
REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD ON 22 NOVEMBER 2005

Chair: * Councillor Jean Lammiman

Councillors: * Blann * Lavingia (4)
 * Bluston * Pinkus
 * Mrs Champagne (2) * Seymour
 * Gate * Thammaiah
 * Mark Ingram * Versallion

* Denotes Member present
 (2), (4) Denote categories of Reserve Members

[Note: Councillors Dighé and Lent also attended this meeting to speak on the item indicated at Minute 355 below. Councillor Dighé also spoke on the item at Minute 351.

Councillor Mrs Bath also attended this meeting to speak on the item indicated at Minute 352 below].

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL
PART II - MINUTES
346. Attendance by Reserve Members:

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Members:-

<u>Ordinary Member</u>	<u>Reserve Member</u>
Councillor Osborn Councillor Mitzi Green	Councillor Mrs Champagne Councillor Lavingia

347. Declarations of Interest:

RESOLVED: To note the following declaration of interests made by Members present at the meeting relating to business to be transacted at this meeting.

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Nature of Interest</u>
9. HOST Project	Councillor Bluston	The Member indicated a personal interest in that he was Chair of the Health and Social Care Sub-Committee which had considered the implementation of the HOST Project. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.
	Councillor Dighé	The Member indicated an interest in that he was the Portfolio Holder for Business Connections and Performance. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon. (See Notes (i) & (ii) below).
10. Stanmore Multi-Storey Car Park	Councillor Bluston Councillor Seymour	The Members indicated a personal interest in that they had served on the Development Control Committee which had considered planning applications for the Stanmore car park site. They would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

12.	Business Transformation Programme Update (BTP)	Councillor Mark Ingram	The Member indicated a personal and prejudicial interest in that he was a member of a Council Committee dealing with the Business Transformation Project. Accordingly, he did not vote or take part in the discussion when the matter was considered.
14.	Update on the Open Budget process	Councillor Mark Ingram	The Member indicated a personal and prejudicial interest in that he was a member of the Open Budget Steering Group. Accordingly, he did not vote or take part in the discussion when the matter was considered.
		Councillor Lent	The Member, who had been invited to the meeting, indicated that he was employed by the Power Inquiry which had been appointed to support Harrow's Open Budget Process. (See Note (i) below).
		Councillor Dighé	The Member, who had been invited to attend the meeting, indicated that he was the Chair of the Open Budget Steering Group which was overseeing Harrow's Open Budget Process. (See Note (i) below).
15.	Scrutiny and Preparing for the Olympics	Councillor Bluston	The Member indicated a personal interest in that he was a Council appointed representative of the Harrow Sports Council. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon. (See Note (ii) below).

[Note: (i) Councillors Dighé and Lent were able to speak at the meeting in accordance with paragraph 13.2 of Section A in Part 5 of the London Borough of Harrow Constitution, in that a Member invited to attend a meeting for the purpose of answering questions or otherwise giving evidence relating to a decision or action may regard themselves as not having a prejudicial interest in a matter relating to that body. Councillor Dighé was further invited to answer questions on the HOST project (agenda item 9).

(ii) In accordance with paragraph 12.2(c) of Section A in Part 5 of the London Borough of Harrow Constitution, a Member appointed or nominated to a body by the authority as its representative may regard himself/herself as not having a prejudicial interest in a matter relating to that body].

348. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

RESOLVED: That (1) the reference from the Cabinet meeting held on 6 October 2005 (agenda item 8(a)) be taken in conjunction with agenda items 9 and 10, which contained reports produced in response to the reference;

(2) it be noted that agenda items 11 and 13 had been combined into a single report entitled Harrow IT Services (HITS) Update Report/Restructure;

(3) in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the following agenda items be admitted late to the agenda by virtue of the special circumstances and grounds for urgency detailed below:-

<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Special Circumstances/Grounds for Urgency</u>
10. Stanmore Multi-Storey Car Park	The report had been submitted late, as officers in the Urban Living Directorate had

not appreciated the need for a report until after the agenda had been printed and despatched. Members were requested to consider this item, as a matter of urgency.

