
REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD ON 25 APRIL 2006

Chair: * Councillor Jean Lammiman

Councillors: * Blann * Mary John (3)
 * Bluston * Myra Michael (1)
 * Gate * Osborn
 Mitzi Green * Thammaiah
 * Mark Ingram * Versallion

* Denotes Member present
 (1) and (3) Denote category of Reserve Members

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

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

Ordinary Member

Councillor Pinkus
 Councillor Seymour

Reserve Member

Councillor Myra Michael
 Councillor Mary John

415. Declarations of Interest:

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:-

- (i) Agenda Item 10 – Corporate Plan
 Councillor Bluston declared a personal interest in that he had been the Chair of the Best Value Advisory Panel. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.
 (See also Note below).
- (ii) Agenda item 14 – An Update on Harrow, West London and London 2012 – Information on Parking Developments in Harrow in relation to the Olympics
 Councillor Bluston declared 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 also Note below).
- (iii) Agenda Item 15 – Business Transformation Partnership
 During the course of the meeting, Councillor Mark Ingram indicated a prejudicial interest in that he was a Member of the Business Transformation Partnership Board. He would leave the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.
- (iv) Agenda Item 16 – Review of the Open Budget Process
 During the course of the meeting, Councillor Mark Ingram indicated a prejudicial interest in that he was a Member of the Open Budget Steering Group. He would leave the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.
- (v) Agenda Item 18 – Individual Performance Appraisal and Development (IPAD)
 Councillor Bluston declared a personal interest in that he had been the Chair of the Best Value Advisory Panel, which had considered this matter. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.
 (See also Note below).

- (vi) Agenda Item 20 - Fairtrade
Councillor Bluston indicated a personal interest in that his daughter was a member of Fairtrade. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

(See also Note below).

[Note: Councillor Bluston stated that, due to another engagement, he would be leaving the meeting early, at approximately 8.10pm].

416. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

RESOLVED: That (1) 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>
4. Minutes	In line with existing practice, the minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2006 were not circulated with the main agenda. Members are asked to agree the minutes at this meeting and that they be signed when printed in the Minute Volume.
9. Urban Living Organisational Arrangements and Middle Management Review (MMR)	The report was not available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated as it was agreed that the report would be submitted to the Committee after the despatch of the agenda. In addition, appropriate clearance on the report had to be completed before its circulation. Members were requested to consider this report, as the MMR Review was an important part of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme.
12. Treasury Management Strategy 2006-07 and Prudential Indicators 2006-07 to 2008-09	This report was not available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated as it had been erroneously omitted from circulation with the agenda. Members were requested to consider this item.
14. An update on Harrow, West London and London 2012 - Information on Parking Development in Harrow in relation to the Olympics	This report was not available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated as it could only be completed after the decision of Cabinet was formally available following which appropriate consultations on the report were carried out. Members were requested to consider this item, which had been requested by the Committee at a previous meeting.
19. Procurement	This report was not available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated as it was received orally at the meeting. Members were asked to consider these items so that they were aware of the current position.
20. Fairtrade	The report on Fairtrade has been updated since it was circulated on the main agenda. Members were requested to consider the report as it contained additional information that had been requested at a briefing meeting on 20 April 2005 to enable them to make an informed decision.

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| 21. | Scrutiny Report Format | This report was not available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated in order to allow appropriate consultations to be carried out. Members were requested to consider this item, which was requested by the Committee at a previous meeting. |
| 22. | Any Other Business:
Members' Induction on Scrutiny and Launch of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report | This report was not available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated as it was received orally at the meeting. Members were asked to consider these items so that they were aware of the current position. |

(2) all business be considered with the press and public present.

417. **Minutes:**
RESOLVED: That the Chair be given authority to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2006, those minutes having been circulated, as a correct record, once printed in the Council Bound Volume.
418. **Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations:**
RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put, or petitions or deputations received at the meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules 8, 9 and 10 (Part 4F of the Council's Constitution) respectively.
419. **Adult and Community Learning Scrutiny Review - Recommendation 1 of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub-Committee Meeting held on 4 April 2006:**
The Committee considered a recommendation from the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting held on 4 April 2006 on the scrutiny review of the Adult and Community Learning (ACL) service and
RESOLVED: That (1) a question be put to the Chief Executive about whether she, as the Council's representative on the West London Alliance, had raised the issue of support to disabled learners with a view to developing solutions for the region and giving consideration to the forthcoming pan-London round of European Social Fund (ESF) funding, the next time she and the Leader attend the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;

