
REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD ON 18 JULY 2006

Chairman: * Councillor Jean Lammiman

Councillors: * B E Gate * Christopher Noyce
* Mitzi Green * Richard Romain
* Salim Miah * Anthony Seymour
* Mrs Myra Michael * Mrs Rekha Shah
* Jerry Miles * Mark Versallion

* Denotes Member present

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION I - Reconfiguration of Scrutiny Sub-Committees

The Committee received a report of the Director of People, Performance and Policy (Business Development), which outlined the consultation that had taken place on the reconfiguration of the Scrutiny Sub-Committees and their proposed remits, including that of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Having agreed the reconfiguration and the terms of reference of its Sub-Committees, it was

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That the terms of reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, agreed by Extraordinary Council on 31 May 2006, be amended to specify responsibility for scrutinising culture, adults with special needs and health finance as set out in paragraph (d) at Appendix 1 to the minutes.

(See also Minutes 11 and 19).

PART II - MINUTES

9. **Welcome:**
The Chair welcomed Councillor Christopher Noyce to his first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee following his appointment by Council at its meeting held on 13 July 2006.
10. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**
RESOLVED: To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance at this meeting.
11. **Declarations of Interest:**
RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:-
- (i) **Agenda Item 10 – Reconfiguration of Scrutiny Sub-Committees**
Councillor Mitzi Green stated that she had taken advice from the Director of Corporate Governance in respect of this report. She declared a personal interest in that her adult son, who had a learning disability, received support from Harrow Learning Disabilities Team and Housing Benefits. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.
- The Member wished it to be noted that she would seek further advice from the Director of Corporate Governance on individual reports with issues relating to adults with special needs and adult health/social care if and when these were considered by relevant Committees and declare her interests accordingly.
- (ii) **Agenda Item 18 – Any Other Business – Presentation by Arts Culture Harrow**
Councillor Jean Lammiman declared a personal interest in that she was a Council appointed representative of Arts Culture Harrow (ACH). She would remain in the room whilst the presentation was received and considered.
12. **Arrangement of Agenda:**
RESOLVED: That (1) in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended), 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> |
|---|--|
| 8. Scrutiny Sub-Committees | The paper setting out the amendments to the membership of the Scrutiny Sub-Committees had not been available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated in order to allow sufficient time for appropriate consultations. Members were requested to consider the paper to enable the changes to be agreed. |
| 18. Any Other Business: | |
| (i) Presentation by Arts Culture Harrow | The presentation was not listed on the agenda at the time the agenda was printed and circulated as it had been erroneously omitted from the agenda. Members were requested to receive the presentation at the meeting so that they were informed of the work done by ACH. |
| (ii) Special Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 26 September 2006 | This item was not listed at the time the agenda was printed and circulated. Members were asked to consider this item so that they were aware of the special meeting of the Committee for the purpose of a question and answer session with the Leader of the Council and the Acting Chief Executive. |

- (iii) Blog This item was not listed at the time the agenda was printed and circulated. Members were asked to consider this item so that they were aware of which Committee would be considering this matter.

(2) the presentation by Arts Culture Harrow and the report titled 'Cultural Services Inspection – Improvement Plan' be received following consideration of agenda items 1 to 7 as the two matters were linked;

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

13. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That (1) the minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2006, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record;

(2) the minutes of the Special meeting held on 5 June 2006 be deferred until printed in the Council Bound Minute Volume.

14. **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.

15. **Presentation by Arts Culture Harrow:**

The Chair welcomed Mike Severyn, the Chair of Arts Culture Harrow (ACH), and Lesley McConnell, Transitional Chief Executive, to the meeting.

Members received a presentation outlining the ACH Vision for the Future 'Going Forward' including the initiatives undertaken and proposed. The Chair of ACH advised that there was a desire to strengthen the relationship between ACH and the Council and a need to tackle challenges, as well as increase income, development and capacity. He paid tribute to Lesley McConnell and her staff on the achievements of ACH despite a restructure and commended her on rebuilding the organisation.

Members thanked the ACH Chair and the Transitional Chief Executive for their presentation and the responses provided to their questions and suggestions.

ACH's interest in being involved in the setting up of an 'all purpose performance area' in Harrow was noted. Members were supportive of the suggestion to visit the Wood Green Chocolate Factory to see how it had developed as a business.

It was noted that ACH would be included in the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme.

RESOLVED: To note the presentation.

(See also Minutes 11, 12 and 16).

