residents associations, neighbourhood watch schemes, etc, are contacted and invited to meet the Community Leadership Co-ordinators to find out about the scheme. They can consider whether and how they would like to be engaged, for example, by running an information stall, arranging an activity such as a litter pick, clean up etc, attending a Guest Tour, or helping to promote and publicise the event. They are expected to share this information within their wider groups. In Wards where the Street Champions scheme is in operation, contact with Street Champions by letter or email is made in advance of the event to offer the opportunity to participate.
- **Stage 2 – Involvement of Ward Councillors:** Ward councillors are invited to meet their Community Leadership Co-ordinator a month prior to the event to discuss a long-list of priorities obtained through the consultation with the residents. A ward-walk and audit may follow to identify specific issues.
- **Stage 3 – Streets Ahead Launch:** Residents are invited to attend the event launch. Where possible engagement work is highlighted during the launch. For example, in Pinkwell ward, school children took part in project that involved taking pictures of unsightly areas and reporting them to the Council's Contact Centre for action during the launch event.
- **Young people:** A local school within the event area is selected and visited by the Mayor of Hillingdon, the Hillingdon Homes Manager and members of the Safer Schools and Safer Neighbourhoods Team to present to young people the impact anti social behaviour has in the community.

¹ Local partners include the Metropolitan Police, Safer Neighbourhoods Teams, London Fire Brigade, Hillingdon Homes, Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), Vehicle and Operator Services Agency VOSA, Probation Service and the Department of Work & Pensions

- **Stage 4 – Marketplace:** this takes place on the day of action and provides information and advice in a way that is tailored to suit the needs of the Ward. The Crime Prevention Bus and a fire engine are regular features and crime prevention messages and fire-proof surveys are offered. The concerns of the community are recorded using an interactive board, which also communicates the work being tackled on the day. Through a guest tour, Officers explain to a group of pre-booked guests and local people the action being taken and how services work.

Conclusions – Streets Ahead

31. Members of the Committee have taken part in Streets Ahead events and seen the practical benefits in terms of co-ordinated action, raising community awareness of services and dealing with often long-standing problems. The Committee were, however, aware of a case when event notices had failed to be delivered to part of an area. The Committee recommend that:

- **More information should be sent to Ward Councillors in advance of Streets Ahead events** so that they know what they can ask for. An information pack, based on outcomes of past Streets Ahead events, sent in advance to Ward Councillors would add value to the Councillor briefings held the month before by the Community Leadership Team.
- **Steps should be taken to improve pre-event publicity**, by monitoring whether communications reach residents and taking action if delivery failures occur.

Encouraging community environmental action

32. Councils have a duty to promote the well being of the community and are encouraged to work in partnership with local organisations and residents in doing this. Some Community or Residents groups or community-minded citizens already carry out voluntary environmental action for the benefit of the community, e.g. regular litter picking or clean ups. But to make an impact this needs to be sustained and supported. Experience shows that the task can turn out to seem relentless and unrewarded and too often ends up left to a few stalwarts, after initial enthusiasm fades.

Conclusions – encouraging community environmental action

33. To respond to residents already working to help keep the borough clean and encourage others to become or stay involved, the Committee recommends:

- **Introducing a reward scheme for significant community environmental action.** The Committee has asked the Cabinet Member for the Environment to consider rewarding residents who provide substantial help to keep

Hillingdon clean and tidy, for example, by organizing regular litter picking, and to consider where the Council could provide bags for litter, gloves and litter picking tongs. An awards ceremony could take place during an annual event for Street Champions and others involved in environmental action.

- **Lobbying the Government via London Councils to introduce civic pride legislation requiring premises holders to have a duty to keep the front of their premises clean.** This type of legislation already exists in some other European countries, e.g. in parts of Germany and Sweden.

Cleansing Services

34. During the second review – on Cleanliness of the Environment - the Committee took evidence from a range of witnesses, including Hillingdon's cleansing manager and staff, Hounslow's cleansing manager; the ENCAMS delivery director for local government; the estates manager for Hillingdon Homes; Hillingdon's green spaces manager and the Council's graffiti contractor.

Current cleansing operations

35. Colin Russell, Waste Services Division Manager, explained that the Cleansing Service in Hillingdon currently has around 73 staff per day (Monday to Friday), with 17 to 18 working on Saturday and Sunday, who are a mix of mechanical vehicle drivers, sweeping teams and solo sweepers. Other tasks that come within the responsibilities of the service are dog bin emptying and graffiti removal. Hillingdon is the second largest London borough in terms of area but has had one of the lowest spends on street cleaning. Around 90% of the work is scheduled and planned, while 10% is responsive and reactive.

