



FOR: Regeneration & Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee

ON: 28th January 2015

RE: Update Report of the Performance & Downsizing of Environment (with Highways) Task Group.

1. Purpose of the Report

For Members of the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Committee to note the information discussed at the performance and downsizing of Environment (with Highways) task group and to consider its next steps.

2. Background

At the first meeting in the municipal year of the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members agreed that it would be beneficial to have an in-depth review on Environment and Highways portfolio to allow Members to understand the priorities of how the service would look going forward and how previous and future budget cuts have affected the performance and downsizing of the service.

3. Next steps

Since the last meeting of the Committee held on the 3rd December 2014, a request from the Performance & Downsizing of Environment (with Highways) Task Group has been made, for additional information around Sickness levels, Customer complaints, the Workforce perspective, Performance data, and Service requests over the last three/ five years.

This information will be available around the end of January early February and the Task Group will meet again to consider the information before agreeing recommendations.

Additionally the Director of Environment, Housing & Customer Services has advised the Chair and Vice Chair of an intended future service review in his portfolio and the need for an agreement of a 'baseline' of his service. It was felt that the next phase of task group could help to make a contribution to agreeing that baseline, subject to Committee approval.

The Director has offered the Chair and Vice Chair of the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods OSC a place on the review steering group to join the Executive Member for Environment and other senior officers including the Unions in influencing the review moving forwards. It was advised that the review would take place to look at the future of Environment and Highways for savings 2016-2018 and how to better productivity and value for money.

It was felt that the steering group would benefit from having Members of the Scrutiny Committee on board (in an advisory capacity), if the Committee felt it appropriate for the Chair and Vice Chair to be part of it. Regular updates from the review would be provided to the Committee

This report contains all the notes from the performance and downsizing of Environment (with Highways) task group, which had previously been submitted to the Committee. Members are asked to consider if they are happy with the information that they have received from Officers and agreed if they wish to seek additional information or agree recommendations for the January Committee.

4. Recommendations

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the Committee accept the offer from the Executive Member for Environment, for the Chair and Vice-Chair to sit on the Environment Portfolio review steering group once it starts.
- 3) That the Committee agree to the additional remit of the performance and downsizing of Environment (with Highways) task group to include reviewing the benchmark for the Environment Portfolio review.
- 4) That once the performance and downsizing of Environment (with Highways) task group has received this additional information it has requested, recommendations be considered and submitted to the Committee meeting to be held on the 16th March 2015

5. Outcome of the Task Group Meetings

1. Highways

Sayyed Osman, Director of Environment, Housing & Neighbourhoods provided Members with a brief overview of his portfolio and the budget pressures within each area. Sayyed confirmed that because of the size of his portfolio additional task groups would be arranged to provide members with information relating to Environment and Public Protection.

Simon Butt, Head of Highways, circulated to Members a copy of his presentation, 'Delivering Highways Maintenance Efficiency Savings'. Members were provided with background information relating to the implementation of the Highways Asset Management Integrated Service (HAMIS).

Simon explained that the partnership between Capita Symonds and the Council provided the full range of highways and property services with the traditional consultancy (white collar) services sitting within Capita Symonds; and operations (blue collar) elements of the service being retained by the council and delivered through their Direct Services Organisation (DSO).

Members were told that the consultancy and operational services teams have not always had the best of relationships, with communication between them often strained and in need of improvement. The partnership between Capita Symonds and the Council alone did not resolve the problems between the consultancy and operational teams. However, in the summer of 2008 Capita Symonds was volunteered to undertake a review of the entire service to understand how the structures, processes and relationships affected the service outcomes.

This review identified issues in the end to end delivery process, but most importantly highlighted that the ultimate goal of improving the condition of the network would not be achieved unless the historic problems and barriers associated with the consultancy and operational teams were resolved. With this in mind, Capita Symonds set out the concept of an integrated service which would, for the first time, bring the consultancy and operational teams together under the banner of HAMIS (Highways Asset Management Integrated Service). The team would have a common approach with a focus on risk, efficiency, quality assurance and growth.

