
REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD ON 4 NOVEMBER 2008

Chairman:	* Councillor Stanley Sheinwald	
Councillors:	* Mrs Margaret Davine * Mitzi Green * Manji Kara * Ashok Kulkarni (2) * Jerry Miles * Janet Mote	* Anthony Seymour * Mrs Rekha Shah (4) * Dinesh Solanki * Yogesh Teli * Mark Versallion
Voting	(Voluntary Aided)	(Parent Governors)
Co-opted:	† Mrs J Rammelt † Reverend P Reece	* Mr R Chauhan * Mrs D Speel

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

[Note: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane, Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing, also attended this meeting to speak on the item indicated at Minute 431 below].

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL
PART II - MINUTES

423. **Welcome:**
The Chairman welcomed the Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing and the Corporate Director of Adults and Housing to the meeting. He welcomed students from the University of Westminster who had come to observe the meeting, and introduced Ofordi Nabokei, Scrutiny Officer, to Members of the Committee.

During the course of the meeting and upon their arrival, the Chairman welcomed Sarah Crowther, Chief Executive of Harrow Primary Care Trust (PCT), and Julie Taylor, Head of Contracts at Harrow PCT, to report on items relating to Kenmore Clinic – Future Service Delivery and Improving Stroke and Major Trauma Services in London.

424. **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 B E Gate Councillor Vina Mithani	Councillor Rekha Shah Councillor Ashok Kulkarni

425. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that the following interest was declared:

Agenda Item 12 – Right to Manage Process (RTM)
Councillor Yogesh Teli, in his capacity as Cabinet Assistant (Support Member) to the Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing, declared a prejudicial interest in this item as he had been present at meetings when decisions relating to the Right to Manage Process had been made.

He would leave the room during discussion and decision relating to this item.

426. **Arrangement of Agenda:**
Item 12 (Right to Manage Process) was considered after item 9 (Report from Lead Members). During the course of the meeting, item 13 (Standing Scrutiny Review of the Budget – Initial Report) was brought forward and considered before items 10 and 11 (Kenmore Clinic – Future Service Delivery and Improving Stroke and Major Trauma Services in London, respectively).

RESOLVED: That all items be considered with the press and public present.

427. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2008 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

428. **Public Questions/Petitions/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 4B of the Constitution) respectively.

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

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

430. **Report from Lead Members:**

RESOLVED: To note that there were no reports from Lead Members.

431. **Right to Manage Process (RTM):**

The Committee received a report of the Divisional Director of Housing Services, which set out the background in relation to the process leading up to the appointment of First Call, a company acting as an Independent Tenant Advisor, the process adopted by First Call in regard to the Right to Manage Process and the subsequent allegations made by residents about the manner in which information had been obtained from them by First Call thereby giving rise to concerns amongst Members.

The Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing introduced the report and explained the reasons why this matter had been brought before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Portfolio Holder stated that the Corporate Director and he were 'uncomfortable' with the Right to Manage process adopted and associated allegations, which ought to be examined by the Committee. The transparency of the Right to Manage Process was being questioned by residents. He referred to the number of complaints received and the concerns expressed at the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum meeting held on 22 July 2008. As a result, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was being asked to carry out an investigation with a view to substantiating the allegations.

A Member of the Committee stated that residents had also alleged that First Call had not given them any details of the Process or been kept informed. Communication was also an issue.

In response to questions from Members, the Portfolio Holder and the Corporate Director of Adults and Housing stated as follows:

- the Right to Manage Process had been introduced by the government with a view to empowering and encouraging residents to take ownership of their homes;
- the main issue that needed investigation was First Call's conduct and it would be helpful if the Committee availed itself of the practices adopted elsewhere, as part of its investigations;
- the lack of communication and the legitimacy of the process adopted by First Call was being questioned by residents;
- the timescales would be dependent on Scrutiny. However, the process would need to be closed down until the investigation was carried out. The government would be informed accordingly, as the Council would need to ensure that funding was not lost as a result;
- they were in agreement that the sampling exercises in Central Harrow, South Harrow and West Harrow/Pinner appeared to be inadequate. The level of participation was too low and that this matter ought to be part of any investigation conducted by the Committee. This would help verify the allegations being made and enable the Council to rebuild relationships and secure a better outcome for residents.

