

EAST STRATEGIC NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

11 October 2023

Commenced: 6.30 pm

Terminated: 8.15 pm

Present:

Councillors J Homer (Vice-Chair), Feeley, Jackson, Lane, N Sharif, Sweeton, Taylor, Tilbrook and Wills

In Attendance:

Emma Varnam Assistant Director of Operations and Neighbourhoods
James Mallion Assistant Director of Public Health
Lee Holland Head of Engineering Services
Sharon Smith Head of Public Protection
Bev Hursthouse Regulatory Services Manager (Environmental Services)

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Pearce, Beardmore, Billington, S Homer and T Sharif

8 MINUTES

The minutes of the East Strategic Neighbourhood Forum meeting held on 21 June 2023 were approved as a correct record.

9 HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE

The Panel received a presentation from the Head of Engineering Services in relation to highways maintenance in the borough.

Members were informed that the Council was responsible for a variety of infrastructure on Tameside's highway network and this included 73km of principal roads, 70km of classified roads, 615km of unclassified roads and 1,155km of footways. In addition, the Council was responsible for 48,126 gullies, 25,341 street lighting columns, 4,000 signs, 159 bridges and 304 retaining walls/structures.

An explanation of the borough's road hierarchy was provided and it was explained that the hierarchy was important in terms of maintenance as this helped to establish where demand was and where resources could be best deployed.

It was explained that the highway network was the Council's largest single asset and a valuation of the network was conducted each year. This valuation determined whether the network had improved or deteriorated and where money should be spent. Members were advised that the Council's highway network was currently valued at £1.4 billion due to depreciation of assets. The Head of Engineering Services emphasised the importance of the efficient use of resources used on asset maintenance.

The Head of Engineering Services explained the different areas of highway asset groups and how the Council determined the condition of the network around the borough. Members were presented with an overview of the condition of highway structures and it was explained 41.47% of structures were rated as being in a fair condition. The condition of structures was regularly monitored.

In terms of street lighting, it was explained that the Council held an inventory of all assets with an electrical supply. Members were informed that the age profile on columns dictated the strategy for maintenance and structural testing was undertaken on a percentage of columns. Visual inspections and electrical testing were also regularly undertaken which assisted with the efficient use of resources within Highways.

Regarding winter maintenance plans, it was highlighted that the Highway's team regularly monitored the weather forecasts between October and April. There was two dedicated weather stations within Tameside, which provided real time weather information and the team used this to determine the measures required. The team regularly undertook a pre-treatment during the winter months that treated 350 kilometres of the network with grit. This was based on a risk assessment that looked at the areas requiring treatment.

In relation to risk management, it was explained that regular inspections of the network were undertaken and interventions were based on a risk-based approach. Members were advised that, 7,516 footway inspections and 7,118 carriageway inspections were undertaken last year.

Members sought an update on the maintenance of gullies and the Head of Engineering Services advised that there was a backlog in gully clearance but the Council now had two gully cleansing vehicles and clearance would take place on a risk-based approach.

The Forum thanked the Head of Engineering Services for the continued work to maintain the borough's highway network in the face of diminishing resources. It was important that residents understood that there was a budget gap but vital that the Council continued with a rolling programme of maintenance.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

10 VACCINATIONS

The Panel received a presentation from the Assistant Director of Population Health in relation to flu and covid-19 vaccinations for autumn-winter 2023/24.

Members were informed that the flu and covid-19 vaccinations were available for those aged 65 and over as well as those who were considered to be clinically vulnerable. The flu vaccine offered varied slightly from year to year and was designed to protect against the type of virus that was likely to be circulating. Covid-19 booster vaccinations were being offered to those eligible to coincide with the flu vaccination programme.

It was highlighted that vaccinations not only provided individual protection but also made it harder for viruses to spread between people, including those who were more vulnerable and/or were unable to be vaccinated.

The Forum was advised that NHS England set out the criteria for those who were eligible to be vaccinated and how the programme would work. The Population Health team at the Council then worked together to deliver the vaccines according to this.

A summary of the seasonal flu vaccination uptake for 2022/23 was shared with the Forum and it was highlighted that uptake had been lower among pregnant women and toddlers. It was explained that this was related to issues around access and a perception that the risk from flu was not as great among these groups.

In relation to the covid-19 booster vaccination uptake for 2022/23, the Assistant Director advised that it was down on the height of the pandemic.

Plans for the 2023/24 autumn-winter vaccination were presented and it was explained that the vaccines would be available in all four neighbourhoods. Primary care networks were leading on the covid-19 vaccine delivery and the flu vaccine could be obtained from practices and community pharmacies. Co-delivery of both vaccines was available for eligible groups.

To increase uptake among those groups where it had been lower, special sessions would be held for two and three year olds, and free soft play vouchers would be available in some areas. Pregnant women would be offered the flu vaccine at antenatal clinics and a flyer on covid-19 vaccine availability would be provided. A school and TMBC programme would also be available.