Simon told Members that a number of other options were considered including outsourcing the operational teams but these were quickly discounted since it was felt that the extent of the inefficiencies would have inflated the price charged by the private sector.

Simon informed Members that in relation to budget cuts Highways had to find a 20% saving for 2015/17. Members were informed that due to the nature of certain services only a third of the portfolio could be looked at for potential savings.

Simon highlighted some of the services that could not be looked at for potential savings:

Road Inspections – Members were advised that road Inspections were in place to reduce insurance claims and provide the Council with a strong defence should a claim against the Council be made. Simon told Members that in 2006 £1 million pound was spent on insurance claims and legal costs, now the Council set aside a reduced amount of £400k. Simon explained that the Councils defence needed to be robust and without regular road inspections insurance claims and legal costs would increase.

Carbon Tax – Members were advised that the Council have to pay a carbon tax and £260k had been set aside. Simon explained that the biggest contribution to the carbon tax bill was the Council buildings which are mostly inefficient for lighting and heating.

Simon highlighted to Members the current budget position and revenue budget for 2014/15 as outlined within his presentation. Members were informed that from a £5 million budget £270k was ring fenced for winter maintenance, £407k for 3rd party insurance claims, £835k for energy & lighting, £790k for statutory services that have to be provided, £2 million is income generated and £700k for all other maintenance costs.

Members were informed that the current work streams included:

- Routine Maintenance - Pothole repairs, street light repairs, gully cleaning.
- Capital Highways projects – Guide Roundabout, Pennine Reach and J5 M65
- LED Retrofit Project
- DeFRA (Department for Environment), EA (Environment agency) and UU (United Utilities) flood resilience works
- Public Utility Management (Gas, BT etc.)
- Developer and Internal Council projects

Simon explained that the substantial cuts to street sweepers had increased the amount of blocked gully's which are mainly being blocked by leaves especially in autumn. Members held a discussion regarding educating residents on how to keep gully's outside their properties tidy through your call: your community and ward solution meetings.

Members were told that as well as the current budget pressures there were ongoing issues:

- The current capital programme of works is unsustainable; however, this now supplements revenue work and the budget

- There are a number of potholes to repair to continue to maintain the Council's insurance defence.
- The average age of the workforce is 50+
- Poor Health limits capability for certain operatives
- Outputs/efficiency not what they could be
- Quality of work can be poor at times
- Reliant on ageing vehicles

Simon explained that the average age of the workforce ranges from 52-54 with the majority of the role involving manual work. Simon added that the workers work ethos had changed since single status had been introduced. At the last round of cuts 5 members of staff requested early retirement but was turned down due to costs.

Members commented that whilst early retirement can carry substantial costs, in the long run it could be more cost effective.

Members were told that sickness levels were high with 3 members of staff on long term sickness and 6 other members of staff absent with ongoing historic issues. It was added that due to the equipment needed for many of the roles workers who had been in the job for a number of years suffer effects from using hand held vibrating tools.

Simon informed Members that previous budget cuts had resulted in the workforce not completing work to a high standard and explained that the quality of work at times was poor due to quantity over quality demands. Members were told that workers now need to be re-educated to make sure all work carried out was to a high standard regardless of the budget pressures/cuts.

Members were advised of what officers felt was needed to be done to improve the service:

- Continual monitoring of key outputs (KPIs): HAMIS monthly board has now been established – (Members requested a copy of the KPI's and volumetric data for April 2014)
- Evaluations on productivity needed – benchmarking private contractors V's in-house outputs
- Bring in apprentices/younger staff as older staff retire
- Quality of work needs to be monitored and improved
- Look to utilise more innovative techniques/plant/materials

In response to questioning from Members regarding the experience and knowledge of older workers and whether this could be put to use to train young apprentices, Simon explained that the Council are looking at a training scheme to take on apprentices, however, in the current climate with budget cuts it could prove difficult.

