
REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD ON 21 APRIL 2009

Chairman:	* Councillor Stanley Sheinwald	
Councillors:	* Mrs Camilla Bath (7) * Mrs Margaret Davine * B E Gate * Jerry Miles * Mrs Vina Mithani * Janet Mote	* Narinder Singh Mudhar (3) * Phillip O'Dell (2) * Dinesh Solanki * Yogesh Teli * Mark Versallion
Voting Co-opted:	(Voluntary Aided) * Mrs J Rammelt Reverend P Reece	(Parent Governors) * Mr R Chauhan * Mrs D Speel

* Denotes Member present
(2), (3) and (7) Denote category of Reserve Members

[Note: Councillor Chris Mote also attended the meeting to speak on the item indicated at Minute 524 below. Councillors Christine Bednell and Anjana Patel also attended this meeting to speak on the items indicated at Minutes 525-529 below. Councillor Anjana Patel also attended this meeting to speak on the item indicated at Minute 530 below.]

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL
PART II - MINUTES
517. 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 Mitzi Green Councillor Manji Kara Councillor Anthony Seymour	Councillor Phillip O'Dell Councillor Mrs Camilla Bath Councillor Narinder Singh Mudhar

518. Declarations of Interest:

RESOLVED: To note that the following personal interests were declared and that all Members would remain in the room and take part in the discussion and any decision on the items:

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Nature of Interest</u>
11. Children's Trust)	Councillor Janet Mote	Portfolio Holder for Children's Services from 2006-08, Chair of Corporate Parenting Panel and daughter worked as a paediatric nurse for the National Health Service.
12. Adoption Service)		
13. Children Looked After Pan-London Pledge)		
14. Safeguarding)		
15. Children and Young People's Plan 2009-11)		
16. Extended Schools Review – Final Report)		
17. Progress report)		

on Harrow
Scrutiny's
response to
Healthcare for
London
Consultation on
Stroke and Major
Trauma Services
in London)

16. Extended Schools Review – Final Report)	Councillor Dinesh Solanki	Daughter being educated at a school in Harrow.
18. Place Survey Results)		
17. Progress report on Harrow Scrutiny's response to Healthcare for London Consultation on Stroke and Major Trauma Services in London)	Councillor Stanley Sheinwald	Chair of Carers' Partnership Board.
	Councillor B E Gate	Married to a health professional and daughter worked at a General Practice.
	Councillor Mark Versallion	Non-Executive Director of North West London Hospitals NHS Trust.
	Councillor Mrs Vina Mithani	Worked for a Health Protection Agency.

519. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2009 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

520. **Public Questions:**

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

521. **Petitions:**

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

522. **Deputations:**

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

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

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

524. **Delivering a Strengthened Voluntary and Community Sector:**

In accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the minutes of the Harrow Partnership Board's last meeting were admitted late to the agenda to allow the views of the Board to be taken into consideration in the context of the main report of the Director of Community and Cultural Services. The Board's minutes had not been available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated as they were being consulted on.

The Chairman welcomed the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services and the Director of Community and Cultural Services to the meeting.

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services introduced the report, which set out Cabinet's response to the recommendations of the scrutiny review entitled 'Delivering a Strengthened Voluntary and Community Sector for Harrow'. The Portfolio Holder congratulated Members and the Voluntary Sector representatives for producing

an outstanding report and commended their achievements. He saw the work of the review group as a good example of cross-party and cross-partnership working in which the partners felt fully involved.

The Portfolio Holder explained that out of the 22 recommendations of the scrutiny review group, seventeen had been implemented, one had not been agreed and the remaining four would be developed further as part of the development of a third sector strategy. The latter, once developed, would initially be presented to Cabinet and thereafter to Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In order to progress the four outstanding recommendations of the scrutiny review group, a Project Working Group had been established and had now had its first meeting.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Review Group stated that the review group had been a pleasure to work on and all parties concerned had worked well together and felt involved. He questioned the Portfolio Holder on the scope for the Third Sector Strategy and the time line for the implementation of the outstanding recommendations. Other Members asked questions about the establishment of the Community Trust for the purposes of administering the Council's grant giving function and whether this would emerge from the Third Sector Strategy. They also asked why the recommendation relating to the outsourcing of the management of 'Harrow Heroes' awards ceremony had been rejected and whether there were any financial implications relating to this particular recommendation. Members were also concerned about the ownership of the Third Sector Strategy, its composition, best practice elsewhere and the length of time a consultant would be employed to oversee this area of work. A question on the role of a relationship manager was asked.