(2) the area of access to all Council services (of which ACL was an important part) for adults with learning difficulties and their carers be considered as a potential area for a separate review as part of the Work Programme for 2006/07.
420. **Urban Living Organisational Arrangements and Middle Management Review:**
The Executive Director (Urban Living) introduced the report, which provided a comprehensive overview of the progress made in implementing the new organisational and management arrangements within the Urban Living Directorate, details of which were set out in the report. The Executive Director made the following key points in response to questions from Members:-
- following discussions with the Acting Director of Human Resources since the report was written, he was confident that the Middle Management Review (MMR) in the Urban Living Directorate would be completed by 31 May 2006;
 - whilst the Directorate had struggled to establish a new 'fit for business' unit, much had been achieved and the organisational arrangements developed were based on recent operational experience and a comprehensive understanding of customer, staff and organisational needs for the future;
 - savings had been achieved;
 - the Urban Living organisational arrangements, set out at appendix 1 to his report, would provide the correct level of service and engineer joined-up working within the organisation and across the Council;
 - he would be liaising with the Executive Director (Business Development) regarding the role of the consultants in relation to the appointments to the posts of the Directors of Area Services and Property Services.

Members welcomed the report and expressed their appreciation of its candour, representing a firm platform for the way forward. They congratulated staff for their work, in particular the work carried out by the 'clean and green' teams who had a positive 'can do' approach to their work.

The Chair indicated that both the Cabinet and the Employees' Consultative Forum had recently considered reports on the Scrutiny Review of the MMR and that full discussion had taken place at these meetings.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and a progress report be submitted to the October 2006 meeting of the Committee.

421. **Corporate Plan:**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of People, Performance and Policy, which set out the statutory requirement on the Council to publish its Best Value Performance Plan and its relationship with the Council's Corporate Plan.

Members noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would not have an opportunity to review the Corporate Plan due to the timetable of meetings and the statutory requirement to publish the Plan by 30 June 2006. It was noted that whilst there were no constitutional requirements to consult the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Plan, the current Administration had adopted the good practice of consulting the Committee. Members were of the view that the good practice adopted should continue in future years and that the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee ought to be consulted on the draft Corporate Plan.

RESOLVED: To note that there would not be an opportunity for review of the Best Value Performance Plan by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to its consideration by Cabinet in June 2006, and that the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be consulted.

(See also Minutes 415 and 435).

422. **Update on Corporate Governance:**

Members received an oral report from the Director of Financial and Business Strategy, which provided an update on the Council's Corporate Governance arrangements and the work carried out in this area since the matter was last reported to the Committee.

The Director reported on the achievements during 2005/06 and areas where further work was required. In response to questions, she stated that the Directors responsible for Corporate Governance were in the process of updating the framework, which would include the improvements on governance made in 2005/06 and those that would be carried out during 2006/07. She added that the framework would be circulated to appropriate Members of the Council for comment in advance of the next ordinary meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet.

A Member thanked officers for developing systems and tools in order to ensure that good governance arrangements were in place during challenging times. The Chair requested that a report be submitted to the next ordinary meeting of the Committee, which included information on the benefits and value for money provided by the consultants engaged by the Council.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(See also Minute 435).

423. **Treasury Management Strategy 2006-07 and Prudential Indicators 2006-07 to 2008-09:**

The Director of Financial and Business Strategy introduced the report, which had been considered by the Cabinet and the Council in February 2006. She reported that the Council was required to approve the Treasury Management Strategy each year, and to approve a number of prudential indicators. She indicated that a low risk approach had been taken.

In response to a question from a Member, the Director provided information on the duration and the appropriateness of the benchmark set for the external cash managers. She confirmed that the Council was required to spread the investments in order to avoid risks and to reduce exposure to fluctuations in interest rates. The Director undertook to seek professional advice on the Council's short-term investment strategy following comments by a Member.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

424. **Business Continuity Planning Update Report:**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Financial and Business Strategy on the current position of the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) across the Council.

The Director indicated that she was pleased to report that the Business Continuity Officer had been appointed. She reported on the work undertaken by the post holder, details of which were set out in the report.

Members were informed that the plans referred to in the report would be tested shortly to ensure 'a state of readiness'.

Members welcomed the report, in particular the Gantt chart, which showed the critical path. They congratulated officers on the work undertaken and were pleased that the plans would be tested.

RESOLVED: That the current position on the Business Continuity Planning across the Council be noted and a further report be submitted to the Committee in six months' time.

425. **An Update on Harrow, West London and London 2012 - Information on Parking Development in Harrow in relation to the Olympics:**

The Director of Strategic Planning introduced the report, which provided Members with an update on the various issues in relation to London 2012. He circulated a report from the Local Government Association (LGA) on how local authorities could maximise the benefits of London 2012.

The Director indicated that he was pleased to report that the budget for a tourism officer had been identified, and stated that the Harrow Olympics Task Force, which had been set up by Cabinet, would be responsible for capitalising on the opportunities provided by London 2012 for Harrow.