36. The breakdown of resources within the borough in 2007/8 was:

North of the borough - total staff = 26.

3 green machines,

4 vans,

2 large mechanical sweepers,

one HGV fortnightly,

solo sweepers – 4 in shopping areas, 6 community based.

South of the borough - total staff = 47.

6 green machines,

7 vans,

4 large mechanical sweepers,

one HGV fortnightly,

solo sweepers – 5 in shopping areas, 15 community based.

Across the borough:

Around 500 litter bins at shop areas

Around 1000 litter bins in outlying areas

Dog bins = 262 on highway, 297 in parks/green spaces and 7 in housing land.

37. The basis for standards is the Environmental Protection Act 1990, which lays down standard of work and response times over different land uses. In simple terms, when reports of fly tipping, litter, etc, are made to Hillingdon's contact centre, they are usually rectified by the next working day.

38. Scheduled work takes account of cleansing need and is carried out, as follows:

- Town centres (thorough the day)
- Minor shopping parades (daily)
- School routes (morning work – unable to do after school)
- Main thoroughfares (avoiding rush hour)
- Beat Teams deal with school areas, etc. Consist of a driver + 2
- Residential road have a pre-determined beat. In the North this is once every 5 weeks and in the South, once every 3 weeks. This reflects the varying nature of parts of the borough.
- Green Machines are used to deal with pavements, tackling detritus.
- Solos (an operative with a broom and bin) are neighbourhood/community based. These have proved very popular where introduced.
- A40 / A4 and other such dangerous main roads e.g. Stockley Road, Harvil Road – when cleaning, the traffic management and lane closure is done via TfL (and costs £6K per time), generally done as night work.

39. Responsive work is done in response to a call to the Contact Centre or other report, and also includes dealing with:

- Fly tipping
- Dog Fouling

40. Performance: the best measurement is public feedback, which comes from Council roadshows or Question times, residents' groups and Street Champions. Two years ago cleaning was high on residents' agenda and comments were critical. Efforts to improve services since then appear to be paying off, as the Cleansing Service has experienced less comment and more thanks. A MORI opinion poll in 2006/7 showed residents' satisfaction with street cleaning had improved by 14%, but it still remains a high priority for action in residents' views.

41. ENCAMS – the environmental charity best know for its "Tidy Britain" campaigns in the past – is funded by the government to carry out regular national surveys of cleanliness in the areas of responsibility covered by local authorities. This external measurement covers public parks, open spaces, highway, industrial land and housing estates, and is used as the basis of best value performance target (BV119). Three surveys are carried out a year, covering road/pavement condition, weed growth, etc, with separate detritus and litter scores given. Results have tended to focus on street cleaning, rather than estates or other areas. There is now an unofficial London league table from the results, with the highest spending boroughs top of the league. In general, Hillingdon is good at litter but bad at

detritus, partly reflecting its status as a “leafy” borough. In the last survey, covering Oct–Dec 2007, Hillingdon was 5th best in London on litter but 5th worst on detritus.

SCORES on the ENCAMS survey

04/05 = 61 (i.e. 61% of inspected areas were below standard)

05/06 = 43

06/07 = 35

07/08..... Heading for small improvement.

Aim – to reach the London average of 25-28.

42. ENCAMS have undertaken a detailed review of problematic areas in borough and recommended a greater focus on:

- Detail, e.g. backs of cable boxes / dirt in potholes
- Communication with businesses
- Grounds maintenance – e.g. boxing grass cuttings
- Highways repairs and maintenance, which would cut down problems such as cracks and holes trapping detrius

43. Partnership: This is an important part of keeping the borough clean and tidy. The establishment of Street Champions has raised the profile of cleanliness and helped action to be taken promptly to deal with problems. Residents’ groups also have a role and have campaigned and contributed to raising standards, e.g. Tidy Harefield. However, very few residents’ groups currently clear highway land or parks and open spaces.

44. Graffiti: This is a growing problem for Hillingdon and surrounding Councils. The Councils’ contractor operates 5 teams a day – 2 teams from 6.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. and 3 teams from 2.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. Much of the work involves cleaning shop shutters. In the case of big business and high up graffiti, the owners are required to clean off the graffiti. Overall, reported graffiti jobs have risen substantially:

04/05 = 3250

05/06 = 5315

06/07 = 6685

07/08 = 8000

Timescales for cleaning are inside 2 days, with current performance at 1.7 days. Racist or offensive is cleared much more quickly – within 4 hours currently, against a standard of 24 hours. A “clear all” graffiti policy, while it might be desirable, would be complex and prohibitively costly. Other boroughs have not found a successful way of making small and medium-sized businesses pay for or carry out their own graffiti removal.