12. Business Transformation Programme (BTP) - Update

This report had not been available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated due to the need to keep multiple bodies within the Council informed of progress on the BTP. Therefore, a single report had been written to cover all requirements. Members were requested to consider this item, as a matter of urgency.

- 11/13. Harrow IT Services (HITS) Update Report/ Restructure

The report had not been available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated because of changes in personnel at IT Services. Members were requested to consider this report, as a matter of urgency.

(4) all items be considered with the press and public present.

349. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2005, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record;

(2) the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2005 be deferred until printed in the next Council Bound Minute Volume.

350. **Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations:**

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put, or petitions or deputations received at this meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules 8, 9 and 10 (Part 4F of the Constitution) respectively.

351. **HOST Programme:**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Strategy (People First) which had been submitted to the Committee to supplement a reference from the Cabinet meeting held on 6 October 2005.

It was noted that:

- the Cabinet, when considering proposed amendments to the Capital Programme 2005/06, had expressed concern in relation to excess expenditure on the HOST Project;
- consideration of the amendment in relation to the HOST Project had been delegated to an Executive Working Group, which was due to meet for the first time on 1 December 2005.

The Portfolio Holder for Business Connections and Performance, who was also a member of the Executive Working Group, was invited to provide further information on this matter. He emphasised that although the full costs of the Project had been established early in the financial year, the amendment had not been reported sooner due to failures in communication between officers.

In response to a question from a Member regarding lessons that would be learnt from this project, officers confirmed that future projects would include better planning and forecasting. A Member emphasised the need to construct full business cases before budgeting. The Committee agreed to receive a report on the progress of the Executive Working Group at its next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Committee receive a report at its meeting on 30 January 2006 on the progress of the Executive Working Group.

352. **Stanmore Multi-Storey Car Park:**

The Executive Director (Urban Living) introduced the report, which had been written in response to a reference from the Cabinet meeting held on 6 October 2005 regarding the return of Section 106 monies in relation to Stanmore Car Park. The report detailed the history of the Stanmore multi-storey car park.

In response to a question from a Member regarding how officers intended to proceed with the development of the site, the Executive Director (Urban Living) advised that the demolition of the car park could now be started, negotiations with tenants who had rights of use over the existing structure having been completed. The agreement with the tenants required the project to be completed by April 2006. Demolition works would commence in December 2005, with extensive works on site commencing in January 2006 in order to minimise disruption to shoppers during the Christmas period.

The Executive Director (Urban Living) reported that the cost to the Council of demolishing the existing car park and constructing a new surface level car park would be in the order of £400k. Half of the funding would be obtained from the Capital Budget, with further contributions received from the parking account.

A Ward Councillor for Stanmore Park who was back benching suggested that there was insufficient provision of car parking in Stanmore and that the Council should have found the resources to rebuild the existing multi-storey car park. Particular reference was made to the provision of spaces for visitors to Wembley Stadium who were likely to use the underground connection at Stanmore. The Committee agreed to refer this matter to the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

Members raised specific questions, to which the Executive Director (Urban Living) agreed to provide written responses.

The Executive Director (Urban Living) confirmed that the new organisational arrangements for Urban Living would provide for better integration of Council services. A Member advised that officers ought to ensure that confidential information was not released in Part I reports.

RESOLVED: That (1) the provision of car parking for visitors to Wembley Stadium be referred to the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Sub-Committee for consideration;

(2) the Executive Director (Urban Living) provide written responses to Members questions to all Members of the Committee.

353. **Harrow IT Services (HITS) Update Report/Restructure:**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Business Transformation.

Officers advised that the most recent developments in HITS had been designed to provide the infrastructure required to deliver the Business Transformation Project (BTP). Having invested heavily in IT, the emphasis would now be placed on people, improving customer focus and revising the management structure within service.

