
REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD ON 29 JULY 2008

Chairman:	* Councillor Stanley Sheinwald	
Councillors:	* Mrs Margaret Davine * B E Gate * Mitzi Green * Manji Kara * Mrs Kinnear (4) * Jerry Miles	* Mrs Vina Mithani * Janet Mote * Anthony Seymour * Dinesh Solanki * Yogesh Teli
Voting	(Voluntary Aided)	(Parent Governors)
Co-opted:	† Mrs J Rammelt † Reverend P Reece	* Mr R Chauhan † Mrs D Speel

* Denotes Member present
(4) Denotes category of Reserve Members
† Denotes apologies received

[Note: Councillor Susan Hall, Portfolio Holder for Environment Services and Community Safety, and Councillor Paul Osborn, Portfolio Holder for Performance, Communication and Corporate Services, also attended this meeting to speak on the items indicated at Minutes 366 and 367 respectively below].

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL
PART II - MINUTES

356. **Welcome:**
The Chairman welcomed Richard Walton (Borough Commander), Councillor Susan Hall (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Environment Services and Community Safety), Jane Sullivan (The Work Foundation) and Councillor Paul Osborn (Portfolio Holder for Performance, Communication and Corporate Services) to the meeting, as invited guests. He also welcomed John Edwards, the recently appointed Divisional Director of Environmental Services, Harrow Council, to his first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
357. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**
- RESOLVED:** To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Member:-
- | <u>Ordinary Member</u> | <u>Reserve Member</u> |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Councillor Mark Versallion | Councillor Mrs Kinnear |
358. **Declarations of Interest:**
- RESOLVED:** To note that the following interest was declared:
- Agenda Item 12 – Scrutiny Member Development Programme – Evaluation of 2007/08 Programme and Draft Programme for 2008/09
- Prior to the consideration of item 12, Councillor B E Gate declared a prejudicial interest in that he was a Member of the Council's Member Development Panel which had put the Programme in place. In declaring a prejudicial interest, he stated that he was erring on the side of caution and left the room during consideration and determination of this item.
359. **Arrangement of Agenda:**
- RESOLVED:** That (1) in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the following 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>
9. Quarterly Briefings Report from the Scrutiny, Policy and Performance Lead Members	This report was not available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated, as it was being consulted on. Members were requested to consider this item, as a matter of urgency, so that they were briefed on the work being undertaken by the Scrutiny Lead Members.
13. Scrutiny Review – Delivering a Strengthened Voluntary and Community Sector – Work Plan for Phase Two	This report was not available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated, as it was being consulted on. Members were requested to consider this item, as a matter of urgency, so that the scope for Phase 2 of the Review could be agreed and the work commenced.
14. Minutes of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee	The minutes were late due to the proximity of the meeting of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee to the despatch of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda. Members were requested to consider this item, as a matter of urgency, so that the actions arising from the minutes could be noted/agreed.
15. Any Other Business – Membership of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee	Detail of the proposed change in the membership of the Scrutiny Sub-Committee was not available at the time the agenda was despatched and circulated. Members were asked to consider this matter as a matter of urgency in order to allow the change to come into immediate effect.

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

360. **Minutes:**
RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2008, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.
361. **Public Questions:**
RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put at the meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 8.
362. **Petitions:**
RESOLVED: To note that no petitions were received at the meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 9.
363. **Deputations:**
RESOLVED: To note that no deputations were received at the meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 10.
364. **References from Council/Cabinet:**
RESOLVED: To note that there were no references from Cabinet or Council.
365. **Report from the Scrutiny Policy and Performance Lead Members' Quarterly Briefings:**
The Committee received a report from the Assistant Chief Executive, which set out matters that had been considered by the Scrutiny Policy and Performance Lead Members between April and June 2008. It was noted that the report contained details of meetings held between the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Lead Members for Corporate Effectiveness and Finance and Sustainable Development and Enterprise. The remaining Scrutiny Lead Members would be meeting end of July/September 2008.
- The Chairman, in his capacity as Policy Lead Member for Corporate Effectiveness and Finance, briefed Members on the issues that had been discussed at his meeting with the Performance Lead Member. He reported on the briefing received from an officer in relation to the Human Resources Development elements of the Corporate

Improvement Plan (CIP) and that the recommendations arising from the Challenge Panel had been endorsed by Cabinet.