Evidence

45. Matthew Watts, Delivery Director – Local Government for ENCAMS, advised that to get the most from resources, the council should consider targeting town centres and gateways into the borough; give high density residential areas more attention; and ensure a service is in place to deal with both litter and detritus. He advised that high performing cleansing services rely on more on manual than mechanical methods, as the traditional sweeper with a broom tends to be more thorough. Where the Council fell down was on detritus, e.g. mud, soil and grime. Regular, good quality operations were required, using both mechanical and manual means. Educating operatives not to miss or overlook problem areas would help.

46. Mark Beaumont of MPM Graffiti Solutions, the Council's contractor, told the Committee that they removed 25,000 square metres of graffiti in the borough over the last 6 months, equating to 50 square metres per day. This was about standard for similar boroughs. Of the boroughs that MPM worked for, Ealing was the largest spender with 12 teams compared to Hillingdon's 5 teams. Mark felt that the way the Council's contract attacked the problem was the best way, through a double-shift approach that enables graffiti to be taken off, for example, when shutters are down. Asked about using anti-graffiti paint and providing "graffiti walls" to distract from other sites, Mark Beaumont said he could not recommend either as cost-effective solutions.

47. The Committee heard that more prevention and deterrence would be attractive as graffiti removal costs this Council about £500,000 a year. Hillingdon officers reported that in some areas Community Police Officers had had an impact and a few prosecutions had taken place of perpetrators. Mark Beaumont confirmed that before and after photos are taken and there is liaison with the police. It was agreed that more emphasis could be given to publicity against perpetrators.

48. The Committee visited parks and streets to see problems at first hand. In relation to green spaces, Paul Naylor, Hillingdon's Green Spaces Manager, told the Committee that the current frequency for cleaning parks and green spaces was about every 2 weeks or when problems are spotted or reported, for example, by Ranger patrols. Cleaning appeared to be adequate, especially where there were site-based staff to monitor and report. The best time to clean in summer would be on a Monday, after weekend use, rather than mid-week. Different solutions were needed for different types of area. Mechanical sweepers gave suitable areas a once a month sweep but litter picking remained a manual job.

49. The Committee's visit also took in a busy high street and both residential and more rural roads. Whilst cleanliness standards generally appeared to be good, problem areas where litter collected were evident, e.g. earth or rough areas around trees or signs; underneath street seats; cigarette ends near pubs and clubs, etc. The smoking ban has increased the problem of cigarette ends on high streets.

50. Rod Smith, Estate Manager for Hillingdon Homes, described to the Committee work to improve cleanliness of Hillingdon Homes' estates. Considerable work had taken place in recent years to develop decent homes and this was now focused on

also achieving decent estates. Until March 2008, there had only been a responsive and not a regular input into keeping external areas such as access roads, garage surroundings and other hard surfaces clean. From April 2008, £200,000 of growth in caretaking surfaces meant that all shared surfaces would receive regular input to set standards.

51. Hillingdon Homes' estate standards of cleanliness had been developed with the involvement of tenants and were visually presented in a guide showing what was not and what was acceptable in a variety of situation. Every estate was inspected on a monthly basis and results published. Estate Champions were also trained on what to look for and what to report. The aim next year was to move to Tenant inspectors. The Committee commended the clarity of visual standards guide - an approach that might be used in other situations - and the actions being taken and planned to raise the standard of cleanliness on estates.

52. The Committee heard from Cathy Knubley, Hounslow's Cleansing Manger, on recent improvements made in Hounslow's street cleaning service. Hounslow was chosen as a comparison borough because it has a similar-sized cleaning budget, is an outer borough and has similar problems with achieving standards. The main changes Hounslow introduced in the service, and which are thought to have produced the improvement in public satisfaction with street cleaning in their annual council survey, were:

- Re-zoning so waste collection took place on the same day as recycling collections.
- Re-zoning so that cleaning follows the day after refuse/ recycling collections (except when these are on Friday)
- Cleansing operatives start out in the borough rather than from the depot.
- Staff wear uniform/equipment has logos - increases public awareness of street cleaning.
- Increased emphasis on manual (solo) sweeping and an increase in resources to provide this.
- Seven rapid response teams
- Training of front line staff.

Conclusions – Cleansing Services

53. A welcomed injection of £280,000 was agreed by the Council for the 2008/9 street cleaning budget to provide 10 extra solo sweepers (person with a broom) plus 2 mechanical sweeping machines with drivers. The evidence from experts and other local authorities confirms that solo sweepers are the most effective ways of keeping areas thoroughly cleaned. The service is already improving but from the evidence given to the Committee there are changes that would now be possible which should take standards forward and raise residents' satisfaction. The Committee recommends:

- **Aiming to carry out street sweeping the day after refuse collection in 80% of the borough by the end of the financial year.** The recent

increase in street cleaning resources offers the prospect of revising rotas to achieve this and so deal promptly with any litter arising from split rubbish bags.

