

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

3 APRIL 2012

Chairman: * Councillor Jerry Miles

Councillors:

* Kam Chana	* Sachin Shah
* Tony Ferrari (2)	* Victoria Silver
* Ann Gate	* Sasi Suresh (4)
* Paul Osborn	* Stephen Wright

Voting (Voluntary Aided) (Parent Governors)

Co-opted:

† Mrs J Rammelt	† Mrs A Khan
† Reverend P Reece	

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

248. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

Ordinary Member

Councillor Sue Anderson
Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Reserve Member

Councillor Sasi Suresh
Councillor Tony Ferrari

249. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interest was declared:

Agenda Item 9 – “Shaping a Healthier Future for North West London” –
Preparing for a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Ann Gate declared a personal interest as an employee of the NHS. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

250. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2012, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

251. Public Questions

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put, or petitions or deputations received at this meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rules 17, 15 and 16 (Part 4B of the Constitution) respectively.

252. References from Council/Cabinet

(a) Scrutiny Review - Debt Recovery Process - Response:

The Committee noted that Cabinet had welcomed the report and noted the recommendations set out with regard to application of the debt recovery process and that this was an emotive issue. Cabinet had acknowledged that early intervention was critical where issues arose and proposed that a working group be established to oversee the process. It was also emphasised that policies should be applied in a reasonable, sensitive and proportionate manner. Cabinet had agreed the recommendations offered by officers and to receive a further progress report in three months.

RESOLVED: That the endorsement of Cabinet to the officer proposals and its intention to receive a further progress report in three months be noted.

(b) Reablement Progress Response to Recommendations from Standing Scrutiny Review Group:

The Committee was advised that Cabinet had considered the recommendations of the Standing Scrutiny Review Panel and officer responses. It was noted that of the five recommendations from the Scrutiny Review, the majority had been taken on board and the Chairman of the Scrutiny Review Group had been invited to attend a discussion outside the Cabinet meeting on the issues.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Review expressed a concern with the service's response as it implied that there was no issue with the arrangements which had been highlighted in the scrutiny report. He felt this was not demonstrable as the evidence regarding the issues had come directly from residents. He intended to take this matter up further with the service.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet resolution be noted and the officer response be subject to further examination by the Review Group.

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

253. Scrutiny Annual Report 2011/12

The Committee received the draft Scrutiny Annual Report for 2011/12, which summarised the work undertaken during the year by each of the scrutiny committees and the Scrutiny Lead Members.

The Chairman introduced the report stating that he felt it was an excellent picture of the work delivered through the various scrutiny channels and which had resulted in a high percentage of positive outcomes over the whole year.

The officer advised that as part of the finalisation of the report content she intended to undertake a survey of all councillors, public and other individuals/organisations that had been involved in any aspect of the scrutiny process over the previous year. Results of this survey would be included in the final report to be presented to Full Council in July.

A Member expressed his satisfaction that a review of the report demonstrated that a large number of the recommendations offered by scrutiny reviews had been accepted by Directorates and this demonstrated the significant success of the process for the year.

The Committee endorsed the Annual Report and expressed its thanks to the Scrutiny Team and all councillors who had participated in scrutiny reviews throughout the year.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That the Scrutiny Annual Report for 2011/12 be agreed.

254. "Shaping a Healthier Future for North West London" - Preparing for a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Members considered a report of the Divisional Director of Partnership Development and Performance, which proposed that Harrow participate in a pan-London Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) to consider NHS North West London's Programme "Shaping a Healthier Future for North West London", to improve care for north west London and the arrangements for consultation.

The Committee's views were sought on a number of issues relating to the shadow JOSC and its proposed formal establishment later in 2012. Specifically, Members were asked to consider whether Harrow should participate in the JOSC along with the seven named London boroughs, noting that the Programme "Shaping a Healthier Future" had also been developed in

partnership with the eight Primary Care Trusts / Clinical Commissioning Groups for North West London.

Members discussed the proposals for the JOSC and the Programme it would consider noting that this was likely to result in a significant piece of work which aimed to deliver value to residents. It was emphasised that the merits of Harrow's approach to the JOSC would need to be carefully considered, including the appropriate representation on the shadow and, eventually, the formal body. It was further recognised that each authority participating in the JOSC process would bring its own views and desired outcomes as part of the overall considerations.