Members held a discussion regarding potholes and road re-surfacing and expressed concerns that members of the public do not know when a pothole is being fixed or if it has been brought to the attention of the Council. It was felt by Members that there was a lack of knowledge within the community on road improvements.

Simon told Members that the public could report potholes via the Council's website where the safety inspection procedure was also available to view. Members were also advised that potholes are identified by Officers walking around the borough.

Members also held a discussion regarding the winter maintenance programme and the issues that members of the public had around grit salt and the availability of it during the winter months. Members agreed that in some areas of the borough the use of grit salt was misused. Suggestions were made that ward Members could work with the Council to speak to local residents about the correct usage of grit salt.

It was noted that the winter maintenance Facebook page was very popular amongst residents of Blackburn with Darwen and that maybe something similar could be introduced around the re-surfacing/dressing of roads to keep the borough informed.

2. Street Cleaning and Refuse

Sayed Osman, provided Members with a brief overview of his portfolio and the budget pressures within each area. He explained that Environment and Public Protection forms around £10 million of the £13.5 million budget for the service and that certain aspects of the Environment portfolio were statutory and therefore reductions to the budget would be restricted.

Members were provided with a brief update in relation to the procurement for waste management and were advised that papers had been sent to the Executive Board in August 2014 with a view to use Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority (GMWDA). New Members of the Committee were informed that last year the Committee played a major part in contributing towards the future of waste management.

Tony Watson advised Members that the Environment portfolio was split into four areas: Refuse, Street Cleansing, Grounds Maintenance and Cemeteries and Crematoriums.

Refuse

Members were advised that the in-house refuse collection service comprises of 9 frontline vehicles plus 3 spares (which would reduce to 2 spares for 2014/15). Tony explained that all vehicles were replaced

after 5 years due to the damage (caused from going to landfill, however, once a nearby transfer station is in place this would be increased to 7 years life per vehicle).

Tony informed Members that the cost to purchase a vehicle is approximately £160,000, with maintenance costs of approximately £15-£20k per annum. He added that fuel usage is 2.5mpg but explained that the Council were currently trialling new electric lifts which has displayed an increase of fuel usage to 3.5mpg.

Tony highlighted to Members that vehicles were used for residual refuse collections Monday to Thursday with a number of vehicles used on Fridays and Saturdays to collect green waste to maximise productivity of the vehicles. Tony also reported that green waste staff were employed on a seasonal basis through the Council's Employment Agency.

It was noted that green waste was still collected in the winter months at the request of Members.

With regards to performance it was advised that 59,000 properties were serviced each week for residual collections ranging from the rural collection round, servicing 2,500 per week to an average of 7,062 properties per week for the remaining rounds over 4 days per week. 27,000 properties were serviced once a fortnight for garden waste. Members were told that this puts the Council in the upper quarter for performance in the country as per the ASPE data 2011/12.

Members were provided with the following statistics:

- Approximately 30 complaints are received each week
- There are 8,000 properties on sack collections
- There are 900 properties on assisted collections (due to elderly or infirm)
- Approximately 60 replacement bins (all colours) are issued each week
- After a number of years of landfill tonnage decrease, the last 2 years have seen the tonnage stabilise, but so far this year landfill tonnage has increased by 10%.

Members were also provided with information relating to the 2014/15 refuse collection budgets costs:

- Employee costs £1,139,900
- Premises costs, services and repairs to storage facilities £2,700
- Transport costs £947,400
- Supplies and Services
 - Equipment and materials – replacement bins and sacks £43,400

- Protective clothing £12,400
- Communication expenses radios and phones £3,100
- Miscellaneous expenses – balance if more bins are needed £6,600
- Contributions to provisions and funds insurance £30,900

As a result of questioning from Members Tony advised that the Council currently use the Whinney Hill Waste Disposal site in Accrington. He added that if there was a facility in the borough it would significantly reduce time. It was also advised that the Council have gone out to tender for the transfer station and companies such as SITA and Neales have both shown an interest.