16. **Cultural Services Inspection - Improvement Plan (Update):**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Lifelong Learning and Cultural Services (People First), which set out the progress made against the Improvement Plan following the inspection of Cultural Services in March 2005.

An officer outlined the contents of the report, in particular the actions taken by the Council and those that were planned for the future, in relation to the recommendations made by the Audit Commission which were as follows:

- improving the Council's relationships with key partner organisations, which the officer explained would include the Arts Culture Harrow from whom the Committee had received a presentation that evening;
- developing and implementing a service-wide framework for measuring impact;
- ensuring that the vision for Cultural Services was clearly articulated and fully understood.

Members were informed that:-

- the Improvement Plan would be updated to reflect the changes in the Council's Corporate priorities under the new administration;
- a cross-cutting cultural services officer group had been established to ensure delivery of actions against the improvement plan and to ensure 'a state of readiness' for the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) in November 2006.

The officer responded to questions from residents and alluded to the changes to the Service Level Agreement (SLA) in relation to the Harrow Sports Council which were expected to be agreed the following week.

The Chairman stated that the Improvement Plan would inform the Committee's Work Programme and how culture in Harrow would be taken forward by Scrutiny. She requested that the report be sent to the representatives of the ACH who had attended the meeting that evening.

RESOLVED: That (1) the report be noted;

(2) it be noted that the Improvement Plan would inform the Committee's Work Programme;

(See also Minutes 15 and 25).

17. **Scrutiny Sub-Committees:**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Corporate Governance, which set out the changes required to the membership of the Scrutiny Sub-Committees in order to ensure compliance with legislation and the Council's Constitution. A paper setting out the changes to the membership of the Sub-Committees was tabled at the meeting.

During consideration of the report, nominations were received and seconded for Councillors Anthony Seymour and Mitzi Green in relation to the appointment of the Chairman of the Call-In Sub-Committee, which were duly voted upon.

RESOLVED: That (1) the advice regarding the groups' entitlement to seats on the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee be noted;

(2) the additional nominations for Reserve Members of the Call-In Scrutiny Sub-Committee be agreed as set out in the tabled paper;

(3) the memberships of the Scrutiny Sub-Committees be approved as appended at Appendix 2 to the minutes;

(4) Councillor Anthony Seymour be appointed Chairman of the Call-in Sub-Committee for the Municipal Year 2006/07.

18. **References from Council/Cabinet:**

RESOLVED: To note that no references from Council or Cabinet were received.

19. **Reconfiguration of Scrutiny Sub-Committees:**

The Committee considered a report from the Director of People, Performance and Policy, which summarised the consultation that had taken place on the reconfiguration of the Scrutiny Sub-Committees and their proposed remit, including the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, since the Special meeting of this Committee on 5 June 2006.

An officer outlined the changes proposed to the remits of the Scrutiny Sub-Committees detailed in the report. She also outlined proposals to establish a standing review group under the auspices of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED: That (1) the reconfiguration of the Scrutiny Sub-Committees be confirmed:

(2) the revised remits of the Scrutiny Sub-Committees be agreed;

(3) a report on the implementation of the reconfigured structure be submitted in a year's time;

(4) the terms of reference for the standing review group on health service finances be agreed.

(See also Recommendation I and Minute 11).

20. **Staff Survey Results:**

The Committee received a report of the Director of People, Performance and Policy, which set out the key findings and areas for development following the second Staff Survey which had been undertaken in November 2005 by the Work Foundation on behalf of the Council.

An officer highlighted the key aspects of the report and responded to questions from Members as follows:-

- that the Work Foundation would be asked to comment on the suggestion of linking the confidence aspects together;
- that staff at all levels would undergo training on the management of contracts and finance and that a new programme of training – ‘money matters’ - for managers would be introduced;
- that an ‘Investors in People’ (IIP) corporate accreditation had been planned for May 2007 and that the outcome of the diagnostic, which had recently been completed, would help determine the assessment date. Each Directorate had its own Action Plan. It was incumbent on each Director to ensure that their Plans were being monitored in order to prepare the Council for the corporate assessment.

The Chairman advised that a ‘light touch’ scrutiny review would be carried out on the IIP corporate accreditation.

RESOLVED: That the findings and action plans of the staff survey 2005 be noted.

21. **Urban Living - Middle Management Review (MMR) Progress Update:**

Members considered a report of the Executive Director (Urban Living), which provided a comprehensive overview of the progress made in implementing the Middle Management Review (MMR) within the Urban Living Directorate, details of which were set out in the report.

