



Council (Annual)

Thursday 16 May 2024

**Confirmation of Cabinet and Committee Recommendations and relevant
Originating Background Papers**

Item on Summons	Cabinet / Committee Recommendation	Originating Report
	Recommendation I:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (9 April 2024)
12.	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2023/24	Report of Assistant Director of Corporate Strategy (Pages 3 - 24)

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**Report for: Overview and Scrutiny
Committee and Scrutiny
Sub-Committees**

Date of Meeting:	9 th April 2024
Subject:	Scrutiny Annual Report 2023-24
Responsible Officer:	Shumaila Dar, Assistant Director of Corporate Strategy
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	All
Exempt:	No
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	Scrutiny Annual Report 2023-24

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report provides the Scrutiny Annual Report for 2023-2024, as developed by the Scrutiny Leadership Group which comprises the chairs and vice-chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its sub-committees, and the Scrutiny Lead members.

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- a) Consider and agree the Scrutiny Annual Report 2023-2024
- b) Submit the Scrutiny Annual Report 2023-2024 to Full Council for endorsement

Section 2 – Report

The council's constitution requires the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to report annually on its activities to Full Council. The attached Scrutiny Annual Report is the draft final report. This has been developed by the Scrutiny Leadership Group, which comprises the chairs and vice-chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its sub-committees, and the Scrutiny Lead members. The Scrutiny Annual Report outlines the activities of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the scrutiny sub-committees and the scrutiny lead councillors during the 2023-2024 municipal year.

Scrutiny's focus has been focussed on looking at customer experience and what that means for Harrow residents. The team prioritises and continues to focus on key challenges impacting Harrow's residents. A key focus of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the last period was focussing on in delving deeper into the impacts of service changes and providing insights into the following projects:

- Harrow Strategic Development ~ (HSDP) Report
- Customer Experience Review
- Community Safety Strategy 2023-2026
- Corporate Plan 2023-2026

The scrutiny work programme for 2023-2024 has reflected this change in priorities.

Ward Councillors' comments

Not applicable as report relates to all wards.

Financial Implications

There are no financial issues associated with this report.

Performance Issues

There are no performance issues associated with this report.

Environmental Impact

There is no environmental impact associated with this report

Risk Management Implications

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been undertaken for this report as it summarises the activities of scrutiny and does not propose any changes to service delivery.

Council Priorities

All

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Not required for this report

Mandatory Checks

Ward Councillors notified: NO*, as it impacts on all Wards

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Mira Chauhan, Policy Officer, mira.chauhan@harrow.gov.uk

Nahreen Matlib, Senior Policy Officer, nahreen.matlib@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

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Harrow Annual Scrutiny Report 2023/24 DRAFT

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Cllr Amir Moshenson (Chair) & Cllr Graham Henson (Vice-Chair)

Our Role:

As always, our vision for scrutiny in Harrow has been '*cross-party investigation of issues and decisions that are important to residents*'. This guides the development of our work programme and ensures a balance between holding the council administration and health partners to account, as well as investigating and influencing the Council and partners' approaches to issues of concern to residents.

The Council's scrutiny function is driven forward by the Scrutiny Leadership Group, made up of the chairs and vice-chairs of the committees and the scrutiny leads, whose work and achievements are highlighted in this report. The Scrutiny Leadership Group provides strategic direction to the scrutiny function and helps to ensure that we maintain an effective focus for our work, acting as a critical friend to the Council and influencing key decisions. Meetings are held quarterly, and they bring together the feedback from scrutiny leads on progress in their different service areas, to identify issues that may need escalating for committee consideration or warrant further in-depth investigation through review work.

Highlights:

Last year, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were happy to have inducted a new team of councillors in their respective scrutiny roles. Over the last 12 months, it has been enjoyable working with colleagues in their respective work areas and seeing the progress made. As this report will detail, there has been a much more focussed and professional approach to scrutiny due to members being relaxed in their roles.

In the previous municipal cycle, our work focussed on looking at customer experience and what that means for Harrow residents. The team prioritises and continues to focus on key challenges impacting Harrow's residents. To aid this work we set the parameters and framework of reviewing customer experience and we are happy that a big highlight of the current cycle was focussing on the customer experience scrutiny report which will be detailed later in this report.

We would like to thank members of the committee for their input and effort, for looking out for Harrow's residents and putting the time to come up with challenging, interesting questions and pragmatic proposals. We would also like to extend thanks to portfolio holders and officers for their detailed and helpful answers and for their open approach when taking questions and suggestions.

