

13 March 2012		ITEM 5
Cleaner, Green & Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
STREETS ACTION PLAN		
Report of: Andrew Murphy, Head of Environment Department		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key	
Accountable Head of Service: Andrew Murphy, Head of Environment Department Lucy Magill, Head of Public Protection Andy Millard, Head of Planning and Transportation		
Accountable Director: Bill Newman, Director of Sustainable Communities		
This report is Public		
Purpose of Report: The report outlines the proposal for a Street Action Plan for consideration.		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Streets Action Plan is a proposed way of working that is intended to increase both the efficiency and the impact of work undertaken by the Public Protection, Planning and Transportation and Environment Departments. The change will be achieved by moving to a more planned approach that takes account of all Council activities in a given area.

The Streets Action Plan has two distinct aspects. The first of these refers to the closer co-ordination of routine activities undertaken by the Council. The second aspect of the Streets Action Plan refers to a more concentrated and co-ordinated approach to enhancement or regeneration within specific areas of the Borough.

Community engagement is vital to the success of the broader programme.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.1 It is recommended that a Working Group be established to further investigate whether tangible benefits can be derived and whether the changes proposed are practicable.**

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

2.1 The Street Action Plan is proposed as a method of increasing the impact of the services provided by the Environment, Planning and Transportation and Public Protection Departments. Initially services would be reviewed to ascertain where particular activities could be re-scheduled so that they were carried out in particular areas on the same day resulting in a greater perceived improvement in the visual amenity of that area. The second aspect of the Streets Action Plan would be to focus the activities of the three Departments in a particular area to achieve a planned enhancement programme.

3. ISSUES AND/OR OPTIONS:

3.1 Full details of the proposed Streets Action Plan are included in the report as Appendix A.

The Streets Action Plan supports the wider programme of regeneration of Thurrock. One concern regarding the plan is the availability of funding to support the proposed enhancement activities.

4. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

4.1 The Street Action Plan is in its initial stage of development and as such no formal consultation has been undertaken. Should it agreed to research the impact further, consultation with communities and other stakeholders would be vital to the success of the programme.

5. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

5.1 The Street Action Plan could have a beneficial impact on the Corporate Priority of creating a cleaner, greener and safer environment for residents of Thurrock.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

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6.2 Legal

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6.3 **Diversity and Equality**

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6.4 **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

No other implications have been identified at this point.

7. **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 Although the changes to working practices identified in the report would derive benefits, in many instances these practices are already in place. Funding for proposed enhancement work would need to be identified.

BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT:

- None

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:

- Appendix A is an outline proposal of the Street Actions Plan.

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Appendix A

Streets Action Plan

The Streets Action Plan is a way of working that is intended to increase both the efficiency and the impact of work undertaken by the Public Protection, Planning and Transportation and Environment Departments. The change will be achieved by moving to a more planned approach to enforcement and enhancement, which takes account of all Council activities in a given area.

The Streets Action Plan has two distinct aspects. The first of these refers to the closer co-ordination of routine activities undertaken by the Council. The second aspect of the Streets Action Plan refers to a more concentrated and co-ordinated approach to enhancement or regeneration within specific areas of the Borough.

Community engagement is vital to the success of the broader programme.

Co-ordination of Routine Activities

The Streets Action Plan advocates that the scheduling of routine activities be co-ordinated and timed so as to occur in the same area on the same day. The benefit of this is that without increasing the work load of the front line operatives or costs to the Council, the impact of the routine tasks would be increased. Council Services that could be included in the re-scheduling programme are:

- Waste collection
- Street cleansing
- Grounds maintenance
- Enforcement relating to fly-tipping, dog waste etc
- Minor road repairs
- Highway Maintenance

It should be recognised that over the course of 2011, work has commenced on the co-ordination of routine activities. Additionally it should be made clear that whilst the majority of work can be coordinated, given the scale of the operations, frequency of service, staff levels and the nature of some of the activities; it will not always be possible for combined activities to be carried out. For example, the length of time between grass cuts varies according to weather conditions, whilst waste collection and street cleansing are not impacted by those factors. Additionally the frequency of services may differ. However, the intention would remain to co-ordinate activities in areas as frequently as possible.

The example offered above suggests that the scope of the co-ordination of activities would be very much at an operational level. The intent of the Streets Action Plan would be for that co-ordination of effort to be duplicated at all levels within the services. Aspects of Highways maintenance and road improvements are planned well in advance, it is envisaged that these longer term plans would be the starting point of planning for all departments. In this way planned changes in roads can be accompanied by timely and appropriate tree planting, for example.

Focused Enhancement Programmes

The second strand of the Streets Action Plan builds on the work successfully pioneered by the Partnership Walk Around Days. Those events are pre-scheduled and involve staff from a number of agencies acting in a concentrated area of the Borough, responding to residents concerns. In a similar manner, the Streets Action Plan would culminate in a series of events drawing on the activities of the Council in one area over a defined period of time. The outcome of these events would be that the area targeted was visibly cleaner and smarter immediately, with planned enhancement activity taking placement over longed period.

It is proposed that the work would have three distinct components, namely:

1. Enforcement
2. Environmental Action Day(s)
3. Improvement and Enhancement

The Enforcement phase would initiate the programme in a given area by targeting those aspects of properties that outside of the Council's direct control, but have a visual impact on the on street scene. For example, the work might include issuing enforcement notices for the removal of rubbish that has accumulated in front gardens or the removal of graffiti from private properties.

The Environmental Action Day is envisaged as a day when all relevant teams from the Council (predominantly the Environment Department) would be deployed to carry out a "spring clean" of the targeted areas. Activities could include deep cleaning pavements, clearing graffiti, cutting grass, edging pathways, maintaining shrubs and effecting repairs to street furniture and signage. This work would have an immediate impact on targeted area. The activity of the day would provide an opportunity for community engagement and for understanding further enhancements and improvements that the community would like in that area. Providing clear guidance regarding the scope and scale of work that could be considered, would be important to avoid communities feeling let down.

From understanding the needs of the community, an Improvement and Enhancement Agenda can be developed. This would also need to be informed by an assessment of the area to understand what equipment needed repair or replacement that had not been completed during the Action Day. Examples of work expected to be included in this part of the programme would be the replacement of litter bins and signs or the establishment of shrub or flower beds in verges.

The Improvement and Enhancement aspect of the Streets Action Plan would be dependant on securing funding. Potential sources of funding are varied and include:

- The Environment Improvement Fund
- Match-funding for smaller projects from the Veolia Trust
- Sale of "Carbon Credits" to local businesses to finance the planting of additional trees

