

REPORT TO: Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 21st Jan 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director (Environment)

SUBJECT: APSE Performance Networks Year 10 (2007/8) annual report (Parks, Open Spaces, Horticultural Services).

WARDS: All Wards

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To demonstrate how the Landscape Services Division and The Parks and Countryside Service performed during Year 10 of the APSE Performance Network's Benchmarking process in relation to Parks, Open Spaces and Horticultural Services.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) The APSE Performance Networks report be accepted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Association for Public Sector Excellence (APSE) is the UK's largest benchmarking club.
- 3.2 The Landscape Services Division joined the APSE Performance Networks Benchmarking group in year 2 of its existence (2000/1). Since that time the Division has submitted data, which is used to compare its performance against other Local authorities. From year 8 data has also been gathered from the Parks and Countryside Service and submitted to APSE.
- 3.3 Council's are grouped into Families so that they can be compared on a more equal basis. Halton currently sits in Family Group H2.
- 3.4 The year 10 (2007/8) data was submitted to APSE in June 2008. Following a validation process a report was received by the Divisional Manager for Landscape Services in November 2008.
- 3.5 Based on the year 10 data submitted Halton was nominated for 'Best Performing Council' and 'Most Improved Performer' in relation to its delivery of Parks, Open Spaces and Horticultural Services. It was a

finalist for the former and won the latter for the second year in succession

- 3.6 In appendix 1 a table shows how Halton's Landscape Services has compared with other local authorities in year 10.

4.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

4.1 **Children and Young People in Halton Borough Council**

The APSE report demonstrates that the Landscape Services Division is providing quality play facilities.

5.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton Borough Council**

The APSE report demonstrates through its Human Resources and People Management indicator that the Landscape Services Division promotes learning and skills amongst its staff.

5.3 **A Healthy Halton**

The APSE report demonstrates that the Landscape Services Division and the Parks and Countryside Service are providing quality parks and open spaces which promotes use.

5.4 **A Safer Halton**

The APSE report demonstrates that investment is being made to security measures in Halton's parks.

5.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

The APSE report demonstrates that quality maintenance is being delivered which contributes directly to Halton's Urban renewal.

6.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

- 6.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

7.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 7.1 No significant Equality and Diversity Issue have been identified.

8.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendices

Appendix 1

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| High scoring Authority | |
| Average scoring Authority | |
| Low Scoring Authority | |

| | APSE PI | | Halton Score | Average Score | Notes |
|---|--|--|--------------|---------------|--|
| 1 | Hectares of maintained public open space per 1000 head of population. | | 6.81 | 5.08 | It is not surprising the Halton has higher than average hectares of public open space. This is a legacy of contaminated land reclamation and the Runcorn New Town. |
| 2 | Number of Hectares Maintained per FTE front line employee. | | 11.76 | 8.76 | Landscape Services front line staff manage the third highest number of hectares per person. This measure demonstrates a high level of productivity. |
| 3 | Percentage of Staff Absence. | | 8.55% | 5.23% | Prior to September 2005 Landscape Services was one of the best performers in terms of sickness absence typically scoring under 3%. After the BVS payment became part of salary sickness figures rose. Much work has been done within the Division to bring the sickness absence figures down. They are now beginning to fall but a couple of cases of serious illness have kept figures above 7%. See 22 for figure excluding long term. |
| 4 | Quality Assurance and Consultation | | 72 | 62.46 | This score is derived from a number of factors including quality awards, Green Flag Parks and robust management systems. |

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|----|--|--|--------------|---------------|---|
| | Score | | | | |
| 5 | Human Resources and People Management | | 86 | 59 | This score is derived from a number of factors including the amount of training given to staff, the qualifications help by staff, Apprentices and the EDR process. The highest scoring authority gained 87 points. The Landscape Services Division was the second highest scoring Council. |
| 6 | Customer Survey (satisfaction) | | 96% | 74% | This score is taken from the Greenstat System. Halton are the best performer. |
| 7 | Output Specification | | 56.67 | 53.33 | It is important to view this alongside the cost indicators, 11, 14 and 17 as it demonstrates that the actual work undertaken on the ground is of a higher standard than average for a lower cost. In measuring this indicator factors such as frequencies of operation and types of finish (e.g. boxed off grass) are taken into consideration. |
| 8 | Environmental Practices | | 46.57 | 35.82 | This score is reached by examining factors such as recycling, composting and reduction of pesticide use. |
| 9 | Playgrounds per 1000 Children | | 1.72 | 4.60 | Halton has less playgrounds per 1000 children than most authorities. However with regards to the quality of the playgrounds that we have, we are the best performer (see 28). |
| 10 | Number of Dog Fouling Notices Issued | | 18 | 29.69 | This represents the number of dog fouling notices issued by Environmental Health staff. |
| 11 | Cost of Service per Hectare of Maintained Land (including CEC) | | £3,629 | £5,081 | This includes the cost of the Landscape Services Division and the Parks and Countryside Service combined along with Central Establishment recharges. |
| 12 | Cost of Service per 1000 head of | | £24.710 | £24,855 | Halton has a relatively small population in relation to the amount of open space that it has. Therefore when cost is measured in |