The Focus of Work over the Past Year:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee are constantly committed to the analysing the decisions that the borough takes to ensuring the best for our residents.

A key focus of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the last period was focussing on in delving deeper into the impacts of service changes, and looking at scrutiny procedures which will allow us to gain a better understanding of council priorities.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee have provided insight in the following projects:

- Community Safety Strategy 2023-26: The three-year strategy set out a clear vision and comprehensive delivery plan for how the Safer Harrow Partnership would deliver community safety priorities, how each priority would be measured, and progress monitored. Upon presentation to committee, members questioned particular attributes of the strategy for example the use of scooters in criminal activity and data in public perception. It was recommended that mental health was included within the Strategy.
- Customer Experience Review: This review focuses on the changing dynamic of the delivery of council services, there were a range of recommendations provided that will be discussed in further depth in this document. Working with colleagues in this review group was both helpful and crucial in understanding how the changes made in the customer service affects residents.
- Harrow Strategic Development (HSDP) Report. It was agreed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee that Cabinet be requested to include the Voluntary Sector in the list of consultees as part of the development and that officers review project milestones and these milestones be presented to Scrutiny Leads and/or Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee.
- Corporate Plan 2023-2026. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee members had questions on particular attributes of the plan such as:
 - The progress on pothole mending in Harrow, the Councils target of building 50 affordable homes on Council sites and the Council's website and accessibility of information/services.
 - Concerns about fly-tipping across the Borough, Homelessness or risk of Homelessness in Harrow and increased cists to Adult Social Care

Impact and Value:

The scrutiny function as a result has been beneficial to the way the council has used its financial resources. We aim to continue to work in this manner to ensure more economic prosperity for the council and its residents.

Work Priorities for Next Year:

We will continue to monitor this year's work plan to make sure it aligns with council functions and necessities. We aim to follow through with the various aspects of the Scrutiny programme and develop others which benefits all parts of the council's workforce. The work programme is dynamic and responding to changes that happen around us. Scrutiny will continue to work with offices and portfolio holders to boost community safety and to review how major projects adjust to changes in circumstances.

Scrutiny will be invaluable in delving deeper into the impacts of the service changes. We are looking forward to scrutiny procedures which will allow us to gain a better understanding of council priorities. A key part of this is the reintroduction of performance boards which will provide a robust performance reporting regime following the pandemic pause, it will be critical to scrutiny's role that involves Performance & Finance. The chair and vice-chair will

continuously analyse these so that they can analyse performance areas and escalate to committee as necessary.

Performance and Finance Scrutiny sub-committee – Cllr Yogesh Teli (Chair) & Cllr Jerry Miles (Vice-Chair)

Our Role:

As members of the Performance and Finance (P&F) Scrutiny Sub-Committee, it is our role to challenge and scrutinise the council and its partners' performance against priorities in terms of finance, operational delivery, and service provision. It is imperative that the scrutiny is performed in a constructive manner that is apolitical, is focused on improving the council's performance and most importantly, ensures the provision of efficient services that are considered value-for-money for the taxpayer.

Key Highlights of Municipal Year:

This year, the sub-committee has focused on scrutinising council documentation and reports detailing the finances of the borough. We are pleased with the provision of information at the set time parameters which allows us to scrutinise more effectively, and we welcome this to continue at the same pace. We were pleased with the quarterly finance reports as they were well prepared and highlighted the financial pressure the council is under and the mitigation that has been put into place.

We have also focussed on pre-consultation meetings to ensure that the chair and co-chair is informed about contents and issues.

Another highlight is the adoption of the budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

The Focus of Work over the Past Year:

This past year we have focussed on the monitoring of the 2023/24 budget. We are pleased that it came within the expected parameters and was presented well. We look forward to continuing to receive stable budgets like this in the future. Some other areas of focus have been Adult Social Care Services and Children Services Annual Complaints as well as Savings and Growth.

In addition to the financial performance of the council we look to develop key performance indicators to measure against to ensure the progress in the management of council finances.

Following the development of the Council's Corporate Plan and Scorecard for 2023-24, Scrutiny Performance & Finance Sub Committee's oversight of the Council's performance against its plans and priorities is being reviewed and updated. From Q3 of 2023-24, we, as Scrutiny P&F Chair and Vice Chair are being briefed each quarter on the corporate scorecard and any key performance challenges. This is part of a process of oversight that ensures scrutiny of Council's performance indicators against targets and benchmarks. We are able to drill down into any areas of concern and meet with officers to review improvement plans and hold them to account.