The Portfolio Holder and the Director responded to Members' questions and concerns. They advised that a project working group had been set up and a report on a third sector strategy would be submitted to Cabinet in autumn 2009. The four remaining recommendations would fall under the third sector strategy. The establishment of a Community Trust would be considered and if agreed, it would be established by April 2010 but its role for the purposes of the grant-giving function would become effective from 2011. Best practice elsewhere that would suit Harrow would be examined.

In relation to the outsourcing of 'Harrow Heroes', the event had been delivered by the Council for the first time last year and a bedding-in period was required. The possibility of outsourcing this event would be examined in the future. There was officer time attached to this event. It was noted that the decision to keep the event in-house at this early stage had been supported by the Harrow Association of Voluntary Services.

Members were informed that the Third Sector Strategy development was government-led. For Harrow, it was being driven by Council officers in partnership with voluntary sector. A number of the Council's partners and Council officers at the highest levels, would support and oversee the development of the strategy and act as a critical friend. An officer added that every sector would be consulted and representatives from the voluntary sector forum had been tasked with consulting their groups. A further consultation exercise would be carried out at the Harrow Strategic Partnership Summit. The Primary Care Trust (PCT) was also represented and would engage with local communities to ensure that their views were represented and fed back.

The Director informed Members that a consultant had been engaged for a fixed term. It was her role to ascertain best practice. A number of London boroughs had developed a third sector strategy. However it was not intended pick one off the shelf but to tailor one that would suit Harrow. It would be submitted to Cabinet and the Harrow Partnership Board for approval in due course.

The Council would further reflect on the identification of a Relationship Manager because of the complexities involved. With regard to the issue of community lettings, further work was necessary amongst the Council's Directorates. A report would be submitted to the relevant bodies in June 2009. The Portfolio Holder stated that the practicalities of applying the lettings issue to vacant shops were complex, and it was noted that guidance on the recent announcement from the government on the use of derelict shops and associated incentives was awaited.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet's response to the 22 recommendations from the scrutiny review group be noted.

525.

Children's Trust:

The Corporate Director of Children's Services introduced a report, which set out the key recommendations for a Children's Trust and informed the Committee of the

progress made in relation to this matter. The report described the role of a Children's Trust on the basis of guidance issued by the government.

The report pointed out that whilst there were many types of Children's Trust, the aim was the same, which was to work across professional and agency boundaries to tackle complex problems proactively and make a real difference to the experience and life chances of children, young people and their families.

In Harrow, the Children's Trust would be made up of a Children's Trust Board and the Children and Young People Strategic Partnership (CYPSP). The Board would continue to develop the commissioning element of the Trust and the CYPSP would focus on the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan. The Trust would be accountable to the Harrow Partnership Board. If there were disagreements amongst the partners that formed the Trust, the status quo would remain.

A Member queried the rationale behind the Trust and how it would alter the lives of children. He questioned how the Trust would benefit or even improve on the existing working arrangements amongst partners.

In response, the Portfolio Holder of Children's Services and the Corporate Director acknowledged that a Children's Trust would not alter the lives of children per se and that, in the case of Harrow where there were good working arrangements with partners, they had struggled to identify its potential benefits. However, the initiative would make it difficult for partners to withdraw from agreements in the financing of various projects. It was essential that young people were involved in this initiative from the outset.

A Member stated that she was pleased that the setting up of the Trust had not been fast tracked, however she was of the opinion that it would bring key partners together and raise the profile of the Every Child Matters agenda.