It was established through further questioning from Members that the complaints received by the Council focus on two main areas, resident's bins have not been emptied or bins have not been returned. Members were advised that since the vehicles have been fitted with CCTV and tracking devices the Council have been able to resolve the complaints quickly.

The cost of replacement bins was queried and Members were informed that the Council charge £20 for the replacement of burgundy bins (residual waste bin).

Members and officers held a discussion about the amount of time spent resolving whether a bin had been emptied or not. Sanyal informed Members that moving forwards in the future the Council would like to see bar coded bins and an infra-red scanning system to track all refuse collections.

Members held a detailed discussion regarding winter maintenance and asked what measures have been put in place for this year. It was advised that staff members would be provided with traction for their shoes and winter tyres would be fitted on the Council's fleet of vehicles. Members were also informed that as a result of previous bad winters the Council would be more prepared to ensure residents of the borough received minimum disruption.

Members held a discussion with regards to bio fuel and questioned whether the Council have explored the process. Officers explained that it is a new process and the technology in this country is new and untested.

Street Cleansing

Tony informed Members that the in-house service for street cleansing comprises of:-

Seven mechanical sweepers which cover the borough on a rota system up to 7 days a week. The vehicles follow set area working, with the borough split into 3 neighbourhood areas with 2 sweepers in each area plus Blackburn Town Centre, which has one sweeper.

Each neighbourhood area has a team leader who supervises and helps deliver the street cleansing service in their respective neighbourhood area. In Blackburn Town Centre, there are 2 town centre caretakers (working 5 days over 6 each week) who supervise and help deliver the workload of street cleansing and grounds maintenance in the town centre. Members were told that previously there had been a night shift but this was cut due to budget savings.

Litterbins (1,100) are emptied by 2 dedicated vehicles at least weekly, some are daily in the town centres of Blackburn with Darwen. Other litterbins are emptied by refuse collection teams.

There are two caged tippers with a driver and operative on each who collect bulky waste (paid jobs) and also fly tipped waste during the weekdays. The teams work in specific areas.

The service also operates a waste transfer station at Davyfield Road, where bulky, fly tipped, street cleansing arising's and other wastes are taken for sorting and recycling, with any residual waste is landfilled. Using a transfer station cuts down on the amount of lost time that would be incurred, by sending sweeping vehicles to tip at the landfill site in Accrington.

Members were informed that the litterbin vehicles with lifts, for the larger bins, cost approximately £5.5k extra, therefore the Council are trying to reduce the number of larger litter bins to reduce costs.

Members held a discussion regarding the frequency of street cleansing and explained to officers that residents are not aware of how often street bins are emptied.

It was advised that bulky waste collections cost £10 for up to 5 items. Members were told that previously the cost had been increased to £20 but last year the cost was reduced after an increase in fly tipping.

It was discussed that in the future, the Council would like to work with housing associations to Freecycle goods (bulky items).

3. Grounds Maintenance and Cemetery and Crematoria Services.

Tony Watson provided Members with a list of areas covered by the Council for grounds maintenance, these included:

- Formal outdoor recreation sites, including outdoor sports facilities and Bowling Greens
- Parks and Gardens
- Urban Green Space
- Wildlife & Nature Conservation Areas

Members were informed that there were 14 formal Parks and Public Gardens within the borough, as identified by the Council's open space strategy. Tony also informed Members that Urban Green Space includes areas such as the Local Nature Reserves, but also includes Housing Association sites within the borough which the Council have no responsibility for.

It was advised that there were 3 sites of special scientific interest in the borough; 99 biological County Heritage sites covering 3,697ha; and 6 Geological County Heritage sites covering approximately 53ha, all of which was managed by the green spaces team.