Impact and Value of Scrutiny:

This period of scrutiny has allowed us to develop a proper budget for this year and the following year. A budget that we will continue to maintain and monitor to ensure value for money for Harrow residents. The budget and the corporate plan have provided the council the direction

of travel and a better understanding of the council's position. The monitoring of the budget allowed us to see the pressure points within the borough. This allowed us to see how the council was mitigating these pressure points and key steps being taken by the council ensure financial stability.

The scrutiny function as a result has been beneficial to the way the council has used its financial resources. We aim to continue to work in this manner to ensure more economic prosperity for the council and its residents.

Work Priorities for Next Year:

Working with officers, we will continue to monitor this year's work plan to make sure it aligns with council functions and necessities. We aim to follow through with the various aspects of the Scrutiny programme and develop others which benefit all parts of the council's workforce. Another possible key area next year is the changes to the regeneration programme, linking into what was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee earlier this year.

Scrutiny will be invaluable in delving deeper into the impacts of the service changes. We are looking forward to scrutiny procedures which will allow us to gain a better understanding of council priorities. A key part of this is the reintroduction of performance boards which will provide a robust performance reporting regime following the pandemic pause, it will be critical to scrutiny's role that involves Performance & Finance. The chair and vice-chair will continuously analyse these so that they can analyse performance areas and escalate to committee as necessary.

This method and dedication to tracking performance will allow Scrutiny to make positive and necessary inflections so that residents can continue to be served efficiently.

Health and Social Care Scrutiny sub-committee - Cllr Chetna Halai (Chair), Cllr Rekha Shah (Vice-Chair) & Cllr Dr Antonio Weiss

Our Role:

As members of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny sub-committee, it is our role to be the key driver of the scrutiny function's health and social care scrutiny programme and maintain relationships with health and social care colleagues and partners in relation to shared stated priorities, in consultation with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

We have specific responsibility for scrutiny of the following functions:

- Health and social care infrastructure and service
- NHS England, NHS NW London and NW London ICS, Harrow Borough Based Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board
- Public Health
- Other policy proposals which may have an impact on health, public health, social care and wellbeing.
- Collaborative working with health agencies
- Commissioning and contracting health services

The sub-committee scrutinises the main health stakeholders in Harrow and meets three times a year. We also represent Harrow's interests on the NW London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which has oversight of health services on a sub-regional level.

Key Highlights of Municipal Year:

Coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic, the sub-committee has focused on key areas affecting Harrow residents from a health and well-being angle to ensure that the health and care system can meet the health challenges of NW London. Key highlights included the scrutiny of the health and care system pressures to ensure preparedness to meet winter demands, particularly at Northwick Park Hospital, as well as the operation of the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital.

In this municipal year, we also placed emphasis on scrutinising NHS England on their commissioning arrangements in relation to childhood immunisations. This is particularly pertinent with the increased cases of measles in children throughout the country, which is understood to be exacerbated by decreased rate of childhood immunisations in recent years. Other key highlights included the provision of outpatient services in Harrow as well as mental provision health provision in the borough, both of which are key areas impacting the health of Harrow residents.

In addition, the sub-committee through our representation at NW London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) scrutinised plans for Ophthalmology and Musculoskeletal Services across Northwest London affecting Harrow residents, as well as the NWL ICS workforce strategy and the progress of the NW London Elective Orthopaedic centre among others.

The Focus of Work over the Past Year:

The Health and Social Care Scrutiny sub-committee has placed particular emphasis on ensuring that health and care systems are adequately prepared for peak pressures particularly during winter. The sub-committee scrutinised winter preparedness, particularly on hospital discharges, system risks and risk mitigation, impact of industrial action, and impact on waiting times as a result of changes to the London Ambulance Service handover policy. With Northwick Park Hospital being one of the busiest A&Es in the country, the sub-committee scrutinised how the system is coping with pressure to ensure that Harrow's residents are able to access a robust service.

In addition, during the past year, we examined the Annual Quality Account of the services provided by the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust (RNOH) which is a National Centre of Excellence and provides healthcare for children and adults suffering from neuromusculoskeletal conditions. The sub-committee scrutinised issues around the length of stay, waiting lists, and patient safety incidents among others to ensure that residents across Northwest London are receiving optimal care at RNOH. The sub-committee also scrutinised the range of outpatient services (Harrow Community Services) delivered and the re-procurement strategy for these services.

A significant piece of work this year for the sub-committee was the scrutiny of childhood immunisation services in Harrow, which is commissioned by NHS England. The sub-committee looked at plans for the NHS commissioning responsibilities passing on to NW London ICS in 2024 and challenged NHSE on plans to deal with declining childhood immunisation rates, particular in newer and emerging communities.