The Corporate Director stated that, in Harrow, the focus of the Trust would be to deliver the Children and Young People's Plan. Costs would be shared amongst the partners, funding would be aligned with CYPP priorities and the focus on outcomes for children would be consistent. The focus would be on children and young people between 0-18 years of age, and beyond if the young person concerned had special needs.

Members questioned the liaison arrangements between various sectors where children struggled to move to adulthood. They were informed that the Council had worked strenuously to ensure that the transition arrangements were smooth but it was not complacent about the difficulties encountered by young people, which would be compounded by the current economic climate.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services advised Members to take the opportunity to attend a Learning Care Conference, which she considered to be inspirational. She commended the support that the youth of today provided to each other at these conferences.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(See also Minute 518).

526.

Adoption Service:

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Children's Services, which outlined the adoption services provided by the Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services complimented the work carried out by former Portfolio Holders on the provision of adoption services, on which she had been able to build. She spoke about the exceptional service provided by Children's Services and informed Members that where it was not possible for looked after children to be reunited with their birth families, the children were provided with a permanent and stable alternative family. She was pleased to report that there had been an exceptional increase in the number of foster families in Harrow. The increase had been recognised by Ofsted.

The Portfolio Holder invited questions from Members of the Committee and responded as follows:

- looked after children were placed in a stable environment within six months. The partnership with Coram adoption agency had help reap benefits, and Harrow ought to be proud that some of its residents adopted two to three children at a time;

- there were occasions when siblings had to be split up;
- the adoption process was regulated with checks and balances. It was not considered as a contracting arrangement but it was a partnership built over a number of years between social workers and adoptive parents. Families wishing to adopt were counselled, trained and assessed, as a result of which there had been no adoption breakdowns in the last three years;
- in the previous six months, Harrow had seen a rise in the number of babies requiring adoption.

The Corporate Director of Children's Services explained, in detail, the difference between foster care and adoption and how the two were sometimes interlinked. He informed Members that a care plan was prepared for every looked after child and reviewed on a regular basis.

Harrow did not suffer from the national shortage of foster carers and adoptive parents. The Corporate Director referred to the methods used by the Council to ensure that the problems experienced nationally were not reflected in Harrow. Previous poor relationships between the Council and foster carers had been improved, local and low key campaigns for attracting foster carers and adoptive parents had helped to reap benefits, and work carried out with faith groups and other locally based stakeholders had proved useful. Training, support and networking skills were also provided to prospective foster carers and adoptive parents.

Members were informed that Coram adoption agency had the lowest number of staff vacancies and did not appear to suffer from a lack of social workers. The Corporate Director assured Members that every social worker employed by Harrow was Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checked.

In response to additional questions, the Corporate Director stated that if any family had wanted to adopt through the Action for Children Charity, the Council would assist.

Members commended the comprehensive report presented by the Corporate Director and were encouraged by the structures that were in place in Harrow for those wishing to foster and/or adopt. They were particularly pleased that the life storybook, which explained the reasons for their adoption, was available to all looked after children in Harrow.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(See also Minute 518).

527. **Children Looked After Pan-London Pledge:**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Children's Services, which set out the progress made on the London Pledge that aimed to ensure that children and young people in care across London had equal access to the same range of key services. The report also set out the cost implications of implementing the Pledge and how it could be funded.

The Corporate Director of Children's Services stated that the London Pledge was an initiative of London Councils and supported by the Mayor of London. Harrow was well placed to meet the demands of the Pledge in that it already provided much that was expected of a local authority.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services stated that Harrow had appointed virtual head teachers who took a special interest in children looked after. A virtual children looked after team had been tasked with implementing the Pledge. When up and running it would become part of the direct work undertaken with each child looked after.

Members were concerned about arrangements for children who ran away from home, budget arrangements for running the service and sought further information on whether there was a national pledge, and the type of support given to looked after children who attended further education.

