
REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2009

Chairman:	* Councillor Stanley Sheinwald	
Councillors:	* Mrs Margaret Davine * B E Gate * Mitzi Green * Ashok Kulkarni (2) * Jerry Miles * Mrs Vina Mithani	* Janet Mote * Anthony Seymour * 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) Denotes category of Reserve Members
† Denotes apologies received

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS
RECOMMENDATION I - Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee to Review Acute Stroke and Major Trauma Services in London - Healthcare for London Stage 2

Members considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive, which advised of the proposed establishment of a pan-London Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) to consider Healthcare for London proposals on acute stroke services and major trauma care, and the arrangements for consultation on the proposals.

During discussion, it was noted that Councillors Vina Mithani and Margaret Davine had served as the Council's representatives on the JOSC for the first Healthcare for London consultation, and it was agreed that this should continue for the second JOSC.

Having agreed a number of other issues relating to Harrow's support for the JOSC, it was

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That Councillor Vina Mithani be appointed as the Council's representative on the pan-London Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the second stage of the Healthcare for London consultation, and that Councillor Margaret Davine be appointed as the Council's reserve representative.

(See also Minute 479).

PART II - MINUTES471. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**

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

Ordinary Member

Reserve Member

Councillor Manji Kara

Councillor Ashok Kulkarni

472. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that Councillor Yogesh Teli declared a personal interest in agenda item 10, "Adults Star-Rating", by virtue of his role as Cabinet Support Member to the Adults and Housing Portfolio Holder, and would remain in the room and take part in the discussion and any decision on that item.

473. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 9 December, and of the Special meeting held on 17 December 2008, be taken as read and signed as correct records.

474. **Public Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put at the meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 8.

475. **Petitions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions were received at the meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 9.

476. **Deputations:**

RESOLVED: To note that no deputations were received at the meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 10.

477. **Adults Star-Rating:**

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Adults and Housing, which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 18 December 2008. The report advised of the outcome of the 2008 star-rating for Adults Services and of developments in the assessment process for 2009. The Council's rating had improved from 1* with uncertain prospects for improvement to 1* with promising capacity to improve, the first improvement in the rating in 7 years.

Members felt that the report represented a welcome step forward. There was disappointment, however, about the findings in relation to the learning disability service, in light of the work that had been on-going in this area for the past year, and the importance of adequate support and safeguarding services in the move towards independent living. The Corporate Director reported that the inspection report had largely been based on information from March 2008, and the action plan had only been agreed in May 2008; if the report had been based on more contemporaneous information it might have been more positive. The first step in improving the service had had to be changing the management arrangements, but progress was being made against each of the issues identified in the inspection report. For example, there was a lot of work on-going in relation to quality assurance, spend on advocacy was increasing, 3 new resource centres for people with learning disabilities had been opened, and a report would be submitted to Cabinet in February regarding the establishment of pooled budgets with the Primary Care Trust (PCT).

It was noted that there had been a disappointing outcome from the inspection of the Council's two external homecare providers, whose contracts had started in December 2007. Members queried how this issue was to be addressed. The meeting was advised that there was often a transition period following a change in providers but there were now signs that both providers were improving. One had improved from zero stars to a one-star rating, and with respect to the other, a zero-tolerance policy had been put in place and the provider had been put on notice that the Council might withdraw the contract; as a result its performance was now improving.

Members were concerned as to whether the service had the necessary funding and resources to achieve the changes required to improve to a 2-star rating, and whether, in light of the Council's financial position, some areas would be subject to budget cuts. The Corporate Director stated that, in his view, the service did have sufficient funding to improve. Subject to Cabinet and Council agreement, the budget for 2009/10 would include investment in some important areas such as safeguarding and preventative services, and there would also be budget growth to recognise demographic pressures and in telecare. In response to a Member's query, information was provided on the service's gross, net and ring-fenced budgets, the amount of income it received, and the national situation in relation to funding. With regard to resources, the service had a low level of vacancies and sickness in comparison with other Authorities, and the management of the service was being refreshed. Areas which needed to improve in order for the overall rating of the service to improve, such as the learning disability service, and the number of people helped to live at home, were being prioritised.

It was noted that the assessment framework would be different in autumn 2009 and Members asked a number of questions relating to the Council's preparedness for the new system. It was reported that the new framework would use the new National Indicator set, of which there were 6 or 7 relating to adult services, and would place greater emphasis on outcomes and user feedback. A large piece of work on obtaining user feedback was currently on-going and the outcome of that, due in April, would give an indication of the service's prospects. The Council may be well-placed to respond to some of the changes in light of its work in piloting personal budgets.