Finally, the sub-committee requested an update from CNWL regarding Mental Health provision in Harrow and examined the urgent and acute care transformation and how its responding to local needs, as well as the new model of community mental health care. Furthermore, the various mental health pathways were looked into to ensure that mental

health provision and pathways are suited to local needs and emerging priorities in relation to mental health in Harrow.

The Impact and Value of our scrutiny

The Health and Social Care Subcommittee plays a pivotal role in safeguarding and advancing the health and well-being of Harrow's residents. Through rigorous examination and evaluation of healthcare services, policies, and initiatives, the subcommittee continues to ensure accountability, transparency, and effectiveness in the delivery of healthcare within the borough and across NW London. By scrutinising various aspects of healthcare provision, such as access, quality, and outcomes, the subcommittee identifies areas for improvement and advocates for necessary changes to enhance the overall health outcomes and experiences of the community.

Through our scrutiny, the subcommittee has not only identified areas of improvement but also continues to foster a culture of adaptation and accountability within the healthcare system, driving improvements that directly benefit the health and well-being of Harrow's residents.

Additionally, our role on the NW London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee has meant that Harrow is represented in sub-regional discussions with health leaders and ensures that Harrow residents have a voice in the issues and decisions that affect them.

Work Priorities for Next Year:

In this coming year, a key area of focus for the sub-committee will be on the outcome of the CQC inspection of Adult Social Care in Harrow. The sub-committee is keen to scrutinise the inspection results and examine how Harrow can foster a culture of continuous improvement in relation to social care provision and access in the borough within the larger context of budget pressures. We are also keen to continue to scrutinise mental health particularly in relation to children as well as Adult Social Care to ensure that residents are getting support in this key area where demand has grown post-pandemic. Furthermore, additional areas of focus include how the system is dealing with diabetes that affects ethnic minorities disproportionately, wider considerations of reducing health inequalities, as well as Harrow's tobacco and smoking strategy which is important in relation to population health. The sub-committee is also keen to look at women's health in the upcoming municipal year to make sure that key issues affecting women such as menopause, maternal health, contraception, and mental health access are scrutinised effectively.

People Scrutiny Leads– Cllr Jerry Miles & Cllr Govind Bharadia

Our Role:

As scrutiny lead members for the People Directorate, our role is to be a critical friend to the organisation and to help residents of Harrow of all ages – from birth to old age.

Key Highlights of Municipal Year:

We have been working with the Corporate Director of People Services and the Director of Children's Services to ensure that our services are relevant and accessible to all residents, from children to older people. We have been monitoring and responding to the move from the old Civic Centre to a new site in Gayton Road where the service will work with Housing to provide an integrated and seamless service, this work is continuously ongoing to ensure that

we remain open and ready to any changes in the new service provision structure. We have also discussed the restructuring of the service in conjunction with senior staff and the trade unions which is designed to have integrated neighbourhoods. In addition to this we have also been keeping a watching brief on the budget, which has continued to be of concern regarding overspending and a lack of additional funding and service planning and development on a national basis. Our dedication to maintaining council finances is paramount to ensuring we deliver the best service for our residents and lessen any constraints on any financial implications.

The Focus of Work over the Past Year:

Healthcare has been a main focus for us over the past year, in terms of our work we have been looking at the effects of Long Covid and figuring out the parameters of how best to help these residents. However, we are happy to see that hospital admissions have decreased. In addition to this we have continued to monitor the maternity service at Northwick Park Hospital which was another focus of ours last year. By keeping this as a main priority we ensure there is a continuous improvement in services and health service providers are kept to account. The pandemic also had an effect on children in being absent from school, and some pupils found it difficult to make up on parts of the curriculum was that missed, and re-settle at school. People service was overspent during the financial year and the restructure is due to complete by April 2024. The adult social care charging reforms have been delayed until October 2025. We looked at how the regeneration programme for the Harrow and Wealdstone opportunity area would affect our service and also discussed the issue of hospital beds and services for stroke patients, and community based mental health services consultation in partnership with MIND in Harrow.

Impact and Value of Scrutiny:

Scrutiny was introduced as part of the Local Government Act 2000 and is an essential tool in bringing the executive to account, working with stakeholders, and ensuring residents receive the best services available. In this area, we try to make sure that our care services are widely available to help people when they need additional resources or help. Due to this, scrutiny continues to be a positive force in service provision in Harrow. The collaboration between all council members makes scrutiny a rewarding process and the impact and value continues in this cycle. It is a function that has the facility to hold the Managing Director, the Leader of the Council, and Portfolio Holders to account in special meetings or by invitation and this ensures viewpoints are reflected in the Cabinet. In our area, we will be ensuring that services are maintained and improved amidst a challenging time for resources in the budget agreed by the Council.