In response, the Corporate Director and the Portfolio Holder stated that Harrow did not suffer greatly from children running away from home. Harrow did have children who ran away from foster carers or children's homes in order to perform a parenting role for their siblings. Those missing were reported to the police. The Corporate Director undertook to provide details of the spend on running the service and a report on the Council's corporate parenting role. Members were informed that the problems

encountered in London were different from those nationally, as a result of which a London only Pledge had been drawn up. The Council's role as a parent continued while looked after children were in further education and any money given to them by the Council would not need to be paid back. However, they would need to pay back any student loans taken in the same way as other students.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(See also Minute 518).

528.

Safeguarding:

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services introduced a report, which set out the key actions taken by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) following the unfortunate death of Baby P. It was noted that Baby P's death had prompted a range of actions from central and local government and there had been considerable media comment. In Harrow, actions had been taken to audit cases, brief Councillors, support staff and respond to government guidance and Lord Laming's report on Baby P.

The Portfolio Holder stated that Harrow had carried out a review of its cases relating to children to ensure that the systems in place were robust. She was confident that Harrow had a stable team of social workers who were well managed. In addition, regular monitoring was carried out by a team of senior managers who carried out random checks on cases. Following the Baby P case, a team of senior managers led by the Corporate Director of Children's Services had carried out a review of all cases relating to Under 5s.

The Corporate Director of Children's Services circulated a guide to safeguarding children compiled by the Harrow LSCB. He also circulated articles which had appeared in the national press, which set out Lord Laming's main concerns and the call from the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives for cash for safeguarding children.

The Corporate Director explained the complexities relating to safeguarding children and the issues around child protection work. He confirmed that since the death of Baby P, the Council and the Police had carried out an audit of all cases and comparisons had been carried out. Training had been carried out at Member level and teachers were also asked to refer concerns for investigation. It was important to collect evidence and gain the trust of parents so that they were confident that assistance was available from social workers and the police. He offered to arrange visits for Members of the Committee to children's centres, if requested.

In response to a question, the Corporate Director stated that there had been a 45% increase in referrals in the last six months. Early intervention with sensitivity was needed as social workers were viewed with suspicion. Work was also being carried out with hospitals with a view to establishing patterns within communities.

The Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children's Development stated that safeguarding of children crossed boundaries and it was important that the whole Council, particularly the Housing Service, were encouraged to raise the alarm if required.

A Member who was also a governor of a school in Harrow was complimentary of the support given by Children's Services to governors and headteachers in this regard.

In conclusion, the Corporate Director of Children's Services informed the Committee that the Vice-Chairman of the LSCB was an independent person who was a General Practitioner. The Corporate Director, as the Chairman of the LSCB, was responsible for routinely challenging the Chief Executives of the local health service providers. He would give consideration to inviting a Member of the Committee to serve on the LSCB.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(See also Minute 518).

529.

Children and Young People's Plan 2009-11:

In accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Children's Services on the statutory Children and Young People's Plan 2009-11, which was admitted late to the agenda to allow the Committee to comment on the Plan prior to its consideration by Cabinet and Council. The report had not been available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated in order to ensure that an up-to-date Plan was presented to the Committee.

The report set out the draft Children and Young People's Plan, which was a requirement of the Children Act 2004. The Plan represented an agreed list of priorities for children and young people, and provided a vision for what the Council and its Partners wanted to achieve by 2011.

The Corporate Director of Children's Services described the contents of the Plan, and circulated a timeline and a poster which set out the vision for children and young people in Harrow. Members were informed that the Plan would be submitted to Cabinet on 23 April 2009 and thereafter to Council for approval. The Plan would be launched in May 2009.

It was noted that the Plan would be published electronically on both the Council and the Harrow Youth websites. Printed copies of the poster and the young people's version of the Plan would be distributed throughout Harrow.

In welcoming the Plan, Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and a co-opted member serving on the Committee asked questions about the consultations that had taken place, the age range of children and young people to whom the Plan applied, the types of assessments that would be carried out and by whom, and how some of the more challenging actions, for example, under the 'Be Healthy' agenda would be addressed in the light of staff shortages, particularly in the midwifery service.