RESOLVED: That (1) the Corporate Effectiveness and Finance Scrutiny Lead Members monitor the implementation of the Corporate Improvement Plan (CIP) at their future meetings;

(2) the request from the Policy and Performance Sustainable Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Lead Members for a piece of work on sustainability to be included in the Scrutiny Work Programme be agreed;

(3) further information on the impact of housing be provided following the publication of proposed legislation;

(4) the withdrawal of direct rail services to Gatwick Airport be kept under review;

(5) the Policy and Performance Sustainable Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Lead Members be provided with information on the replacement of Metropolitan Line trains at their next meeting.

366.

Community Safety Partnership Plan Priorities 2008-11:

The Committee received the Community Safety Partnership Plan from the Divisional Director of Environmental Services, which set out the priorities for 2008-11. The report stated that the legislative framework for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) in England had changed. Previous duties of the CDRPs to produce triennial audits and strategies had been replaced by an annual strategic assessment and partnership plan containing three yearly objectives. There was a requirement to revise the objectives annually using the strategic assessment and comply with regulations known as the 'minimum standards' to reflect the minimum requirements for an effective CDRP. It was a statutory requirement for the Community Safety Partnership Plan and targets to be refreshed and published annually.

An officer introduced the report and described the work undertaken by the Safer Harrow Partnership and the Management Group in the preparation of the Community Safety Partnership Plan. The Safer Harrow Partnership was committed to working together to make Harrow a safer place to live, work and visit and the Plan would support the Partnership objective to become the safest borough in London.

The officer circulated an A3 paper version of the Plan, which gave an insight to the Plan and set out priorities, work streams, actions and the groups accountable for the actions. He added that the Safer Harrow Management Group would review the Plan on a regular basis. In response to questions from the Policy Lead Scrutiny Member for Safer and Stronger Communities about the availability of resources, the officer, the Portfolio Holder for Environment Services and Community Safety and the Borough Commander stated that:-

- the priorities carried equal weight;
- funding was available for 2008/09 and that it was anticipated that funding would be available for future years;
- the Metropolitan Police was operating under severe financial constraints and that there were pressures on its budget. These pressures were, however, unlikely to affect the delivery of the Community Safety Partnership Plan. Income generation and money from 'other' funding streams would be secured;
- pooled funding (Local Area Agreement Area based Grant) would in future be disaggregated to the Safer Harrow Management Group (SHMG) by the Harrow Strategic Partnership and the SHMG would monitor the funding and delivery of the Plan.

The Chairman invited Members to pose questions to the invited guests. In response to their questions, the Borough Commander and the Portfolio Holder for Environment Services and Community Safety stated that:-

- early intervention to prevent offending and re-offending by young people was a key measure. The police engaged with primary schools, and early intervention with profile offenders and their families was carried out on a regular basis. Multi-agency working was essential in this regard. Schools had positively encouraged the police in their engagement role and the police had five dedicated schools' officers who were continuously requested to attend schools;

- youth crime and serious violence in Harrow had decreased in comparison to national statistics;
- Harrow was not showing an increase in knife crime and that 'knife arches' would be used as a deterrent. Harrow had two knife arches and these were used outside Harrow on the Hill Tube Station and the other for educational purposes. The Borough Commander explained how the 'knife arches' were used and which groups were targeted. Police in plain clothes acting as spotters were also on site during the use of 'knife arches' and they would ensure that those people who fitted the profile passed through the arches. He agreed to raise the issue of women using their handbags to carry knives for their partners with his officers;
- the bus station situated outside Harrow on the Hill Underground Station was 'designed in crime' and that it was costly to police despite the CCTV. The Borough Commander had lobbied for the bus station to be replaced with hubs across the borough. In his opinion, a new strategy was required. The Borough Commander also undertook to investigate the problems at Harrow Weald Bus Garage where the early morning bus drivers driving to Heathrow were confronted by customers who were intoxicated with alcohol and refused to pay the fare. He added that liaison with various organisations was continuing with a view to dealing with similar behavioural issues;
- during 'weeks of action' resources from other Wards were transferred from adjoining Wards. The Portfolio Holder added that the 'weeks of action' would continue and Harrow had benefited from partnership working in this area;
- alcohol free zones, which would be implemented from 1 August 2008, would be rigorously enforced. Dispersal Notices had been placed at transport hubs. Neighbouring boroughs also had alcohol free zones. Contingency plans were in place for various public events and it was recognised that Harrow was adversely affected by events held at Wembley Stadium. The Borough Commander was trying to increase resources on the basis of footfall but had yet to win the debate on this. The Portfolio Holder informed the meeting that Controlled Parking Zones might help resolve the problem;
- stop and account was used on a regular basis in Harrow. Stop and search was not used, as reasonable grounds were required before any search could be carried out;
- intelligence was collected centrally in order to formulate a picture for Harrow. Harrow did not suffer from visible drug dealing unlike some other boroughs but the police were not complacent about the issue. The police welcomed the proposed re-classification of cannabis. The Borough Commander acknowledged a problem in the use of Khat which affected Somali children;
- consultation on the Plan had been extensive. The Plan was aligned with borough priorities rather than local ones. The Plan, however, did not impinge on local priorities. The Plan was forward looking and a strategic document. Additional related information, such as crime data, was available on the Council's website.