Work Priorities for Next Year:

As the council transitions into a new service provision style, we will continue to work on staffing issues and how they will impact and develop the service. We will continue to look at safeguarding arrangements investment for Adults and Children ensuring safety for our residents and breeding a culture of safety in the borough. As previously mentioned, the budget remains a core focus point on our work and aim to continue to keep this in mind. We also will continue to press for new reforms from central government to ensure that Harrow's issues are of national interest. We also want to do further work on mental health, taking in to account the Metropolitan Police and the 'Right Care Right Person' approach. Additionally, we would like to continue our work on children's mental health wellbeing working with charities and examining the pressure placed on children and young adults on social media platforms.

Community Scrutiny Leads – Cllr June Baxter & Cllr Dan Anderson

Our Role:

In Community, we look at a wide range of issues; from the environment, libraries, and homelessness, to cleanliness, personal safety, and roadworks - things that affect residents directly. The focus over the past year has been on Harrow residents and ensuring that the needs of the community are considered when decisions are taken that impact their lives.

Key Highlights of Municipal Year:

- Environment
- Inclusive Economy, Culture & Leisure
- Regeneration & Sustainable Development.
- Climate Strategy
- Housing

The Focus of Work Over the Past Year:

Over the past year our work has focused on our in-depth quarterly meetings with the Corporate Director - Place, Dipti Patel, and her team of Directors for Environment, Inclusive Economy, Culture & Leisure, Regeneration & Sustainable Development, Climate Strategy and Housing.

These are some of the key achievements in each department that we have been monitoring as Scrutiny Leads:

Environmental Services

- **FPNs issued** (tri-borough contract) shows a significant increase from quarter 2 (from 1635 to 2040).
- Improvements in **recycling** continue in quarter 2 now at 33.04%. (Reported in arrears). **Residual waste** has also seen a decrease in quarter 2 to 158.95kg compared to 171.46kg the previous quarter. MTFs savings for next two years based on changing behaviour.
- Recruitment to the new **recycling team** was completed in quarter 3. The team has continued their engagement in the town centre and with schools and places of worship.
- **Bartec** (in-cab technology) rolled out successfully for garden, food waste and domestic residual waste.
- A **successful week of action** in Rayners Lane in October.
- **One Hour Free Parking** – this continues to prove popular with residents.
- **PCN's** – we will have issued more PCN's in 2023/24 than in pre-covid years.
- **Highways** – successful completion of 60 roads and footway resurfacing programme

Regeneration and Sustainable Development

- Preparation and submission of the **first annual Overarching Business Plan for the HSDP** since August 2021 and the **first Phased Business Plans for Byron Quarter and Poets Corner**. The plans were recommended for adoption by the HSDP Board in December 2023 enabling their referral to the Council for Cabinet approval in January 2024.
- **Local plan preparation** continues to progress with a successful Planning Policy Advisory Panel review of the draft Local Plan vision and strategic policies which were well received.
- **Early engagement on the Harrow Town Centre masterplan** took place which will inform future masterplan development.

- Successful **sale of 105 Eastcote Lane** for £455,000, contributing to the MTFS disposal target.
- **Headstone Manor Recreational Ground won the British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI) Principal Award for Nature Conservation & Biodiversity Enhancement.** This recognised the project as demonstrating a significant contribution to conservation or enhancement of biodiversity.

Inclusive Economy, Leisure & Culture

- **High street vacancies have reduced** this quarter to from 8.3% in Q2 to 7.5% in Q3.
- **Headstone Harrow Museum (HMM) income targets continue to be exceeded - Harrow Arts Centre (HAC) hosted their 18th Panchamukhee Durga Utsav Festival** in October, with a free 5-day of events, promoting the arts and cultural heritage of Indian subcontinent.
- **The annual pantomime at HAC -Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, sold over 13,600 tickets (20% increase from 2022)- the most successful show to date.**
- Designs for the **Meanwhile Use in Greenhill Way**, the Kiosks in St Ann's Rd and public realm improvements in Harrow Town Centre were completed.
- The **consultation on the Harrow Metropolitan Town Centre** enhancements was successfully completed.
- **Tender completed for Supply Ready project** which aims to help Harrow businesses secure contracts with the public sector.
- **Our skills & employment initiative was the best performing West London borough in delivering it's employment project**, securing 108% of its target, the next best borough only pulled down 52% of targeted job outcomes.