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|----|---|--|--------------|---------------|--|
| | Population | | | | this way we do not appear to be as inexpensive as indicators 11, 14 and 17 show. However even when measured in this way we are still below average. |
| 13 | Cost of Service per Household | | £55.00 | £52.00 | See notes in 12 except for the fact that we are slightly above average. |
| 14 | Maintenance cost per hectare of maintained land (including CEC) | | £3,001 | £4,608 | This indicator shows the cost of the Landscape Services Division's operational arm. Halton score is the second lowest on cost. |
| 15 | Maintenance Cost per 1000 head of population. | | £20,435 | £22,966 | Halton has a relatively small population in relation to the amount of open space that it has. Therefore when cost is measured in this way we do not appear to be as inexpensive as indicators 11, 14 and 17 show. However even when measured in this way we are still below average. |
| 16 | Maintenance Cost per household (Including CEC). | | £45.00 | £51.00 | See notes in 15. |
| 17 | Charge per hectare (category B Parks) | | £2002 | £5,344 | Category B parks are parks such as Crow Wood Park, Hough Green, Rock Park and Phoenix Park. Halton's score is the lowest on cost. |
| 18 | Charge per Hectare (Secondary Schools) | | £1,096 | £1,851 | The Landscape Services Division offers the lowest cost service to Secondary Schools. |
| 19 | Charge per Hectare (Primary Schools) | | £1,188 | £2,563 | The Landscape Services Division offers the lowest cost service to Primary Schools. |
| 20 | Charge per Hectare (RSL Land) | | £7,844 | £4,450 | The Landscape Services Division charge for maintenance to HHT is the highest in the family group. This is explained by the fact that in 2005 when the housing stock transferred the new organisation (HHT) went for a very high specification for |

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|----|---|--|--------------|---------------|---|
| | | | | | landscape maintenance. For example prior to 2005 the Landscape Services Division was below average in terms of cost. |
| 21 | Charge per Hectare (high maintenance highway land) | | £1,112 | £4,085 | The Landscape Services Division offers the lowest cost service for highway land maintenance. |
| 22 | Percentage of staff absence excluding long term. | | 3.24% | 2.16% | When long term absence is discounted the Landscape Services Division is closer to the average score. |
| 23 | Total staff costs as a percentage of total cost. | | 69.10% | 60.65% | This indicator demonstrates that most of the budgets of the Landscape Services Division are spent on salaries. This in turn demonstrates the commitment to having staff at the front line delivering a service to the public. |
| 24 | Front Line Staff Costs as a percentage of total cost. | | 55.56% | 49.04% | See notes above |
| 25 | Number of FTE non Front Line employees per 100 hectares maintained. | | 1.85 | 3.15 | This indicator is designed to show how many back office staff there are in the service. As can be seen from the score the Landscape Services Division has a low ratio of non front line staff. |
| 26 | Hectarage of local nature reserve per 1000 head of population | | 1.20 | 3.64 | Although Halton has 10 Local Nature Reserves, which is more than most authorities have, they tend to be relatively small which accounts for a lower score for this indicator. |
| 27 | Average NPFA Play Value Score of Children's | | 51.61 | 31.47 | The score is taken from an independent assessment of our Playground facilities using NPFA scoring methodology. Halton is the highest scoring authority which reflects the investment that |

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|----|--|--|--------------|---------------|---|
| | Playgrounds. | | | | has been made in the Borough's playgrounds since 2000. |
| 28 | Number of Public Events per 1000 head of population. | | 4.38 | 0.92 | This score is based upon the number of events that the Parks and Countryside Service put on in public parks. Halton is the highest scoring authority. |

A copy of the full APSE Performance Networks Report is available in the Members Room.