In response, the Corporate Director stated that the Plan had been agreed with the Council's Partners and various stakeholders had been consulted. Children and young people within the age range of 6-23 had also been consulted. The Council would 'own' the Plan and ensure that it was delivered on. The delivery of actions set out in the Plan would have to be debated by a Children's Trust, a body that was in the process of being set up to enable and ensure joint working amongst Partners for the benefit of children and families. The government would assess the Council and its Partner, including schools, on the delivery of the Plan.

A Member stated that he was encouraged by the support available to children in Harrow, which he considered to be robust. It was important that children's rights were defended and that the best possible protection was available for children in the 21st Century to ensure healthy adulthood. Another Member suggested that further changes to the Plan should only be made provided they were in the interest of children and young people. A co-opted member stated that the Plan did not address the needs of the most able pupils and that the support provided to those children ought to be reflected in the Plan under the 'Enjoy and Achieve' priority.

In response to these concerns, the Portfolio Holders and the Corporate Director assured the Committee that:

- the Council's Achievement and Inclusion Team addressed and supported the needs of gifted children, including those pupils with special needs. The Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children's Development undertook to provide details of the programme that underpinned this area. She acknowledged the observation made by the co-opted member in relation to the inclusion of support provided to gifted children in the Plan;
- changes to the Plan would be made on the basis that they were in the interest of children and young people.

The Corporate Director highlighted the role of the Council and its Partners in ensuring collective responsibility and accountability towards children and young people from conception up to the age of 25 years.

RESOLVED: That (1) the report be noted;

(2) the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out above, be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

(See also Minute 518).

530. **Extended Schools Review - Final Report:**

The Chairman of the Extended Schools Review Group informed the Committee that the report of the Review Group would be submitted to the June 2009 meeting of the Committee and explained the reasons for the delay. She explained that time was needed to produce a cohesive report, and provided a flavour of the recommendations of the Review Group.

During the review, Members of the Review Group had been heartened by examples of good practice and ideas, such as the parent ambassador initiative. The level of performance across clusters had varied. A draft report of the Review Group would initially be circulated to the Members of the Review Group for comment prior to it being released widely.

The Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children's Development stated that she looked forward to the report of the Review Group and how it would help Harrow schools, particularly children whose first language was not English.

The Portfolio Holder and the Chairman of the Review Group agreed to meet to discuss the preliminary report.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Scrutiny Review Group on Extended Schools be submitted to the 9 June 2009 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(See also Minute 518).

531. **Place Survey Results:**

In accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, Members received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive, which was admitted late to the agenda to allow Members to be briefed on the results of the Place Survey. The report had not been available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated as comparative figures had been awaited for inclusion in the report.

An officer introduced the report, which set out the results of the Place Survey and highlighted the most significant outcomes. He stated that whilst London-wide results were not available at the time of writing the report to help put the survey into context, the net -30 percentage points rating for promoting the interests of local residents and a net -18 percentage points rating for acting on the concerns of local residents was not good news. As a result, the Council's Corporate Strategy Board (CSB) had asked that these outcomes be addressed. A report setting out the actions that needed to be taken would initially be submitted to the CSB and thereafter to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The officer responded to questions from Members and a co-opted member and confirmed that for parks and open spaces, the net percentage point satisfaction rating was +40. He undertook to supply all members of the Committee with the comparative data for inner and outer London which had recently been released. In relation to personal safety, a significant visible presence of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams had improved outcomes. However, it was noted that a net -2% of Harrow's population felt safe outside after dark.

Members were informed that the survey had been carried out between October and December 2008 and the officer agreed that if it had been conducted any later the results would have been different due to the economic downturn. He advised against comparing the recent Place Survey results with previous MORI surveys because of the use of different sample sizes.

It was noted that local authorities were required to conduct a Place Survey every two years but the view of Harrow Council was that this was insufficient. As a result, a survey would be conducted by the Council every year and appropriate remedial action taken to address issues. This course of action would help build patterns, trends and improve performance.