The Divisional Director of Environmental Services thanked the Committee for its contributions. The Plan would be submitted to Cabinet and Council thereafter for adoption. He added that the Plan itself was prescriptive but was presented in a concise A3 paper for ease of reference.

The Chairman thanked the Borough Commander and the Portfolio Holder for their contribution at the meeting.

RESOLVED: That (1) the draft Community Safety Partnership Plan Priorities for 2008-11 as attached at appendix 1 to the report of the Divisional Director of Environmental Services be agreed;

(2) the Committee follow up on the issues raised in relation to the bus station outside Harrow on the Hill Underground Station.

367.

Staff Survey:

The Committee received a presentation from the Work Foundation, an independent, not-for-dividend organisation which aimed to improve working life in the United

Kingdom. Its aim was to spread best practice in the development and treatment of people at work.

Prior to the presentation, an officer stated that the Work Foundation had carried out the survey for the Council the past 2 occasions and was therefore able to track findings. The final report from the Work Foundation would be posted on the intranet in due course and the presentation to the Committee was a summary of the findings.

Jane Sullivan from The Work Foundation circulated the presentation to the Members and spoke about the highlights and the lowlights when compared with figures for the previous 2 surveys in 2005 and 2003 and with the Work Foundation benchmarks from their work in carrying out surveys in a range of organisations. She stated that the response rate from 50% of staff was good. Staff perception of line managers was good and that the perception of senior management was moving in the right direction. She considered this outcome to be a reflection of the more distant relationships between staff and their senior managers as opposed to their immediate managers. Although the survey results were significantly better than other organisations in how staff view reward and development systems, it was important to note that these needed to be fair and transparent.

An officer outlined the important learning points from the survey results. Communication had improved but there was more to do in this area. She identified the next steps and how these would be fed into the Cultural Change Programme and the Corporate Improvement Programme. It was important that the outcome was communicated to the staff and realised. Staff across the organisation had been engaged and positive feedback had been received from the large group event led by Roffey Park and attended by 180 members of staff on 20 June 2008.

The Portfolio Holder for Performance, Communication and Corporate Services welcomed the report of The Work Foundation and stated that, whilst the organisation had been through challenging period, it was now moving in the right direction. He outlined the improvements made in communicating with staff and was pleased to report that the organisation was moving away from silo working. He recognised that there was a need to manage expectations but felt that the organisation was moving forward having laid down solid foundations. The organisation was looking at ways to reward staff in recognition of their work and address the issues arising from the survey results.

In response to questions from Members, the following responses were provided:-

- whilst the survey did not relate to absenteeism, concerted effort was being made by managers to reduce absence through sickness;
- it was important to keep the communication channels 'alive' and take action on the outcomes as there was a perception amongst staff that no action would be taken following the staff survey. 36% only were confident that the Council would take action on the back of this survey;
- it was recognised that senior managers were expected to play a pivotal role in managing change and the organisation needed to ensure the managers engaged and involved staff at all levels. Middle Managers were also pivotal and it was important that they were engaged and on board in delivering change;
- the communication channels set up by the Chief Executive and specifically the Chief Executive's Forums had had a significant positive impact on the organisation and staff in a relatively short time and have been instrumental in shifting perceptions;
- whilst there were strong affinities within teams, silo working continued to be an issue and improving cross-departmental working between teams was essential;
- a number of lessons had been learnt from the Middle Management Review (MMR), particularly how to improve the management of change and the importance of following the Council's Protocol.
- the Management Development Programme would support the development and engagement Middle Managers. It was essential that in going forward all staff were engaged on the journey towards the Council's vision of becoming one of the best London Councils by 2012.