Climate Change & Natural Resources

- The public consultation on the Council's **Climate and Nature Strategy 23-30** was completed and final strategy approved by Cabinet in November.
- The Council appointed a **Nature Recovery Ranger** as part of a UKSPF funded project (until March 2025) to deliver biodiversity and habitat improvements in parks and open spaces. The role will also help run volunteering sessions for residents in our nature reserves & work with Harrow Nature Conservation
- Introduction of the **Council's new Cycle to Work Scheme** & investigation of **Green Car Benefit Scheme** for staff (salary sacrifice low emission vehicle leasing)
- Procurement taking place for a supplier to deliver **solar installations at five further council sites**
- Renewal of **council's energy contracts for the period 24-28.**
- Inaugural **YESFest (Harrow Schools Youth Eco Summit)** held in September, with 2024 event planned for May

Housing

- Despite the increasing number of households presenting as homeless we have maintained in Q3 some of the highest levels of **homelessness preventions in the country at over 72%** across the quarter.
- We have maintained the number of households in Temporary Accommodation at just over 1,110 households, or 12.4 households per 1,000 in Harrow's, this is significantly better than benchmarked boroughs at 18.8 per 1,000 households.
- We have made good progress in improving health and safety compliance and address in particular our domestic electrical testing programme is well ahead of schedule with now over 60% of properties tested.

- We have maintained a **low level of rent arrears at 4%** with the benchmark being over 5%.
- We are continuing to perform well in attending to **emergency repairs at over 97.2% above the benchmark of 93%**.
- We have improved void turnaround times from over 60 days down to 50 days, again 10 days better than comparative boroughs.
- We have also increased the number of Council homes which are EPC C or above to 38.8%.

Work Priorities for Next Year:

We will continue to monitor the current work programme and make changes if and when necessary. In the upcoming cycle we will be focussed on scrutinising the progress of Poets Corner and the Bryon Quarter developments under the Harrow Strategic Development Partnership.

Resources Scrutiny leads – Cllr Rekha Shah & Cllr Samir Sumaria

Our Role:

We are involved in shaping the Scrutiny Work Programme as part of the Scrutiny Leadership Group. Our focus is to ensure that services and programmes within the Resources directorate are reflected in scrutiny's work. We work with the Assistant Director for Corporate Strategy as well as the Head of Customer Services and Business Support to review and understand the improvements made by the directorate as part of the Modernisation Programme.

Key Highlights of Municipal Year:

A main highlight of this year's scrutiny committee was the Customer Experience Scrutiny Review. This follows the adoption of Cabinet's key priority of putting residents first, which was ratified on the 24th May 2022. The review was organised to investigate how council policies and strategies are used to improve and monitor the progress of customer experience. Namely the review looks at in practice this means ensuring that any interaction is a positive one with the Council being approachable, accessible, responsive, and informative through the best use of technology.

The Objectives of the review were:

- To monitor the progress on more intuitive digital access for residents e.g., refined search options on webpage
- To better understand digital exclusion and those affected by it
- Review how services are delivered (such as the front door to Adult Social care and Council Tax) and key customer journeys (such as subscribing to Garden Waste, reporting bin issues and ordering a parking permit)
- To ensure an improvement in the council's complaints process and interaction with elected members
- To ensure an improvement in the customer journey using the webpage and phone lines

Detailing these objectives is crucial to understanding and providing a bigger picture of the work that is being done to ensure the residents of the borough are benefitting from the council's resources.

Another reason for the review was due to the closing of the Civic Centre and looks at front facing services going forward. Discussion points in the review covered: Customer satisfaction, accessibility, digital exclusion, and front facing services. It is also important to mention that the council remains committed to continuous investment in digital services.

Based on the research composed the review suggested five key improvement measures to customer service:

1. Using one site for front-line council services instead of two
2. Improved signage to sites in the Town Centre
3. Improved Accessibility
4. Better communication and engagement for residents with the council
5. Refined complaints process

Cabinet has accepted recommendations outlined in the Customer Experience review and the implementation of these will be picked up through Performance & Finance sub-group after one year. Scrutiny looks forwards to seeing the outcomes from its review informing the development of the new Customer Experience strategy which is due summer 2024.

Incorporating this review into our overall Scrutiny work has been beneficial for the function of Scrutiny, this is an example of how our work progresses the success of the council and allows us to perform better for our residents. We aim to carry this understanding into further projects.