An officer made the following key points in response to questions from Members:-

- the MMR within the Public Realm Infrastructure Services Group was expected to be completed by August 2006;
- whilst the MMR was ‘substantially complete’ within five of the six operational groups which comprised Urban Living, certain issues such as retirement and displacement of staff had yet to be resolved in these groups;
- the £100m + contract with Accord MP which commenced on 1 July 2006 was for a period of five years;
- Appendix 1 to the report provided an overview of progress, comparing the status report to the April 2006 Committee with the current position at 30 June 2006 but it did not include details of new staff.

It was commented that the information provided at Appendix 1 was misleading and Members requested that a comprehensive list of the staff employed within the Urban Living Directorate be circulated to the Committee. Members also sought assurances that the MMR process within Urban Living would be completed by August 2006.

The Chairman requested that the issues raised by Members be conveyed to the Executive Director (Urban Living) and the relevant Portfolio Holder(s). She indicated that the Committee would, if necessary, consider matters under the confidential section of the agenda.

RESOLVED: That (1) the report be noted;

(2) a comprehensive list of managers within the Urban Living Directorate be circulated to Members of the Committee;

(3) it be noted that a progress report on the recommendations made by the scrutiny review of the MMR process would be submitted to the October 2006 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

22. **Corporate Governance Update:**

The Director of Financial and Business Strategy (Business Development) introduced the report, which set out details of the progress made in Corporate Governance during 2005/06 and the improvements planned for 2006/07. She highlighted the key achievements during 2005/06 and the main workstreams planned for 2006/07.

The Chairman welcomed the report and stated that, in relation to the Equality Standards, it was important that the Committee received information comparing Harrow's progress with other London Boroughs with an equally diverse population, prior to the October 2006 meeting of the Committee. A Member suggested that the relevant Portfolio Holder be invited to attend that meeting of the Committee.

In response to questions from Members, the Director highlighted the benefits of the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and the Management Information Systems (MIS) systems, details of which were set out in her report. She added that the ERP system would go 'live' on 4 September 2006 and that staff training would take place during August and September 2006. She explained how the Council would reap enormous benefits from both the systems, and would improve the Council's capacity to monitor the issue of the costs and benefits associated with the use of consultants, data that was currently collected manually. She added that with the ERP system, officers would be able to respond more fully on a report previously requested by the Committee in relation to the benefits and value for money provided by the consultants engaged by the Council.

A Member commended the work carried out by the Director of Financial and Business Strategy on financial stringency since her appointment to the Council.

RESOLVED: That the good progress made in Corporate Governance during 2005/06 and the planned improvements for 2006/07 be noted.

23. **Business Transformation Partnership:**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Business Transformation, which outlined the performance of the Business Transformation Partnership projects (BTP) and the proposed programme for quality assurance reviews during 2006. The report also set out issues and developments in relation to the re-structure of Harrow Information Technology Service (HITS).

Members welcomed a representative from Capita and the consultant appointed to programme manage the BTP to the meeting. They reported on the key aspects of the BTP project and the transformation of HITS, details of which were set out in the report. They updated Members on the position since the report had been prepared and mentioned the following key points:-

BTP

- the BTP project(s) was approaching a critical phase;
- the Council had undertaken the biggest single training activity in Harrow;
- Access Harrow (formerly First Contact) had embedded and performance had been improved;
- further reports on the lessons learnt from the projects would be submitted to the Committee;

HITS

- transformation of HITS aimed to provide high quality IT support;
- the MMR process within HITS would be completed in August 2006;
- the BTP was placing enormous demand on HITS and that a single 'gateway' had been created to deal with the demand;
- the HITS Transformation Project Plan had been submitted to the First Contact Project Board on 7 July 2006 (rather than 25 June as stated in the report) and a copy of the Plan would be circulated to Members of the Committee;
- the results of the Council-wide customer satisfaction survey run by HITS would be submitted to the Committee when the results were available.

Questions from Members on the survey and resources were answered. The discussion then focused on the ability of the systems to deal with a high volume of calls, such as those recently experienced during the launch of the compulsory recycling scheme. Members were informed that, in this instance, calls had been diverted to Capita's Call Centre in Coventry and that useful lessons had been learnt when dealing with Council-wide campaigns. It was noted that the Call Centre in Coventry was an option which would be held as a 'reserve' for use in exceptional circumstances.

A Member stressed that whilst it was important to ensure that the overflow was dealt with, it was equally important to answer telephone calls quickly. He was informed that whilst the volume of calls received was high, the quality of the response provided to the caller needed to be addressed.