In terms of representation, the Committee agreed that Council be requested to delegate the final authority with regard to appointment of councillors to itself, noting that, in the first instance, this should be considered to be appropriate appointments for the two Health Lead Councillors.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council) That :

- (1) the proposals for a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) for the consideration of the "Shaping a Healthier Future for North West London Programme" be noted;
- (2) Harrow's participation in the JOSC be confirmed and authority delegated to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with regard to the appointment of councillors to the JOSC and to determine membership and issues related to it;
- (3) it be agreed that the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee write, in conjunction with the other seven London borough's, to seek financial assistance for the JOSC process from NHS North West London to enable procurement of the administrative and policy support to the Committee, as set out at option A to the report;
- (4) consideration be given to future appointments to pan-London Joint Committees where these impacted upon Scrutiny and that this process be delegated permanently to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED ITEMS

255. Standing Review of the Budget - Quarterly Report

The Committee received the quarterly report of the Budget Review Panel noting the points identified around the allocation of capital resources and the longer term implications of capital spend. It was advised that various issues had been raised with the Interim Corporate Director of Resources and reassurance sought as to her more vigilant approach to the allocation and management of capital resources.

The Chairman of the Review Group noted that the focus over the coming period would be the Housing Revenue Account Budget and the implications of

the upcoming changes. This would include robust consideration of the proposed business plan and modelling of the debt structure, together with an examination of the viability of the proposals set against the size of the housing stock.

In response to a suggestion, it was confirmed that a matrix flow table concerning the HRA proposals would form part of the overall plan to be brought to scrutiny review.

The intention was to undertake bench marking with other authorities and additional representation of Administration councillors on the scrutiny review was sought.

RESOLVED: That the quarterly report and future direction be noted.

256. Customer Care Scrutiny Review - Scope

The Committee considered the proposed scope for the Customer Care Scrutiny Review as agreed by the Review Group at its meeting on 29 February 2012.

Members made various comments with regard to the extent of the review and the Chairman of the Review Group emphasised that it was intended that the remit of the Group would extend beyond the Better Deal for Residents review's consideration of impact on residents and that all channels of customer care would be considered, together with an examination of the culture of the organisation with regard to customer care.

A Member expressed her view that consideration be given to finding a more symmetrical way of honing the current customer care arrangements, citing the Aberdeenshire model as a strong example for aspiration by the Group. The Chairman of the Review Group agreed with the point made and emphasised that the Customer Care Scrutiny Review was focused on how the council dealt with contacts via its multiplicity of channels before a matter reached the complaints stage as a result of poor service experience.

Members then discussed the various merits and disbenefits in relation to expanding beyond the proposed customer care scope to include a wider focus upon the customer care channels, management and subsequent delivery. A Member commented specifically that the current scope proposals did not address the potential of establishing a model to take forward for the future with regard to customer care and contacts.

The Chairman of the Review Group emphasised the extent of the evidence that would need to be gathered as part of the current scope proposals and that a measure of success would be effects on the customer score through the council's relationship tracker. He also stated that there was a limited window to undertake and achieve the review. The review, as proposed, would map the customer journey and would also consider a random selection of customer interactions with the Council through the various channels offered.

A Member spoke on the need to establish who the “customer” was and for the need to ensure that customer care as a principle was in place across the entire organisation. He noted the challenge the review faced in ensuring its customer care review did not become an inward focussed review.

The Interim Corporate Director of Resources responded to the comments noting that a significant level of good practice was already fundamentally in place within Access Harrow and that the philosophy she supported was “provide excellent services and get the governance right”. She felt the review was timely and would link well with the ongoing officer review of service and customer care delivery.

A Member suggested that further thought be given by the Review Group to widening its aims and objectives as she felt these were too limiting as currently proposed and the Chair of the Review Group invited Members to send him suggestions for expansion of the Scope which he would ensure was considered by its next meeting. However, he emphasised the need to ensure the workload remained manageable as any expansion would have an impact upon available resource.

RESOLVED: That the Scope of the Customer Care Scrutiny Review be provisionally approved subject to a consideration of widening its aims and objectives at its next meeting.

257. Scrutiny Lead Member Report

Members considered a report of the Divisional Director of Partnership Development and Performance, which set out a report of various Scrutiny Lead Members meetings held on:

- 22 February - consideration of the mobile and flexible working programme.
- 7 March - Corporate Effectiveness examination with respect to the Debt Recovery Review.
- 20 March - Safer and Stronger Communities examination of priorities for the 2012/13 municipal year.

A Member queried whether awaited information from the Children and Families Directorate had come forward for consideration and was advised that officers were working with the Directorate to produce the evidence for consideration by Members.

RESOLVED: That the report from the Scrutiny Lead Members be noted and the actions proposed therein agreed.

258. Work Programme Update Report

Members received a report of the Divisional Director of Partnership Development and Performance, which provided an update on the progress of the delivery of the scrutiny work programme, and set out the projects

proposed by the Scrutiny Leadership Group for inclusion in the work programme.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) progress of the delivery of the work programme be noted;
- (2) the inclusion of a Challenge Panel on the Implementation of Review of Staff Terms and Conditions be agreed.

259. Any Other Business

The Chairman noted that this was the final meeting of the current Municipal Year and thanked all Members and officers for their contributions throughout the year.

The Committee registered its thanks to the Chairman for his leadership over the year and noted the success of the cross-party working arrangements.

(The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.43 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR JERRY MILES
Chairman