A Member stated that parking provision/controls outside all underground stations in Harrow ought to be investigated and that officers should not merely concentrate on the Jubilee Line stations. Another Member, in his capacity as Chair of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Sub-Committee, stated that the Sub-Committee, at its meeting in September 2006, would be considering a report on the parking situation around the Stanmore area directly arising from the use of the Wembley Stadium.

Members noted that it was intended to bring the Prince Edward Playing Fields into use but not for parking. They discussed the arrangements for transporting spectators to and from the 2012 venues, including the need to ensure that those taking part in the paralympics were able to travel by public transport. It was noted that the Olympics Task Force and its sub-groups would be addressing these issues.

The Director informed Members that Section 106 money (£100,000) had been allocated to provide on-street parking controls in Harrow in order to alleviate the impact on the Borough for events held at Wembley Stadium. He advised that Brent Council would release the money once the schemes developed by Harrow had been approved.

The Chair, whilst mindful that the work of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Sub-Committee should not be duplicated, was of the view that the Overview and Scrutiny ought to monitor parking controls/provision and other issues that related to 2012. She requested that a report be submitted to the next ordinary meeting of the Committee in July 2006 on the financial, access and parking aspects, to include a project plan Gantt Chart setting out the critical path.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and that a further report be submitted to the Committee in July 2006 on the issues raised in the preamble above.

(See also Minutes 415 and 435).

426. **Business Transformation Partnership:**

The Director of Business Transformation introduced the report, which outlined the performance of the Business Transformation Partnership (BTP) projects and the methods of monitoring the contractual elements of the BTP. Members welcomed a representative from Capita and the consultant appointed to programme manage the BTP to the meeting.

The Director reported on the key aspects of the projects, details of which were set out in the report. She updated the position since the report was written and mentioned the following key points in relation to the re-structure of HITS:-

- the job descriptions had been agreed and a further meeting had been arranged with Unison to finalise details and commence the recruitment process which was a priority;
- significant improvements had been made in service delivery and that 90% of the calls to the helpdesk were addressed in less than a day;
- the Transformation Plan for HITS would be presented to the next ordinary meeting of the Committee.

The Director responded to questions from Members who welcomed the report, including the notion of user acceptance testing of the various systems. She responded to the concerns expressed by the Chair in respect of the facilities provided at the First Contact (FC) Centre and reported that a number of additional measures would be introduced to ensure that the FC Centre was 'welcoming'. Members were informed that the facilities in the Centre would also be 'road' tested and further changes made if necessary.

In response to additional questions from Members, the Director reported that the Council would be moving away from the provision of laptops to Members and that consideration was being given to providing access through the Council's network. She added that this matter was the subject of a report to the BTP Sub-Committee, which was scheduled to meet the following day.

The Chair thanked the Director for a comprehensive report. She added that Scrutiny, having been involved in its development from the outset, enabled the scrutiny process to be more effective and thus benefit the organisation during the change management process. It was noted that regular updates would be provided to the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(See also Minute 415).

427. **Review of the Open Budget Process:**

The Director of Financial and Business Strategy gave an oral report to the Committee. She informed Members that she had recently received a report from the Open Budget Panel, which had been set up following the Open Budget Assembly under the auspices of the Power Inquiry. She added that the report from the Power Inquiry on the evaluation of the Open Budget process was expected shortly. The Committee was assured that both reports would be sent to all Members of the Council in due course.

The Director reported on the contents of the report from the Open Budget Panel and its findings as follows:-

- broadly, the Council had taken on board the views of the Assembly;
- the Panel had commented on the timing of the whole process and the roles of the various participants;
- the Panel members had expressed their desire to be involved in the budget proposals for 2006/07.

A Member commented on the Open Budget Process and whether it had had any real impact on the budget. He requested that a report be submitted to the Committee setting out the changes that had been implemented and those that were in the pipeline as a result of the process. He added that the report should also include details of the mechanisms that would be used to provide feedback to the participants, including justification and an explanation to the Panel where their suggestions had been rejected.

Another Member was of the view that Harrow should be proud of hosting this innovative process. He acknowledged that the process had experienced problems and that the lessons learnt ought to be fed back to the Power Inquiry.

The Chair was of the view that the Open Budget process had not been entirely satisfactory and perhaps the lack of support to the Open Budget Panel and the timing

had hindered its effectiveness. She suggested that this matter be included in the Committee's Work Programme for 2006/07.

In response to the various comments from Members, the Director stated that whilst there had been problems, much had been gained from the process and that various other organisations had shown an interest in it. She added that feedback would be provided to members of the Panel and thanked them for their participation and contributions. The Council had been mindful of the independence of the Panel and the support that would be required in the future.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(See also Minute 415).