RESOLVED: That (1) the results of the Place Survey be noted;

(2) a report be submitted to the 28 July 2009 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on actions that had been taken to address issues relating to perceptions of public services in Harrow working to promote the interests of local residents, acting on the concerns of local residents and enabling people to influence decisions in their local areas.

(See also Minute 518).

532. **Progress report on Harrow Scrutiny's response to Healthcare for London Consultation on Stroke and Major Trauma Services in London:**

An officer introduced a report, which provided an update on the work of the pan-London Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) and the Harrow Healthcare for London (HfL) scrutiny working group. She informed Members that the next meeting of the working group would take place on 28 April 2009 and would involve

discussions with stakeholders. Harrow's response to the HfL consultation would subsequently be drafted for submission by 8 May 2009.

Members welcomed the comprehensive report.

RESOLVED: That (1) the progress made by the pan-London JOSC and Harrow HfL scrutiny working group be noted;

(2) local issues be given particular consideration by the Harrow HfL scrutiny working group in developing Harrow scrutiny's response to the HfL consultation;

(3) Harrow's response to the HfL consultation be signed off by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in liaison with members of the scrutiny working group.

(See also Minute 518).

533. **Scrutiny Work Programme 2009/10:**

In accordance with the Local Government Act (Access to Information) Act 1985, the Committee considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive, which set out initial proposals for the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2009/10, and which was admitted late to the agenda to allow the initial proposals of the Scrutiny Work Programme to be agreed at the earliest opportunity. The report had not been available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated as it was being consulted on.

The Work Programme included work areas that were continuing and those that were evolving, some of which had been derived from the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee's investigations. The scopes for the agreed Sustainability Review and the proposed Review of the Performance of the Council's Contract with Kier were included in the report.

An officer asked for a steer from the Committee as to the projects that should form the Work Programme and informed Members that a further report would be submitted to the June 2009 meeting proposing a final Programme for 2009/10 for approval. She advised Members that capacity for carrying out in-depth reviews was limited.

The Committee was mindful that the majority of the Work Programme ought to be completed by January 2010 in light of the local elections in May 2010.

Members discussed the projects set out in the Work Programme. Particular attention was paid to the type of review that ought to be carried out in relation to the partnership arrangements between the Council and the Kier Group. Members were of the view that whilst Kier Group's performance on the school programme was good, the work relating to housing maintenance was of concern and ought to be scrutinised. A time and motion study in relation to housing repairs carried out by the Kier Group would be helpful.

Members agreed that work on the current projects should continue and made the following observations in relation to the list of proposed projects:

<u>Proposed Project</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Communications and Fear of Crime Young People and Crime) projects to be linked as one)
Community Cohesion	to be included as part of the current Sustainability Review project
Adults and Housing Transformation Plan	Project agreed
Safeguarding Children	Project agreed - To concentrate on the transition arrangements for Children's Services
Preparing for CAA	Project agreed
Residents' attitude Survey Experion/ Vitality Profiles Joint Analytical Group Community Engagement Process	Project to be deleted

Community Lettings	Project agreed pending the report of the Director of Community and Cultural Services in June 2009
Grants Criteria	Project agreed with a view to a review being completed in May 2009
Equalities	Project deleted
Housing Revenue Account	Project agreed
Performance of the Kier Contract	Project on Minor Works relating to Housing Repairs

RESOLVED: That (1) in the light of ongoing commitments and infrastructure projects being undertaken by the scrutiny team, the comments above be taken into consideration in relation to the scrutiny work programme for the period up to January 2010;

(2) the scrutiny team be authorised to undertake further consultation on the proposed projects;

(3) a further report be submitted to the June 2009 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to include further comment on the agreed projects and any additional projects identified during the consultation;

(4) the scope for the review of sustainability that was agreed as a part of the previous year's work programme be re-affirmed;

(5) the review of the performance of the Council's contract with the Kier Group on the basis set out above - a project on minor works relating to housing repairs - be expedited and the scope of the review which would need to be revised in the light of the discussion above, be not agreed;

(6) membership of the scrutiny review group for the review of the Kier Group be sought by scrutiny officers by email;

(7) membership of the scrutiny review group for the review of the Grants Criteria be sought by officers by email.