Members noted that all Bowling Green sites in the borough are self-managed and not maintained by the Council, however the Council provides a grant contribution annually.

In response to questioning from Members it was advised that the Council could provide maintenance support to the Bowling Green sites depending on what support was required. It was reported that the Council try to work with the Bowling Green Clubs to provide support and guidance if needed.

Members held a detailed discussion around community engagement and participation while promoting a healthy lifestyle by using facilities at the Bowling Green sites within the borough and felt that more could be done. Members discussed various marketing strategies and felt that the Culture, Leisure and Sport portfolio could provide assistance.

Members were informed that the Council has 66 playgrounds within the borough. It was reported that 3 years ago, as a result of budget savings, it was decided that the Council would no longer repair any major damage caused to playground equipment. It was further advised that the Council inspect equipment, litter pick and remove glass and other debris, remove small scale graffiti and undertake repairs and maintenance to equipment at least weekly (some more frequent).

Members raised concerns regarding damaged playground equipment and Tony advised the task group that the Council look for BID and grant funding opportunities to repair major damage, however, if the funding applications were unsuccessful the Council would make the area safe and remove any damaged items. Tony advised Members that the Council do not have insurance to cover the damaged items.

Members requested information and data relating to how many playgrounds, in the borough, were damaged. It was advised that an independent report was being prepared and as soon as it was available it would be distributed to Members.

It was further advised that the Council has 26 football pitches requiring the following maintenance:

- Initial annual and weekly marking out
- Replace/repair divots weekly
- Forking weekly
- Vertri-draining twice per annum
- Rolling as necessary
- Reseeding and pitch renovation at least once per annum
- Overseeding 3 times per annum
- Fertilising twice per annum
- Selective weed killing once per annum
- Mowing (starts march to November)
- Erecting goalposts and dismantling them annually

It was reported that several problems arise with football pitches, including grass cutting (demand depending on the weather), drainage and maintenance and re-seeding. It was added that previously the Council used to take the top 4 inch off a football pitch every two years however due to budget savings this had been reduced and the council are only able to do this around the goal areas and the centre circle.

Members were provided with information relating to budgets for Grounds Maintenance showing an employee cost of £1,179,300 for 2006/7, £951,112 for 2010/11 and decreasing to £379,900 for 2014/15. Tony informed Members that staffing has been reduced by almost a third and further informed Members that staff cope the best they can, however some sites were not maintained as frequently as they had been in the past.

Members were informed that 2014/15 is the first year that the Council have not entered any of the parks into the Green Flag awards as it was felt that that due to the reduced maintenance within the parks the results may not have been positive, which would affect staff morale even more than it already has.

Tony provided Members with information relating to staffing and it was reported that staff work annualised hours, 42 hours per week in summer and 29 hours per week in winter.

The Director for Environment, Housing and Neighbourhoods informed Members that due to the aging workforce across Environment and Highways the Council were looking to take on 16 to 18 trainees on a traineeship programme starting in January, in partnership with

Blackburn College and Training 2000. Trainees will be reviewed over a 6 month period with a view for some of the trainees to be taken on as permanent staff within the department. It was advised that the trainees would spend a mix of their time in the workplace and in college, increasing more into the workplace over a period of time.

It was highlighted to Members that the Council's transport costs for grounds maintenance was £455k. Members noted that some of the vehicles and machinery required was Council owned and some of the equipment was hired due to the issues around hand held vibrations. Members were advised that the hired equipment was maintained to a high standard which would mitigate the impact of hand held vibrations onto staff. It was also advised that in relation to hand held vibration issues the Council were still receiving historical claims.

Tony informed the Committee that grounds maintenance would be reviewed in the next round of budget savings. He explained that a 20% reduction would need to be found in the next few months.