428. **Health and Safety Executive Inspection Update:**

An officer reported on the positive outcome of the Health and Safety (HSE) Management Audit. He advised Members of the role of the Council's Health and Safety Service and agreed to discuss the concerns in relation to safety expressed by a Member outside of the meeting.

A Member stated that he was pleased to see that health and safety had been embraced throughout the Council.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and that a further report be submitted to the Committee in six months' time.

429. **Individual Performance Appraisal and Development (IPAD):**

Members received a report of the Executive Director (Business Development) which set out how Individual Performance Appraisal and Development (IPAD) had progressed since its inception.

Members were informed of the benefits of the scheme and the progress made in monitoring, introducing competencies and training, details of which were set out in the report. The officer stated that the target set for the number of staff who should have had an IPAD was 98% by 2007. She explained that the competency dictionary contained 19 competencies but that it was anticipated that most staff would be set five/six competencies.

In response to questions from Members, the officer described the value that IPF consultancy would bring to the process. She informed Members that the cost of engaging IPF would be in the region of £10,000-£14,000. It was noted that an executive summary of the results of the staff questionnaire would be sent to Members of the Committee and that a report on the survey would be submitted to its next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and that a progress report, reflecting the impact of IPAD and how it had been embedded within the organisation, be submitted in one year's time.

(See also Minute 415).

430. **Procurement:**

The Committee received an oral report of the Director of Financial and Business Strategy on the work carried out by the Council's procurement team, details of which would be circulated to Members separately. It was noted that procurement would be included in the Committee's Work Programme for 2006/07.

RESOLVED: That the position be noted.

431. **Fairtrade:**

Members considered a revised report of the Chief Executive, which had been circulated with the third supplemental agenda. The report described the actions taken since it had been agreed, at the meeting of Council held on 20 October 2005, that Harrow would become a Fairtrade borough.

An officer outlined the measures that had been put in place to encourage the use of Fairtrade products, details of which were set out in the revised report. She described how the initiative could be taken forward.

In response, the Executive Director (Urban Living) highlighted the importance of mainstreaming the promotion of Fairtrade and undertook to discuss this further at the Corporate Management Team meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and that a further report be submitted to the next ordinary meeting of the Committee on the issues raised above.

(See also Minute 415).

432. **Scrutiny Report Format:**

An officer introduced the report, which updated the Committee on the outcome of the working group set up to discuss the format of reports to Scrutiny. She added that the comments made by a Member during the meeting that reports should contain detailed financial implications rather than merely state 'to be contained within existing budgets' would also be taken on board.

RESOLVED: That (1) the current standardised report format was helpful and should continue to be used so as to ensure that all appropriate information was included;

(2) the standardised format should be used to enable officers to explain the implications of the information being considered rather than followed in a mechanical way;

(3) officers responsible for submitting reports to Scrutiny Committees be requested to adopt a more considered approach to the use of the standardised format;

(4) the appropriateness of this arrangement be considered in one year's time.

433. **Members Induction on Scrutiny - 11 July 2006:**

The Committee was informed that, aside from the training all newly elected Members would receive following the May 2006 Borough Elections, there would be additional training for the Members serving on Scrutiny Committees on 11 July 2006 from 6.30pm. It was also intended to identify the individual training needs of Members for further development.

RESOLVED: That a report be submitted to the next available meeting of the Committee.

434. **Launch of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report:**

The Committee was reminded that its Annual Report, setting out the benefits of good scrutiny, would be launched on 27 April 2006 at 6.30pm. This would provide Members with an opportunity to thank community representatives who had participated and led on the reviews and the public who had given up their time and taken the trouble to give their views.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

435. **Timing and Late Reports/Calendar of Meetings:**

During the course of the meeting, a number of Members expressed concerns about the timing of reports and meetings and late reports. Members were of the view that, as their time was limited, the promptness of reports was important. A Member was of the view that improvements in information technology would assist officers to deliver reports on time.

The Director of Financial and Business Strategy acknowledged Members' comments and recognised the need to 'map out' reports in order to provide an improved service.

RESOLVED: To note the comments made by Members.

436. **Vote of Thanks:**

The Chair thanked Members who had served on the Scrutiny Committees for their work in making scrutiny in Harrow a success and for scrutinising challenging issues. She thanked community representatives who had led on reviews, Media4Life and the public for their contributions on the Scrutiny Review of Community Engagement (Hear/Say).

The Chair thanked officers for their support.

Finally, the Chair outlined the strengths and success of scrutiny in Harrow.

437. **Extension and Termination of the Meeting:**
In accordance with the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 67 (ii) (b), it was

RESOLVED: (1) At 10.00pm to continue until 10.15pm; and

(2) at 10.15pm to continue until 10.30pm.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.31 pm, closed at 10.29 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR JEAN LAMMIMAN
Chair