Members of the Committee agreed that Scrutiny should examine the concerns of residents and discussed how this ought to be done. Various suggestions were put forward by Members, including the involvement of Councillors serving on the Tenant' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum and the possibility of setting up a Challenge Panel. There was general agreement that, in the first instance, the issues be referred to the relevant Scrutiny Lead Members to investigate and report back initially to the December 2008 meeting of the Committee. The need for more detailed investigation would be considered at that meeting and it was anticipated that a final report would be submitted to the 10 February 2008 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Following advice from the Scrutiny Manager, it was

RESOLVED: That (1) current issues set out in the report be considered and any appropriate action to resolve them be suggested;

(2) the issues relating to the Right to Manage Process be examined initially by the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Lead Members for Sustainable Development and Enterprise together with Councillor representatives from the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum and reported to the 9 December 2008 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;

(3) the decisions and a summary of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's discussions be reported to the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum.

432. **Standing Scrutiny Review of the Budget - Initial Report:**

The Committee received an interim report of the Scrutiny Standing Review of the Budget in response to a growing recognition of the need to improve scrutiny's response to the budget. The Review Group had considered a range of evidence regarding the Council's processes and examined national best practice. The Members of the Review Group had also visited a number of London boroughs to discuss their management of finances.

The Chairman of the Review Group introduced the report, which set out a number of recommendations on the Council's budget setting process as part of the First Phase of the Project. The next Phase would consider some of the long-term issues, which would help improve the Council's financial performance.

The Chairman of the Review Group stated that the Review had focused on the way the Council set the budget and had spent time considering best practice in other boroughs, such as Wandsworth, Ealing, Hillingdon and Hounslow. Information gathered from these visits had formed the core of the Review Group's recommendations. He added that, in recognition of the realisation that local authorities were unlikely to be able to either increase Council Tax, or receive an increase in grant, the Review Group had looked at ways of reducing costs and joint provision of services. The Review Group also hoped to consider the Council's Charging Policy.

Phase 2 of the Review was about to get underway and some of the proposed projects for inclusion in this phase were included in the appendix to the report. The Review Group was also meeting with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Performance and Finance Sub-Committee in December 2008 to plan ahead for the special meeting with the Leader of the Council and the Corporate Director of Finance, which would consider the 2009/10 Budget.

In response to a query from a Member regarding the Strategy for the Disposal of Assets, the Scrutiny Manager stated that the Executive was being recommended to have one in place. She added that informal discussions on the proposed recommendations of the Review Group with some of the Members of the Executive had already taken place. Another Member congratulated the Review Group on the work undertaken, which he was confident would assist the Executive in improving the budget process.

RESOLVED: That (1) (a) progress towards the achievement of the '9-point plan' and the subsequent Council Improvement Programme be monitored by the scrutiny function;

(b) political direction/clarity of purpose be welcomed and, in accordance with recommendations relating to service and budget planning, the Review Group would seek to contribute to the determination and monitoring of these objectives;

(c) further work be undertaken to examine the robustness of the service and budget planning process, using case studies in particular service areas;

- (d) the process for scrutiny's engagement in the service and budget planning, as outlined in the report, be referred to the Executive for comment;
 - (e) that the opportunity for Overview and Scrutiny to contribute to and comment on the development of Directorate Service Plans be identified and built into the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme;
 - (f) the Performance and Finance Sub-Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee contribute to the monitoring process and pay particular attention to the quality of information being presented through the management information system and how it was being acted upon. In this context it was noted that the possible investigation of the performance management process being considered was part of the Performance and Finance Sub-Committee's Work Programme for the forthcoming year and which might support the monitoring process;
 - (g) the Council investigate the potential of introducing a zero-based budgeting process to ensure that the limited funds were being effectively targeted at real need and that the most effective means of meeting these needs were adopted;
 - (h) further work to investigate the potential offered via shared services be undertaken by the Review Group during the 2nd Phase;
 - (i) learning from this Review and the Review on 'Delivering a Strengthened Voluntary and Community Sector' be shared to ensure that the Council makes the most effective use of its budgets and partnerships;
 - (j) the Council ensure that the most appropriate areas were selected for inclusion in the fundamental service review programme and that the methodology followed was robust enough to deliver a root and branch analysis of the effectiveness of the service;
 - (k) selection of reviews for either fundamental service review or for scrutiny consideration should follow a similar rationale and the two programmes should not duplicate each other.
 - (l) whilst the delivery of 'quick wins' was an attractive element of the fundamental service review process, there could be potential pitfalls in this. As such, it was recommended that scrutiny be engaged in determining the programme of reviews, their scoping and in the consideration of the proposals made. Lead Councillors should also participate in the process either as Members of reviews or by being invited to provide evidence to a project group;
 - (m) the every effort be made to ensure that use of financial management information becomes a cornerstone of the management competencies of the Council. In particular, the Council must ensure that managers become expert in the use of the SAP financial reporting systems;
 - (n) progress toward the delivery of the action plan derived from the financial effectiveness review be monitored by the Performance and Finance Sub-Committee;
 - (o) the Council ensure that the budget setting process was ongoing;
 - (p) the Executive assure that a formal strategy for the disposal of assets would be in place, that this safeguards the value of the Council's assets and was cognisant with/of the changed economic context for development;
- (2) the proposed programme of activity for Phase 2 of the Review be agreed;
- (3) the report be referred to Cabinet;
- (4) a further report on completion of the activities included in Phase 2 be submitted to Committee in Summer 2009.