RESOLVED: That (1) the report be noted;

(2) the HITS Transformation Project Plan be circulated to Members of the Committee;

(3) the results of the Council-wide customer satisfaction survey run by HITS be submitted to the October 2006 meeting of the Committee;

(4) the cost of diverting calls to the Call Centre in Coventry be provided to Members of the Committee.

24. **Procurement Update:**

The Committee received a paper from the Director of Financial and Business Strategy which had been previously circulated to the former Members of the Committee.

The Director highlighted the following key points:-

- the new ERP system, due to go live on 4 September 2006, would substantially enhance the Council's capacity to monitor procurement activity and performance of the suppliers;
- the function of the procurement team was being examined/reviewed;
- work with the voluntary sector would continue through the Harrow Association of Voluntary Services (HAVS);
- a report on the savings achieved through procurement would be reported to Cabinet at its meeting on 3 August 2006.

The Chairman informed Members that procurement would remain in the Committee's Work Programme for 2006/07.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

25. **Scrutiny Work Programme:**

The Committee received a report from the Director of People, Performance and Policy (Business Development) which outlined how the Committee's work programme had been devised for the period 2006-2010 and proposed new ways in which work might be undertaken.

An officer introduced the report and reported that the proposed new ways in which the work programme could be undertaken might help improve the way scrutiny was delivered. She referred to the proposed establishment of the standing scrutiny review group on health finances and the need to consider its membership.

The Director of Financial and Business Strategy referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's responsibility for scrutinising the Council's budget and the budget setting process. She suggested that scrutiny of the budget would be more effectively delivered by a half day session – Challenge Panel – to which all appropriate officers and Members could be invited. The Director was of the view that this process would help scrutiny Members to understand the issues and the pressures involved and allow them to contribute to the development of the budget.

The Director responded to questions from Members and suggested that it would be helpful for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to receive the report on the Council's financial position, which would be considered by Cabinet on 3 August 2006. She explained that the report would set out the process involved in setting up the budget.

Members expressed reservations about the proposed new ways of working due to the limited number of resources available. They highlighted the importance of co-ordinating the various reviews and the need to be mindful of any overlap.

In response, an officer acknowledged the concern expressed by Members. She reported that all non-executive Councillors would be invited to participate in the projects and stated that it was important that the Committee focused on outcomes that were important such as NHS finances, Council's budget, Corporate Assessment, and the longer term scrutiny review on procurement and the Cultural Strategy.

The Chairman stated that a letter would be circulated to all non-executive Councillors inviting them to participate in the summer programme of scrutiny reviews. The letter would set out details of the reviews under each scrutiny committee and the different methods of working that would be employed in each of the projects. Following further discussion, the following Members were selected to lead on the projects set out below to be undertaken:-

- NHS Finances - Councillor Myra Michael
- Challenging the Council's budget - Councillor Christopher Noyce (subject to his confirmation)
- Comprehensive Performance Assessment - Councillor Gate (subject to his confirmation)
- Culture - Councillor Mitzi Green

In considering the recommendations set out in the report, it was

RESOLVED: That (1) the items included in the work programme long list for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;

(2) the standing scrutiny review group of health finances be established;

(3) the preparation for the finance and corporate assessment challenge panels be commenced;

(4) the items in the work programme of the scrutiny sub-committees be noted only as the programme had since been updated;

(5) a further report incorporating more detail in relation to scope, prioritisation and methodology for topics be submitted to the October 2006 meeting of the Committee;

(6) it be noted that a letter would be circulated to all non-executive Members inviting them to participate in scrutiny projects to be concluded over the summer months.

26. **Urgent Business - Special Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**
The Chairman reported that a special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Question and Answer Session with the Leader and the Acting Chief Executive) would be held on 26 September 2006 at 7.30 pm. She informed Members that a pre-meeting to discuss the questions would be held on 12 September 2006 and thereafter these meetings would take place 'virtually'.

In response to questions from Members, the Chairman stated that the role of the Unions and their input into the work of Scrutiny would be discussed separately.

(See also Minute 12).

27. **Urgent Business - Blog:**
The Chairman reported that the 'blog' (ie developing new channels of communication) would come under the remit of the Member Development Panel.

(See also Minute 12)

28. **Maggie Rees, Group Manager - Organisational Development (Business Development):**
On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman thanked Maggie Rees, who would be leaving the service of the Council, for her work, professionalism and the support given to scrutiny.