The Focus of Work Over the Past Year:

Over the past year our focus has been on customer experience and what this means for Harrow residents. As a result of this a large amount of our work has been interacting with residents, discovering the best ways to provide a great customer service. We have done this by conducting site visits and questionnaires. By using these methods, it gives us a unique perspective in understanding the lives of our residents. Working on the report has also provided an immense amount of insight in how best to provide services going forward. This period of scrutiny has allowed us to focus on needs of residents and looking into real life cases where residents struggled to get the expected services. By having these conversations with residents, it allows us to contextualise the services that are in need within the borough. As a result of this we have been able to take a pragmatic approach to make proposals that we believe are achievable.

Impact and Value of Scrutiny:

We believe that scrutiny is an important function for the council. Scrutiny ensures that the Cabinet and officers are held accountable for decisions that will impact our residents. It is also a mechanism that allows for collaboration cross party, in context the scrutiny function allowed for the review group for the customer experience review to work together in a space where in other circumstances would not be able to occur. It is an effective mechanism in ensuring the right decisions are made. The value of scrutiny this year for our committee is the presentation of the report to cabinet and awaiting its outcome.

As we continue, the work on the current work programme we believe there will be more impact for scrutiny as the year goes on.

Work Priorities for Next Year:

We look forward to actioning the contents of the report upon approval from cabinet in Autumn 2023. We believe that the report's recommendations will provide an overall positive affects for residents and the customer service experience

Appendix 1 - Scrutiny Committee Business and Attendance 2023-2024

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chair: Councillor Amir Moshenson

Vice-Chair: Councillor Graham Henson

Other Members: Councillors; June Baxter, Govind Bharadia, Vipin Mithani, Samir Sumaria, Dan Anderson, Eden Kulig, Maxine Henson, Philip Benjamin (Reserve), Janet Mote (Reserve), Matthew Goodwin-Freeman (Reserve), Kuha Kumaran (Reserve), Salim Chowdhury (Reserve), Rashmi Kalu (Reserve), Jerry Miles (Reserve), Sasi Suresh (Reserve), Dr Antonio Weiss (Reserve)

Co-Optees: Reverend P Reece, Ms M Trivedi, Harrow Youth Parliament Representative

Meetings	Attendance	Main Items
18 May 2023 (Special)	Scrutiny Members: Councillor Amir Moshenson (Chair) Councillor Graham Henson (Vice-Chair) Councillor Govind Bharadia Councillor Vipin Mithani Councillor Samir Sumaria Councillor June Baxter Councillor Dan Anderson Councillor Dean Gilligan Councillor Eden Kulig Councillor Philip O'Dell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of Vice Chair • Establishment of Sub-Committees 2023/24 • Appointment of Scrutiny Leads 2023/24
6 June 2023	Portfolio Holder Councillor Anjana Patel Scrutiny Members: Councillor Amir Moshenson (Chair) Councillor Dean Gilligan (Vice-Chair) Councillor Govind Bharadia Councillor Vipin Mithani Councillor Samir Sumaria Councillor June Baxter Councillor Eden Kulig Councillor Maxine Henson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Safety Strategy 2023-26 • Education Sub-Committee, Call-In
3 July 2023 (Special)	Leader of the Council Councillor Paul Osborn Scrutiny Members: Councillor Amir Moshenson (Chair)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question and Answer Session with Leader of the Council and Managing Director

	<p>Councillor Graham Henson (Vice-Chair) Councillor Govind Bharadia Councillor Samir Sumaria Councillor June Baxter Councillor Dan Anderson (Present as reserve) Councillor Dean Gilligan Councillor Eden Kulig Councillor Jerry Miles (Present as reserve)</p>	
12 September 2023	<p>Scrutiny Members: Councillor Amir Moshenson (Chair) Councillor Graham Henson (Vice-Chair) Councillor Govind Bharadia Councillor June Baxter Councillor Dan Anderson Councillor Maxine Henson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Experience Scrutiny Review
7 November 2023	<p>Scrutiny Members: Councillor Amir Moshenson (Chair) Councillor Graham Henson (Vice-Chair) Councillor Govind Bharadia Councillor Vipin Mithani Councillor Samir Sumaria Councillor Dan Anderson Councillor Maxine Henson Councillor Eden Kulig</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Justice Plan
9 January 2024 (Special)	<p>Leader of the Council: Councillor Paul Osborn</p> <p>Portfolio Holder: Councillor David Ashton</p> <p>Scrutiny Members: Councillor Amir Moshenson (Chair) Councillor Graham Henson (Vice-Chair) Councillor June Baxter Councillor Govind Bharadia Councillor Vipin Mithani (Substituted by Councillor Salim Chowdhury) Councillor Samir Sumaria (Substituted by Councillor Janet Mote) Councillor Dan Anderson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question and Answer with the Leader of the Council and the Managing Director