A Member praised the HITS Member tour, and officers were asked to organise another event for Members who had not been able to attend.

In response to a question from a Member regarding the possibility of using technology to facilitate mobile working, the Director of Business Transformation confirmed that this was high on the HITS agenda and that a bid would be made to the Capital Programme in 2006/07.

RESOLVED: That (1) the report be noted;

(2) officers arrange a further Member tour of the Harrow IT Services.

354. **Scrutiny and Preparing for the Olympics:**

Members were shown the Olympic Winning Bid Video as an introduction to a report of the Director of People, Policy and Performance. The report outlined the potential benefits of the successful London Olympic bid, and presented suggestions as to how Scrutiny might support and monitor the Council's preparations.

Officers emphasised that to reap the benefits of the 2012 Olympics, it was necessary to begin preparations now. The Chair added that Scrutiny would be able to add value to the preparations underway. It was further emphasised that the benefits to the Council would depend heavily on the efforts made to capitalise on the opportunities presented.

Members made several suggestions on how the Council could approach the preparations. Inter-borough cooperation was encouraged, both across London through the Association of London Government and within the West London Alliance. Reference was made of partnership with the London Borough of Brent, which benefited from Wembley Stadium. At a local level, Members suggested ways in which the

paralympians could become involved with projects at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital and other organisations within the Borough.

A Member suggested that the Council could examine previous Games to find examples of how more remote areas could benefit from events held in major cities. It was emphasised that since all Harrow residents had to pay the precept to meet the costs of the Games, it was the Council's responsibility to ensure that the residents receive the maximum benefit from this investment. Members endorsed the proposals contained within the report of the Director of People, Policy and Performance.

RESOLVED: That (1) the potential benefits of the successful London Olympic bid be noted;

(2) the options report being considered by Cabinet in December 2005 be presented to the subsequent meeting of the Committee;

(3) any project plan for the implementation of the Council's Olympic objectives be considered by the Committee as early as possible and on a regular basis;

(4) the Committee call for further reports in accordance with work programme/monitoring proposals;

(5) the proposals for supporting and monitoring the progress of the Council's preparation for the Olympics, as outlined in the report, be noted.

355. **Update on the Open Budget Process:**

Councillors Dighé and Lent had been invited to the meeting to provide an update on the Open Budget Process. The meeting was informed that the Power Inquiry, an independent Commission exploring political participation in Britain, had been appointed to support the process. Members were also informed of Councillor Lent's involvement in the Power Inquiry (see also Minute 347).

The Committee received a presentation outlining the progress that had been made on the open budget process.

Key Principles: The five key principles of the open budget process were:

- The importance of the influence of those participating;
- The information presented to the participants should be in a form that was readily understandable;
- The process should involve deliberation and assent, not confrontation;
- Feedback to participants was essential;
- The process would be independently managed.

Management: An Open Budget Steering Group of Councillors had been established to oversee the process. In addition, the Open Budget Management Board was an independent body consisting of consultants and employees of the Power Inquiry, and was directing the mechanics of the process.

Open Budget Assembly: Pre-assembly consultation had been conducted with officers and community groups, to produce a draft discussion document that was presented to an Assembly of approximately 300 Harrow residents.

Representation and Evaluation: The meeting was informed that the Assembly had mostly reflected the ethnicity, age and gender of residents in the Borough, although a particularly under-represented group was 20-44 year olds. Within the Panel (elected by the Assembly) the diversity was ideally balanced. The feedback from attendees at the Assembly had been positive, with the majority of participants finding the process 'good' or 'very good', and stating that the process should be repeated where appropriate.

Open Budget Panel: The Open Budget Assembly had elected a Panel of approximately 30 people from the attendees. The Panel would observe the development of the Harrow budget, and work alongside the Council to promote the priorities identified from the Assembly.