534. **Minutes of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee Meeting held on 31 March 2009:**

In accordance with the Local Government Act (Access to Information) Act 1985, the minutes of the Sub-Committee meeting held on 31 March 2009 were admitted late to the agenda so that actions arising from the minutes could be agreed and taken, as appropriate. The minutes had not been available at the time the agenda was printed and circulated as they were being consulted on.

RESOLVED: That the actions arising from the minutes of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting held on 31 March 2009 be noted and, insofar as was necessary, agreed.

535. **Report from Lead Scrutiny Members:**

The Committee considered a written report of the issues considered by the Scrutiny Lead Members for Sustainable Development and Enterprise meeting held 9 March 2009.

It was noted that Scrutiny lead Members for Corporate Effectiveness and Finance had also met since the report was written and a written report on the outcomes would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That (1) the Scrutiny Lead Members for Sustainable Development and Enterprise:

- monitor progress on Decent Homes and the Sustainable Design Supplemental Planning Document;
- monitor what is being done by and within the Council, as well as nationally, to provide assistance to enterprises and economic development;

- contact the Corporate Complaints Officer for any further queries, information regarding the complaint or the complaints process relating to the complaint received in February 2009;

(2) the Scrutiny Lead Members for Sustainable Development and Enterprise and other Members involved in the review group consider the Sustainable Communities Act during the sustainability review.

536. **Report from the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee Chairman:**

The Chairman of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee introduced a report, which set out the items that had been considered by the Sub-Committee at its meeting on 31 March 2009. A number of these items had also been set out in the report on Scrutiny Work Programme 2009/10, which was also on the agenda. He stated that it would not be prudent to carry out an in-depth investigation into the Kier Partnership.

Members considered the recommendations and it was

RESOLVED: That (1) the issues set out in the report of the Performance and Finance Sub-Committee meeting held on 31 March 2009 be noted;

(2) following on from the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting held on 21/01/09 and subsequent discussions with the Divisional Director of Housing, an investigation into the Housing Revenue Account, dependent upon information received from Housing in July 2009, be approved;

(3) the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee carry out a review - a project on minor works relating to housing repairs - of the Council's partnership with the Kier Group.

(See also Minute 533).

537. **Any Other Business:**

(i) Cabinet Decisions

The Chairman reported that concerns had been raised with the Leader. It was confirmed that hard copies of the decisions would no longer be circulated to the co-opted members of the Committee.

(ii) Care Matters – Harrow's response to the Children and Young Person's Bill 2007 – Mandatory Training Sessions

The Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel stated that a training session for Councillors on their corporate parenting role would be included as part of a session scheduled to take place on 22 June 2009. A dedicated session would be considered and would depend on the popularity of the session on 22 June.

Members were disappointed that the session was not mandatory and it was

RESOLVED: That the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee write to the Leaders and the Chief Whips of the political parties urging that Members be whipped to attend the training session on the corporate parenting role of Councillors scheduled to be held on 22 June 2009, or to a later session, to be held on another day, if required.

(iii) Overview and Scrutiny Committee – October 2009

It was reported that the October 2009 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been re-arranged and the Committee would now meet on 12 October instead of 7 October 2009.

(iv) Scrutiny Manager, Lynne Margetts

The Chairman stated that Lynne Margetts would be running the London Marathon on 26 April 2009 in support of the Teenage Cancer Trust and he urged all to support her in this brave effort.

(v) Vote of Thanks

The Chairman thanked Members and Officers for their support in the work relating to the Committee during the current municipal year.

538. **Extension and Termination of Meeting:**
In accordance with the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rule 6.6 (ii) (Part 4B of the Constitution) it was

RESOLVED: At (1) 10.00 pm to continue until 10.30 pm;

(2) at 10.30 pm to continue until 10.45 pm.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 10.40 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR STANLEY SHEINWALD
Chairman