Members were keen that GPs communicated the availability of vaccines to their patients and the Council's Communications Team would also be launching a campaign on social media and in local publications, as well as posters and banners in key locations.

RESOLVED

That the content of the update be noted.

11 ENFORCEMENT PANEL ACTIVITY

The Panel received a presentation from the Head of Public Protection in relation to recent enforcement activity by the Council. An overview of the functions undertaken by the Public Protection team was provided, and this included Food Safety and Food Standards; Trading Standards; Housing Enforcement; Environment/Waste Enforcement; Public Health; and Licensing.

Members were informed that the Council was required to have a Corporate Enforcement Policy and a draft of this policy was currently being updated. The Policy outlined how the Council enforced a range of legislation in a fair, equitable and consistent manner. It was intended to protect the public, the environment, consumers, and workers within the borough to meet their legal obligations, and take firm action against those who flouted the law or acted irresponsibly.

Details of the Council's Enforcement Panel were outlined to the Forum and it was explained that the purpose of the Panel, which met quarterly, was to:

- Provide overview, assurance and scrutiny of the wide range of enforcement activity undertaken across the Council by receiving reports from service areas in scope.
- Promote the enforcement activities of the Council's enforcement services throughout the borough.
- Provide cohesion for the Council's enforcement bodies.
- Provide integrated service provision and joined up planning across a range of enforcement activities with wider service providers, such as Greater Manchester Police.
- Deliver on strategic priorities, including increasing enforcement across Tameside.

A wide range of enforcement activity had taken place between March and September 2023 across the remit of Public Protection. A summary was provided to the Forum. Environmental Services had conducted an investigation at the Bake 'n' Butty Café following the installation of a petrol generator in the basement of the premises. A Health and Safety Notice was served and Tameside Magistrates Court imposed 100 hours of unpaid work, 20 rehabilitation days, £130 victim surcharge, £5,000 costs and an 18-week custodial sentence.

Members welcomed the successful prosecution at Tameside Magistrates Court of a Droylsden man for fly tipping. The magistrates imposed a fine of £500, victim surcharge of £50 and costs of £1,269. An Ashton woman had also been successfully prosecuted for waste dumped on Bentinck Street in the town. A fine of £112 plus £200 costs was imposed.

The Council had undertaken a number of successful Waste Enforcement Days of Action in Hyde Werneth on 15 March, St Peter's on 28 June, St Michael's on 12 July and Waterloo on 27 September. A total of 32 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) were issued across these days of action. Members were keen that they were invited to days of enforcement activity.

It was reported that the Council's Licensing Panel had refused two applications for a taxi license as the applicants did not meet the standards of the Council's fit and proper person test.

In relation to anti-social behaviour, it was reported that the Council had received 178 reports between January and August. Twenty-one Public Space Protection Order tickets were issued, as well as four Community Protection Warnings and three Community Protection Notices.

Members and the public were encouraged to contact the Public Protection Team if any matters of concern arose.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

12 JOINT HEALTH & WELLBEING STRATEGY AND LOCALITY PLAN

The Forum received a presentation from the Assistant Director of Population Health in relation to the Tameside Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy and Locality Plan.

The Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy and Locality Plan would set out Tameside's ambitions for improving the health of residents and reducing the many inequalities that some communities in the borough faced. It also explained how these ambitions would be achieved by making commitments across the life course, including a focus on mental health & wellbeing, and then building back fairer, stronger and together to achieve these.

Members were informed that each local authority area was required to have a Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) and this had the responsibility for building a strong and effective partnership for Tameside, including the local authority, NHS and the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector.

The Locality Plan for Tameside provided the vision for health and care services across the borough, aligned to the priorities in the Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership Strategy and Joint Forward Plan.

A number of the key aims for Tameside were outlined to the Forum:

- Giving children the best start in life;
- Helping people stay well across the life course and detect illness earlier;
- Enabling all residents to grow old with dignity and independence;
- Helping people get into, and stay in good work;
- Strengthening communities; and
- Delivering healthy places with accessible and inclusive services.

This would be achieved by building back fairer, stronger and together.

The voice of Tameside residents was crucial during the formulation of the Plan and their views included:

- More job opportunities that matched skills;
- Charities being supported;
- Concern about poverty and climate change;
- A recognition that local and national funding was a challenge; and
- Improved access to mental health support.

A discussion ensued in relation to how the success of the strategy would be measured. The Assistant Director explained that increases in healthy life expectancy and reducing levels of smoking would be important indicators, though stressed results would not be immediate.

A copy of the Strategy was available for both Members and the public to read.

RESOLVED

That the content of the update be noted.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED

That the next meeting of the Forum would take place on 24 January 2024.

CHAIR