433. **Kenmore Clinic - Future Service Delivery:**

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive of Harrow Primary Care Trust (PCT) on the current status of Kenmore Clinic and the actions proposed to address current issues within the site to ensure the ongoing delivery of primary and

community health services in the area. The Decant Plan for services currently provided at the Kenmore Clinic site had been made available to Members separately.

In response to questions from Members, Sarah Crowther, Chief Executive of Harrow PCT and Julie Taylor, Contracts Manager for Harrow PCT, responded as follows:-

- Kenmore Clinic needed to be closed down as the cost of works to maintain the site in its current state were substantially higher than had originally been envisaged;
- the site ought to have been redeveloped sometime ago, however, a small investment in the buildings, with a view to keeping the Clinic open, was considered to be inappropriate. Carrying out minor works would not provide value for money. It was envisaged that healthcare facilities would be provided on the site as part of the redevelopment proposals. Currently the services provided on the site were limited and, as part of the De-cant Plan, these services would be re-located elsewhere, such as to local GP surgeries and the Belmont Health Centre;
- it was acknowledged that transport facilities to Belmont Health Centre were inadequate but the PCT had tried to avoid extending journeys unnecessarily. The PCT would welcome suggestions from Members. A Member suggested that the PCT ought to reconsider the transfer of services to the Belmont Health Centre. The Member also suggested keeping open part of the Kenmore Clinic. The Chief Executive for Harrow PCT undertook to take the suggestion to the PCT Board.

A Member requested that the PCT re-visit the provision of children's services, re-locate the services for the vulnerable to local GPs and allow those who were not registered with those GPs to use the services. She asked that the redevelopment plan for the site be submitted to Members and that residents be consulted on the proposals. She envisaged that residents would be upset at the suddenness of the closure of Kenmore Clinic. In response, the Chief Executive for Harrow PCT confirmed that a local GP had expressed an interest in re-developing the Kenmore Clinic site. The PCT envisaged that the site would re-open within a period of 18 months.

In response to further questions, the Chief Executive for Harrow PCT stated that:-

- some services relocated from Kenmore Clinic were likely to remain with GPs. New services would be provided on the re-developed site;
- consultation would include a draft specification of services, which would be based on the confines of the 'footprint' of the site. The hours of opening were also an issue, as the PCT would be expecting services to be provided from 8.00 am to 8.00 pm. Relocation of staff would be carried out according to the Decant Plan;
- in comparison with other sites in Harrow, Kenmore Clinic site was poor and it needed to be closed. The Health and Safety Review carried out in August 2008 had also reported on the range of issues that needed addressing. It was expected that other GPs might be extended/reviewed;
- a planned strategy was essential and the provision around the Children Centres needed to be taken forward;
- the decant of Kenmore Clinic would be phased in over a period of 6-8 weeks at which point patients would be re-directed to other GPs. GPs had confirmed that they would be able to cope with the additional demand. A clear communication plan would be drawn up.

Another Member commented on the need to ensure adequate parking and transport facilities in any future re-development of the site. He stated that whilst the PCT was looking to the future, the provision of services now in Queensbury and Kenton East Wards was an issue in light of the proposed closure of Kenmore Clinic and the situation in relation to Mollison Way surgery.