A number of other detailed issues were briefly discussed, including the implications for voluntary sector providers of the personalisation of services, and the Council's relationship with a neighbouring PCT. Members also requested that, wherever possible, the Committee receive such reports before Cabinet in future, and that the Portfolio Holder be invited to attend for future reports.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

478.

Report from Lead Members:

The Committee considered a written report of the issues considered by the Scrutiny Lead Members for Corporate Effectiveness at their quarterly meeting in December 2008. The Lead Members had considered issues relating to the Local Area Agreement, Strategic Workforce Development Plans, Sickness Absence, the Management Development Programme and the Councillor Call for Action.

It was reported that the government guidance for the Councillor Call for Action was anticipated shortly, and the Council had been approached by the IDeA to host the launch for it in London and the South East; around 140 people would be attending.

It was noted that two challenge panel meetings on the Right to Manage process had taken place in December and January, and the outcome would be reported in February. It was also noted that the Adults and Social Care Scrutiny Lead Members would be meeting on 30 January, the Safer and Stronger Communities Lead Members on 3 February, and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Lead Members on 4 February 2009.

RESOLVED: That (1) the Scrutiny Lead Members for Corporate Effectiveness continue to monitor the Local Area Agreement target plans outside of Committee meetings;

(2) progress in the areas of Strategic Workforce Development Plans, sickness absence and the Management Development Programme be noted and these areas be subject to continued monitoring by the Scrutiny Lead Members for Corporate Effectiveness;

(3) the Scrutiny Lead Members for Corporate Effectiveness await further information on Councillor Call for Action from relevant officers and consider the matter again at their March 2009 briefing.

479.

Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee to Review Acute Stroke and Major Trauma Services in London - Healthcare for London Stage 2:

Further to Recommendation 1 above, Members' views were sought on a number of issues relating to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC). Specifically, Members were asked to consider whether a scrutiny working group should be re-convened to inform Harrow's participation in the JOSC, whether Harrow should host a future meeting of the JOSC, and whether Harrow should contribute to the costs of a pan-London health scrutiny officer for JOSC work. Some authorities had also suggested that a pan-London standing committee be established to consider

Healthcare for London issues, and this would be discussed at the next meeting of the London Scrutiny Network; Members were requested to let officers have any views on this.

The proposals to convene a scrutiny working group and to host a meeting of the JOSC were agreed. There was concern as to where the money to contribute to a pan-London health scrutiny officer would come from, and whether this would impact on the scrutiny budget. Members were advised that the Assistant Chief Executive considered that this could be met from existing budgets in Strategy and Improvement. It was also pointed out that this should reduce the JOSC-related workload for Harrow's scrutiny officers. The proposal was therefore agreed.

With regard to the proposals for trauma care, Members were concerned to note that there were areas in North and West London that were not covered by the three London Hospital Trusts which had successfully bid to become Major Trauma Centres. The meeting was advised that Healthcare for London was looking again at the other bids received to see if this could be addressed; the consultation document was due to be published on 30 January 2009.

RESOLVED: That (1) the proposals for a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) for the second stage of the Healthcare for London consultation be noted;

(2) the scrutiny working group to inform Harrow's participation in the JOSC be reconvened with the terms of reference set out in the officer report;

(3) Harrow host a future meeting of the JOSC;

(4) any views on the establishment of a pan-London standing committee for Healthcare for London be forwarded to officers in advance of the London Scrutiny Officer Network meeting on 11 February 2009; and

(5) Harrow contribute to the costs of a pan-London health scrutiny officer for JOSC work.

480. **Scrutiny Review - "Delivering a Strengthened Voluntary Community Sector for Harrow":**

The Committee received an extract from the minutes of the Cabinet meeting on 18 December 2008, which detailed the outcome of the Cabinet's consideration of the Scrutiny Review on "Delivering a Strengthened Voluntary Community Sector for Harrow". It was noted that a full response to the Review's recommendations would be submitted to the Cabinet meeting in March 2009.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

481. **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference:**

Members considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive, which proposed amendments to the terms of reference for the Committee, largely to reflect changes arising from the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

Some Members wished to see a number of additional, detailed changes to parts of the Terms of Reference that it had not been proposed to amend, but not all Members were in complete agreement with these. Officers therefore undertook to liaise with Members outside of the meeting to produce an agreed version of the Terms of Reference, with a view to submitting this to the Committee at its meeting on 10 February 2009 for final approval and recommendation to Council.

RESOLVED: That officers liaise with Members to produce an agreed version of the Terms of Reference, to be submitted to the Committee at its meeting on 10 February 2009 for approval and recommendation to Council.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.34 pm, closed at 9.20 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR STANLEY SHEINWALD
Chairman