	Councillor Maxine Henson Councillor Eden Kulig	
23 January 2024 (Special)	Scrutiny Members: Councillor Amir Moshenson (Chair) Councillor Graham Henson (Vice-Chair) Councillor June Baxter Councillor Govind Bharadia Councillor Vipin Mithani (Substituted by Councillor Philip Benjamin) Councillor Samir Sumaria Councillor Dan Anderson (Substituted by Councillor Jerry Miles) Councillor Maxine Henson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harrow Strategic Development (HSDP) Report
13 Feb 2024	<p>Leader of the Council: Councillor Paul Osborn</p> <p>Portfolio Holder: Councillor David Ashton</p> <p>Scrutiny Members: Councillor Amir Moshenson (Chair) Councillor Graham Henson (Vice-Chair) Councillor June Baxter Councillor Govind Bharadia Councillor Samir Sumaria Councillor Dan Anderson Councillor Maxine Henson Councillor Eden Kulig</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Plan 2023-2026: Review of first year and Flagship Actions 2024-2025 • Final Revenue Budget 2024-2025 and final Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2026-2027
9 April 2024		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Performance and Finance Sub-Committee

Chair: Councillor Yogesh Teli

Vice Chair: Councillor Jerry Miles (Vice-Chair)

Other Members: Councillors; Nitesh Hirani, Samir Sumaria, Natasha Proctor, Salim Chowdhury (Reserve), Govind Bharadia (Reserve), Vipin Mithani (Reserve), Dan Anderson (Reserve) & Kandy Dolor (Reserve)

Meetings	Attendance	Main Items
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28 March 2023	Scrutiny Members: Councillor Yogesh Teli (Chair) Councillor Jerry Miles (Vice-Chair) Councillor Samir Sumaria (Substituted by Councillor Govind Bharadia) Councillor Nitesh Hirani Councillor Natasha Proctor (Substituted by Councillor Kandy Dolor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Revenue Budget 2023/24 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 to 2025/26
18 July 2023	Scrutiny Members: Councillor Yogesh Teli (Chair) Councillor Jerry Miles (Vice-Chair) Councillor Samir Sumaria Councillor Nitesh Hirani Councillor Natasha Proctor (Substituted by Councillor Kandy Dolor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Complaints Feedback Reports 2022 - 2023 - Children's and Adults'
14 December 2023	Scrutiny Members: Councillor Yogesh Teli (Chair) Councillor Jerry Miles (Vice-Chair) Councillor Nitesh Hirani (Substituted by Councillor Salim Chowdhury) Cllr Samir Sumaria Cllr Natasha Proctor Guests: Cllr Govind Bharadia Cllr David Ashton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Revenue Budget 2024/25 & Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2026/27
27 March 2024		<ul style="list-style-type: none">

Health and Social Care Sub-Committee

Chair: Councillor Chetna Halai

Vice Chair: Councillor Rekha Shah

Other Members: Councillors; Govind Bharadia, Vipin Mithani, Maxine Henson, Samir Sumaria (Reserve), Yogesh Teli (Reserve), Kuha Kumaran (Reserve), Simon Brown (Reserve), Natasha Proctor (Reserve), Julian Maw (Advisor)

Meetings	Attendance	Main Items
20 June 2023	Scrutiny Members: Councillor Chetna Halai (Chair)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust

	<p>Councillor Rekha Shah (Vice-Chair) Councillor Govind Bharadia Councillor Vipin Mithani (Substituted by Councillor Kuha Kumaran) Councillor Maxine Henson</p> <p>Guests: Julian Maw (Advisor) Councillor Phillip O'Dell</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immunisation Services in Harrow • Harrow Community Services position statement
12 December 2023	<p>Scrutiny Members: Councillor Chetna Halai (Chair) Councillor Rekha Shah (Vice-Chair) Councillor Govind Bharadia Councillor Vipin Mithani</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harrow Health and Care System Pressures • Harrow Mental Health - CNWL
5 March 2024	<p>Scrutiny Members: Councillor Chetna Halai (Chair) Councillor Rekha Shah (Vice-Chair) Councillor Govind Bharadia Councillor Vipin Mithani Councillor Maxine Henson</p> <p>Guests: Julian Maw (Advisor)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter Pressures - Harrow Mental Health • Harrow Mental Health - CNWL

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