In response to a question from a Member regarding how the Panel would interact with officers, it was advised that the Panel was still determining the best approach, and that officers would be invited to the Panel meetings to answer specific questions.

The meeting was advised that although the process provided a professional, meaningful way to engage and involve the public in budget development, it might not be appropriate for other forms of consultation. However, it was identified that the key principles of the process could be applied to other forms of engagement.

In response to a question from a Member, it was confirmed that participants knew that the final budget would be guided by statutory requirements and that Councillors would agree on the final budget.

People within the 20-44 age bracket were identified as less locally networked, and therefore more difficult to reach. A Member asked how the process had engaged those who were not usually involved in consultation. It was advised that although it was useful to engage people who were already informed and active in engagement, the Power Inquiry had also made efforts to target groups less likely to attend.

In response to a question from a Member regarding improvements that could have been made to the process, it was advised that the process could have benefited from additional time, and that it would have been useful to extend the scope of the pre-consultation to enable more participation from residents, possibly using IT.

Members congratulated officers and Members on the success of the process. The Chair suggested that the work would inform the progress of the Community Engagement Review. The Committee was advised that the Power Inquiry would submit a full written report to the Committee at its meeting in March 2006.

RESOLVED: That (1) the above be noted;

(2) the Committee receive a report of the Power Inquiry at its meeting on 28 March 2006.

356. **Business Transformation Programme Update:**

The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director (Business Development) which provided an update on the current status of the Business Transformation Programme.

Officers advised that the Programme was currently in the 'business blueprint' stage, and that this was being transformed into a detailed pilot scheme using proven methodologies. A lot of recent work had focused on effectively communicating the message of the Programme to Council staff. It was emphasised that the Programme was working on an accelerated timescale, and that, although it was challenging, deadlines were still being met.

With reference to the First Contact project, the Chair commented that recent consultation with Members had been unsatisfactory. She added that Members had requested a notice be placed on site identifying the person responsible for construction, as well as a further Member consultation event, and that neither of these events had happened. Officers confirmed that both requests would be completed.

Members discussed the possibility of using videos or web cast presentations to enable Members to have remote access to presentations.

The Chair congratulated the work of staff involved in the Business Transformation Programme.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

357. **Strategic Performance Report - Quarter 2 2005/06:**

Officers introduced a report of the Director of People, Performance and Policy which provided first and second quarter performance information to the Committee.

Referring to the LPSA targets, a Member noted that the Council would receive a financial reward based on the proportion of measures included in the LPSA that achieved their agreed targets. Members requested further information on the likelihood of these targets being met.

RESOLVED: That officers provide Members with further information on the LPSA targets.

358. **Update on Current Reviews:**
Members received a report of the Director of People, Performance and Policy noting the progress made so far on the reviews currently underway.
- RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.
359. **Format of Scrutiny Reports:**
Members discussed the format of reports presented to the Scrutiny Committee and its Sub-Committees.
- RESOLVED:** That (1) an informal working group be established to examine the most suitable format of reports for the Scrutiny Committee and its Sub-Committees;
- (2) the working group consist of Councillors Blann and Versallion, who would receive support from within the scrutiny unit;
- (3) the working group report its conclusions to a future meeting of the Committee, for their consideration.
360. **Any Other Business:**
- Special Meeting of the Committee on 6 December 2005
The Chair informed the Committee that questions for the Leader and Chief Executive needed to be forwarded to scrutiny officers virtually in advance of the Special Meeting on 6 December 2005. The deadline for receiving questions was Friday 25 November 2005. An edited shortlist of questions would be circulated to Members, for approval.
- RESOLVED:** That the above be noted.
361. **Extension and Termination of the Meeting:**
In accordance with the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 6.7 (Part 4F of the Constitution) it was
- RESOLVED:** (1) At 10.00 pm to continue until 10.30 pm;
- (2) at 10.30 pm to continue until 10.35 pm.
- (Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 10.31 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR JEAN LAMMIMAN
Chair