The Chief Executive for Harrow PCT stated that the PCT was aware of the adverse impact on residents and agreed that it would have been helpful if the PCT had been in a position to give sufficient notice. In relation to Mollison Way surgery, the outcome of the consultation would be reported to the PCT Board in November 2008. The future of

a polyclinic on Kenmore Clinic site was dependent on the outcome of the decision on Mollison Way surgery.

Members were informed that the PCT would consider mitigating the negative impact on residents in various ways such as the provision of a home service to the vulnerable and paying for travel to another clinic. A Member commented that the closure of the Kenmore Clinic site would put pressure on services and recommended that the PCT give priority to the re-development of this site. She asked for details of the communications with GPs and the hard to reach groups. The Chief Executive of Harrow PCT stated that the draft consultation document would initially be submitted to the PCT Board in December 2008 and would be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee thereafter.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and that the draft consultation document for the Kenmore Clinic site be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

434. **Improving Stroke and Major Trauma Services in London:**

The Committee received a programme brief, issued by the Healthcare for London, for consideration by the Primary Care Trust Boards in September 2008. The report set out proposals to significantly improve the care delivered to stroke and trauma patients across London.

The Chief Executive for Harrow PCT reported that the PCT Board had agreed to appoint her to represent them at the Joint Committee of PCTs. She added that the meetings were also attended by the Chair of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC).

The Committee was informed that consultation on the proposals from Healthcare for London would commence in January 2009. The Joint Committee of the PCTs would decide on the designation of stroke and trauma centres. Implementation was dependent on which centres were chosen and whether any of these sites would need to be upgraded. The likely implementation date was Autumn 2009. Of particular interest would be the centres designated and their implications on Harrow residents.

The designation of stroke centres would be of particular importance to Harrow PCT, because of the increased prevalence of stroke amongst Harrow residents. Of immediate concern was that there were no centres in London that had 24/7 access to specialist equipment for stroke patients and the quality of service across London was considered to be poor. In addition, when patients were relocated to their local stroke units for rehabilitation, it was important that the ongoing care provided there was excellent. The Chief Executive for Harrow PCT stated that, currently, the ambulance service took stroke patients to their nearest hospital. Heart patients were taken to specialist hospitals.

Harrow PCT would undertake full consultation on the proposals. All residents would be consulted. Those boroughs on London's borders would also be consulted by Healthcare for London. Traffic analysis had been carried out and would form the basis of where the Centres ought to be located. Other factors that would be taken into account were the quality of existing Units, geographical spread and local prevalence. Central London periphery had the highest rates of stroke; however the majority of services were currently based in Central London. Stroke patients in Harrow were likely to be taken to Northwick Park Hospital. The Chief Executive for Harrow PCT acknowledged that the service was inadequate and pointed out that the specialist workforce for stroke patients was not currently available in the market.

The Chief Executive for Harrow PCT stated that a technical plan would be prepared once the designation process had been completed. The PCT's intention was to ensure a swift and smooth transition process towards the newly designated Centres.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

435. **Any Other Business:**

(i) **Attendance at Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee**

The Chairman of the Sub-Committee took this opportunity to ask about the PCT's non-attendance/lack of representation at the Sub-Committee meeting held on 29 October 2008. In response, the Chief Executive for Harrow PCT stated that owing to the short notice given, she was not able to re-schedule a meeting with her Directors. She understood that questions relating to the Obesity Review Report would be submitted to her to respond.

The Chairman of the Sub-Committee agreed to look into the matter of late notice given to the PCT. He informed the Chief Executive of Harrow PCT that the next scheduled meeting of the Sub-Committee was 20 January 2008.

(ii) Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Change in status of December 2008 Meeting(s)/ Additional Meeting

The Chairman informed Members that there would be two meetings of the Committee in December 2008. The scheduled meeting of 9 December would be an ordinary meeting, and a Special meeting had been convened on 17 December for a Question and Answer Session with the Leader and the Corporate Director of Finance on the 2009/10 budget proposals.

RESOLVED: That the Special meeting on 17 December 2008 commence at 7.00 pm instead of 7.30 pm, subject to the availability of the Leader and the Corporate Director of Finance at the earlier start time.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.32 pm, closed at 9.43 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR STANLEY SHEINWALD
Chairman