Cemeteries and Crematoria services

Members were provided with details of Cemeteries covered by the Council:

- Pleasington Cemetery
- Darwen Cemetery (old and new)
- Blackburn Old Cemetery

Members were also advised that the Council have maintenance responsibilities for Church of England closed Churchyards within the borough, as listed below:

- St James Blackburn
- St Peters Darwen
- St Peters Blackburn
- St James Darwen
- Pole Lane (no church name)
- Holy Trinity Blackburn

Tony informed Members that 'closed' cemeteries or churchyards were those that have been closed by an Order in Council because there was no space left to dig a new grave, however, there may still be space in family graves which can be used for other members of the family. The Council has the responsibility for maintaining the grounds in all of these cemeteries or churchyards. The ownership of the memorials, however, remains with the original purchaser or his heirs. The Council is classed as the 'occupier' with attendant responsibilities for safety.

Members were provided with performance data relating to burials during 2013/14:

- Blackburn Cemetery – 3 burials, 4 ashes burials
- Darwen Cemetery (old) – 6 burials, 16 ashes burials
- Darwen Eastern Cemetery – 67 burials, 10 ashes burials
- Pleasington Cemetery – 289 burials, 76 ashes burials
- Cremations – 1169

Members were also provided with information relating to staffing and premises related costs. It was explained that the Council have 3 buildings (Blackburn Old Cemetery, Darwen Cemetery and Pleasington Cemetery) which were managed by the cemeteries service. Costs were incurred for rates, electricity, gas, water, insurance, repairs, and maintenance to the buildings and facilities such as crematoria equipment.

It was reported that the Council have supplies and service costs for items that need to be bought in such as: Urns, Muslim timber, memorial trees, brushes etc.

Members held a detailed discussion regarding the cost of the timber required for Muslim burials. Members were provided with a list of fees and charges for all crematoria and cemetery services. It was also advised that there were usually 3 pre-dug graves (covered) for Muslim burials due to the quick turn over in which they were required.

Members also questioned the cost of burials for non-Blackburn with Darwen residents and it was advised that the Council allow burials for non-residents but a 50% increase in charges was applied to costs.

Tony provided Members with figures relating to income and expenditure for 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15, it was advised that the forecast income for 2014/15 for cemeteries and crematoria combined was £1,384,175.

4. Public Protection

Tony Watson, Head of Environment and Public Protection and Gary Johnston, Service Manager for Public Protection and Environmental Health to the task group meeting to provide information relating to the Public Protection portfolio.

Gary also provided Members with an overview of the service and a copy of the Public Protection and Environmental Health structure chart which outlined the services within the department:

- Business Compliance
- Trading Standards

- Licensing
- Housing Standards
- Environmental Protection

Gary provided Members with information relating to staffing and budgets, whilst highlighting each services achievements and challenges.

Business Compliance

Members were informed that the enforcement team deal with the following areas of legislation:

- Food Hygiene and Standards (e.g. dirty restaurants, food labelling, food hygiene rating scheme)
- Health and Safety at work (e.g. workplace injuries, workplace deaths)
- Petroleum Licensing (issuing licenses to petrol stations, complaints about petrol leaks)
- Safety at sports grounds (safety certification for Blackburn Rovers)
- Communicable diseases (e.g. food poisoning outbreaks)
- Smoke free legislation (e.g. smoking at work, shisha houses enforcement)

It was advised that the Food Standards Agency (FSA) impose statutory requirement on Local Authorities and that the Council does not have sufficient staff to fully comply with these requirements. Gary also informed Members that there was a risk of being put into administration by the FSA if they found that the Council were not administering the food safety regime properly within the Borough.