- **Officers should investigate and report to the Cabinet Member on the costs of and potential for introducing uniforms and logos on equipment to raise public awareness of cleaning.** Evidence from another borough is that this raises recognition of services and translates into higher satisfaction levels. This may need to be phased in to be achieved within the existing budget.
- **The Cleansing Service should take over the monitoring of our standards of cleanliness.** This would replace the ENCAMS monitoring and reflect more accurately the views of residents. In the short term both ENCAMS and internal monitoring would be used in order to provide a comparison.
- **All types of Council land should have regular cleansing based on need and need would determine the frequency required.** This would cover streets, highway land, green spaces, parks, car parks and housing land. It needs, over time, to be built into contractual arrangements and/or service level agreements.
- **Introducing strategically-placed and suitable size bins near places that are now experiencing higher levels of litter since the smoking ban, e.g. pubs and clubs.** Bins have already been placed at bus stops and stations where needed but the smoking ban has created new litter spots, especially in High Streets. New designs of bins are emerging to provide solutions.
- **More emphasis on raising the skills of staff in cleansing** through training, good visual guides as to what is and is not acceptable and by reducing the size of patch covered by solo sweepers, so that it is cleaned more thoroughly. The latter should be possible with the increase in funding.
- **Officers developing closer working between Councillors, street cleaning services and the enforcement service to deal more effectively with intractable problems,** e.g. recurrent graffiti, fly-tipping and litter on land not owned by the Council. Solutions might include quicker identification of problems, publicity in relation to perpetrators or contacts with land-owners to request barriers.

Appendix

CHRYSALIS PROGRAMME - SCHEDULE OF THE 41 PROJECTS FUNDED FROM 2005-2008

Project name	Description of Work	allocation £'000s
Ruislip Rugby	Safe route to school	8.0
Trevor Cres paths	Phase II DDA compliant link paths	10.0
Chestnut Ave Play	Provision of new play equipment	21
Woodlands Ave Play	Provision of new play equipment	32.0
Manor Farm Pram Shed	Renovation of the pram shed at Manor Farm site re collection of farming implements	15
Cavendish Bowls Club	Improved site security and bowling facilities	66
Eastcote Hockey Fencing	Fencing improvement and car park resurfacing including lighting and CCTV	16
Eastcote Hockey Car Parks	Refurbishment and extension of two council owned car parks	34.0
Park Lane Patio Area	Enhanced patio area	15.0
Parkfield Crescent Play	Provision of new play equipment	20.0
Hill Lane Play	Provision of new play equipment and fencing	75.0
Ickenham anti-m'bike	Gating	7.0
Court Park Bowls	Installation of new fencing and gates	4
Cowley Rec Play	Renew fencing, and renew car park	54.3
Mayfield Close Ball Park	Install of ball park	25.0
Sweetcroft Scouts fence	Installation of new fencing	12.0
Uxbridge Tennis	Hard court resurfacing	17.0
Yiewsley Rec Trees	Tree planting	12
Yiewsley Rec Ground Sensory Garden	Sensory garden	22
Connaught Rec Play	Provision of new play equipment	56
Uxbridge Common Trees	Tree planting	12.0
Colham Paths	New pathway	20
Swakeleys Tennis	Resurfacing of area	16.0
Yiewsley & WD Bowls	Resurfacing of bowls club	35.0
Hayes CC Storage	Security shutters	4.0
Hayes End Rec Ph 2	Provision of play equipment	25.0
Granges Footbridge	Provision of footbridge and lighting	6.0

Yeading Lane Youth Shelter	Provision of youth shelter	3.0
Larch Crescent Play	Provision of new play equipment	30.0
Cranford x - Berkeley	Removal of trees and rubbish	7.0
Yeading Community Fence	Fencing improvement.	12.0
Rosedale CCTV	General security works	11.0
Grosvenor Car Park Works	Resurfacing of car park	50.0
Willowtree Marina	Restoration of restoration area	39.0
Barra Hall Fence	Security fencing	55.0
Botwell Bowls Lighting	New Lighting for Bowls Club	35.0
Norman Leddy Gardens	Various environmental improvements	32.0
Gating Alleyways	30 schemes implemented across the borough	69.0
CCTV Stand Alone systems	Cameras installed in Glebe Avenue	5.1
Hayes Town Centre CCTV	Various cameras installed	10.0
Tree Planting	Tree planting	39.0