29. **Extension and Termination of the Meeting:**
In accordance with the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 6.7(ii)(b), it was

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

(2) at 10.15 pm to continue until 10.20 pm;

(3) at 10.20 pm to continue until 10.25 pm.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.31 pm, closed at 10.21 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR JEAN LAMMIMAN
Chairman

APPENDIX 1OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the following power and duties:

- (a) to co-ordinate and manage the scrutiny function for the Council.
- (b) to develop a work programme for scrutiny in consultation with the Executive.
- (c) to develop and oversee protocols for reviews and referrals.
- (d) to have specific responsibility for policy development support and scrutiny of the civic budget, statutory plans as appropriate and major cross-cutting issues **such as responsibility for scrutinising Culture – to include sport, leisure and libraries; scrutinising Adults with Special Needs and scrutinising Health Finance – to include strategy in relation to budget problems and impact on residents.**
- (e) to examine the Council's performance generally, using information from Best Value implementation plans, Best Value Performance Indicators, the comprehensive performance assessment, and other performance management frameworks.
- (f) to examine the Council's corporate governance framework and make recommendations for change as appropriate.
- (g) to be responsible for the use of allocated resources for scrutiny to support its functions.
- (h) to establish such sub-committees as it considers necessary to achieve effective scrutiny of the Executive and senior officers of the Council.
- (i) to review, make reports and make recommendations to the Council and/or the Executive in respect of any Council functions;
- (j) to consider, report and make recommendations on any matter affecting the area and/or those who live, work or travel through Harrow;
- (l) to report to the Council annually on the work of the scrutiny function;
- (m) to conclude reviews promptly, normally within six months.

APPENDIX 2SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEES

(Membership in order of political group nominations)

ConservativeLabour**(1) SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES (7)****(4)****(3)****I.**
MembersRobert Benson
G Chowdhury
Anthony Seymour (CH)
Stanley SheinwaldMano Dharmarajah
Mrs Sasi Suresh
Keeki Thammaiah ***II.**
Reserve
Members1. Salim Miah
2. Mrs Bath
3. Mrs Lurline Champagnie
4. Susan Hall1. Dhirajlal Lavingia
2. B E Gate
3. Navin Shah**(2) ADULT HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE (7)****(4)****(3)****I.**
MembersMrs Lurline Champagnie
Mrs Myra Michael (CH)
Julia Merison
Joyce NickolayMargaret Davine
David Gawn
Mrs Rekha Shah ***II.**
Reserve
Members1. Robert Benson
2. Ashok Kulkarni
3. Stanley Sheinwald
4. Salim Miah1. Mitzi Green
2. Keith Ferry
3. Keeki Thammaiah

(3) CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (11)**(8)****(3)****I.**
Members

Jean Lammiman
 Julia Merison
 Golam Chowdhury
 Dinesh Solanki
 Yogesh Teli
 Mark Versallion (CH)
 Narinder Singh Mudhar
 Jeremy Zeid

B E Gate *
 Mitzi Green
 David Perry

II.
Reserve
Members

1. Mrs Lurline Champagnie
 2. Mrs Camilla Bath
 3. Salim Miah
 4. Mrs Myra Michael
 5. Anthony Seymour
 6. Joyce Nickolay
 7. -
 8. -

1. Ms Nana Asante
 2. Bill Stephenson
 3. Mrs Sasi Suresh

Voting Co-opted Members:

- (1) Two representatives of Voluntary Aided Sector
 - Mrs J Rammelt/Reverend P Reece
 (2) Two representatives of Parent Governors
 - Mr H. Epie (Primary)/Mr R. Sutcliffe (Secondary)

(4) SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE (7)**(4)****(3)****I.**
Members

Susan Hall
 Ashok Kulkarni
 Narinder Mudhar
 Richard Romain (CH)

Ms Nana Asante
 Graham Henson
 Jerry Miles *

II.
Reserve
Members

1. Stanley Sheinwald
 2. Dinesh Solanki
 3. Yogesh Teli
 4. Joyce Nickolay

1. Mano Dharmarajah
 2. Phil O'Dell
 3. Dhirajlal Lavingia

(5) CALL-IN SUB-COMMITTEE (5)**(3)****(2)****I.**
Members

Anthony Seymour (CH)
 Mark Versallion
 Jean Lammiman

B E Gate
 Mitzi Green *

II.
Reserve
Members

1. Jeremy Zeid
 2. Richard Romain
 3. Mrs Lurline Champagnie
 4. Dinesh Solanki
 5. Susan Hall

1. Jerry Miles
 2. Graham Henson
 3. Keeki Thammaiah
 4. Mrinal Choudhury