Environmental Protection

It was noted by Members that the enforcement team deal with the following areas of legislation:

- Air Pollution – Air Quality Monitoring and Air Quality Management Areas
- Permitting – Permitted processes (industrial processes which cause pollution)
- Contaminated Land – Monitoring of sites of potential concern (SPC's)
- Noise Complaints
- Dark Smoke Complaints
- Light Pollution
- Accumulations of rubbish in back yards
- Filthy and verminous premises

- Nuisance defects of properties
- Other nuisance work – including flies, odour etc.
- Private water supplies
- Planning consultations – Acts as a consultant on statutory nuisance and contaminated land issues for the Council on planning applications
- Smoke Control Areas

Members noted that the zero tolerance enforcement regime was putting significant pressure on the team. Gary also informed Members that the Council face some challenges with regards to Air Quality and Contaminated Land issues. It was also advised that the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) impose a licensing regime for processes which cause pollution, ensuring that they are well controlled. Fees are set by DEFRA, and have been reduced in recent years; however, the Councils income target has not been reduced leaving a deficit of £12K, currently bringing in £34,700.

Community Hygiene

Members noted that the revenue budget for Community Hygiene work (mainly accumulations of rubbish in back yards) is the 'works in default' budget and when rubbish is cleared from backyards, the contractors are paid, when (if) monies are recovered, it is paid back.

Gary advised Members that the Council is not duty bound to carry out 'works in default', although it is in the Council's interests of a prompt and hygienic outcome for the community. Once costs are incurred in 'works in default' they are recovered by means of:

- Prosecution (we now ask for compensation rather than costs)
- Attachment to property (property owners only)
- Civil debt (very occasionally)

Gary informed Members of some of the challenges that the Council were currently facing:

- Changing behaviour
- Landlords not taking responsibility for their tenants
- Improving the behaviour of repeat perpetrators
- Improving the appearance of the neighbourhood and asking residents to take responsibility for their actions

Night Time Noise Service

Members were advised that the budget for the Pennine Lancashire Night Time Noise Service was a joint operation between BwD, Burnley, Hyndburn, Rossendale and Pendle.

Gary informed Members of the challenges that the Council were currently facing:

- Lack of immediate intervention on discovery of noise
- Legal process – The Environmental Protection Act 1990 sets out a process by which noise nuisance can be acted on.

Hackney Carriage & Private Hire

Members were informed that the hired services budget was insufficient for essential spend (e.g. MOT tests) and the taxi trade regularly challenge the Council's policies and procedures.

Members held a discussion regarding the number of private hire and hackney carriage licences, the number of private hire and hackney carriage drivers and information relating to safety inspections and prosecutions.

It was agreed that Gary would provide Members with up to date information following the task group on private hire/hackney carriage licenses and drivers.

Entertainments & Other Licensing

Members were informed that the enforcement team deal with the following:

- Alcohol and late night refreshment licenses
- Sex shops
- Gambling establishments
- Gambling permits
- Lotteries
- Pet shops
- Dog Breeders
- Animal Board Establishments
- Street Traders
- Approved Marriage premises
- Explosives
- Skin Piercing
- Charitable street collections
- Scrap Metal dealers
- Second Hand dealers

It was noted by Members that the main complaints received were regarding anti-social behaviour and underage sales. Gary advised Members that the Council have excellent working relationships with

partners such as Police, Fire and Public Health which allows co-ordinated, intelligence led compliance work.

Housing Standards

Members were advised that the enforcement team cover housing standards legislation including:

- Illegal Evictions
- Empty properties
- Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)
- Standard of rented accommodation
- Selective Landlord Areas

It was noted that the Council face challenges in identifying Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) where the tenants were not in receipt of benefit. It was also added that there was an increasing number of claims of harassment and illegal eviction.

Trading Standards

Gary provided Members with information relating to the full range of Trading Standards services:

- Under Age sales (alcohol, tobacco, harmful highs)
- Fair Trading (Rogue traders)
- Weights and Measures
- Product safety (Including electrical products, e-cigs, harmful highs and fireworks)
- Animal Health (Including contingency plans for animal health related issues such as rabies and foot and mouth)
- Feed Law
- Doorstep crime
- Counterfeiting
- Trade related fraud

John Addison
Principal Scrutiny Officer

Sonya Palmer
Scrutiny Officer