The Chairman thanked Jane Sullivan from The Work Foundation and the Portfolio Holder and officers for the presentation and their contributions.

RESOLVED: That (1) the presentation be noted and that the Committee keep abreast of the outcomes of the staff survey;

(2) the overview of the staff survey showing the percentage figures be circulated to all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

368. **Scrutiny Member Development Programme - Evaluation of 2007/08 Programme and Draft Programme for 2008/09:**

The Committee received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive, which set out an evaluation of last year's Scrutiny Member Development Programme for 2007/08 and a draft outline programme for 2008/09. An officer introduced the report and outlined the key aspects, including new activities for 2008/09 with a view to developing a team spirit for scrutiny, building on relationships with officers and external partners and to develop Member skills and expertise.

Members recognised that briefing meetings prior to Committee meetings which involved all Members would help build on a team spirit as well as make for more strategic questioning styles at Committee meetings. Training on subject-specific issues would also be welcomed. A Member asked that she be invited to events held by the Committee as she appeared not to have received invitations in the past.

RESOLVED: That (1) the evaluation of the Scrutiny Member Development Programme for 2007/08 be noted;

(2) the draft Programme for 2008/09 be approved;

(3) the delivery of the Programme for 2008/09 be progressed.

369. **Scrutiny Review - Delivering a Strengthened Voluntary and Community Sector - Work Plan for Phase Two:**

The Committee considered the report of the Project Sponsors – Corporate Director of Finance, Harrow Council, and the Chief Executive of Harrow Association of Voluntary Services - which set out the work plan for Phase 2 of the Scrutiny Review on Delivering a Strengthened Voluntary and Community Sector.

An officer introduced the report and drew Members' attention to the recommendations set out in the report. She suggested that as one of the five voluntary sector representatives had not taken up the place on the Review Group, it would be appropriate to invite a further voluntary sector representative to participate on the Phase 2 of the Review.

The Chairman of the Review Group commended the manner in which Phase 1 of the Review had been conducted so far and thanked the participants for their enthusiasm, including the representatives from the voluntary sector. He expected Phase 2 of the review to continue in the same manner although it was likely that challenging decisions would need to be taken.

A Member of the Review Group agreed with the comments made by the Chairman of the Review Group and added that the contributions from the voluntary sector had been particularly valuable.

RESOLVED: That (1) the work plan for Phase 2 of the Review at appendix A to the report of the Project Sponsors be agreed;

(2) it be noted that Councillor Lurline Champagnie was no longer a Member of the Review Group.

(3) Julie Bellchambers, Harrow Youth Workers Forum, be invited to participate in the Review.

(4) the Case Study memberships at Appendix B to the report of the project sponsors be noted.

370. **Minutes of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee:**

The Vice-Chairman of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee reported on the meeting held on 15 July 2008, with particular reference to the discussion with the Chief Executive for North West London Hospitals NHS Trust (NWLH) who had been present at that meeting. It was noted that the review report on the recent

maternal deaths had been submitted to the Healthcare Commission and was currently under embargo.

The Vice-Chairman of the Sub-Committee stated that a review of the Council's Improvement Programme (CIP) and the specific issue of customer service delivery would, in due course, be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

It was noted that a query raised with the Chief Executive for NWLH NHS Trust by a co-opted member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be passed to the Scrutiny Policy Lead Member for Adult Health and Social Care.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee be received and that actions arising from this Sub-Committee be noted/agreed.

371. **Any Other Business:**

Change in Membership of Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee

RESOLVED: That Councillor Mrs Margaret Davine replace Councillor Bill Stephenson as a Reserve Member on the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee.

372. **Heather Smith:**

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked Heather Smith, Scrutiny Officer, who was going on maternity leave, for her work. Members wished her well.

The Chairman also thanked other officers present for their work.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.31 pm, closed at 10.15 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR STANLEY SHEINWALD
Chairman