

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

Meeting:	LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE
Date:	30 JUNE 2003
Subject:	ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2002/03
Responsible Chief Officer	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Status:	Part I
Ward:	N/A
Enclosures:	DRAFT REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 In the last cycle of meetings, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Scrutiny Sub-Committees agreed the process by which the 2002/03 annual report should be prepared and agreed for presentation to Council. This process provided for a composite report to be produced which includes an overview of the work undertaken over the past year supported by individual contributions from each of the scrutiny bodies. A draft Chair's contribution for this Sub-Committee is attached for Members' consideration.

2. **Recommendation**

- 2.1 To approve the draft Chair's report of the Sub-Committee's work over the past year for inclusion in the 2002-03 scrutiny annual report.

3. **Policy Context (including Relevant Previous Decisions)**

- 3.1 This report addresses the requirement placed on the Committee to report to Council on the work done in the previous year and on its annual work programme for the forthcoming year.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 1.4.03
Sub-Committee meeting - 8.4.03

4. **Relevance to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 The work of scrutiny bodies seek to support all of the Council's corporate and strategic priorities.

5. **Background Papers:**

Report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee 1.4 .03
Minutes of the meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 8.4.03

6. **Author:** Frances Hawkins, Scrutiny Support Officer, Civic Centre, Harrow. Tel 020 8863 5611 x 3156

7. LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

- 7.1 2002-03 has been a very active first year for the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub-Committee during which time we have established a variety of approaches for carrying out our responsibilities. Our work has included undertaking two in-depth reviews of service areas, the consideration of statutory plans and the budget, the examination of performance issues, and questioning of the Portfolio Holder.
- 7.2 Our in-depth reviews looked at Healthy Life-Styles in Schools and the Distribution of Statements across Schools. In each case we established a cross-party working group to consider available evidence and to seek further information from officers and by visits to schools where it was extremely helpful talking to teachers and especially students, whose comments were reflected in the final report. Both reviews were concluded within the municipal year and the review groups' reports were received at the meeting of the Sub-Committee in April 2003.
- 7.3 Each review led to a range of recommendations which were passed to the Portfolio Holder for Education and Lifelong Learning or to officers for following up. Our findings and recommendations included the following:
- There were examples of good practice in relation to healthy life-styles in all schools visited and significant benefits from the Healthy Schools schemes.
 - Specific recommendations were made in relation to free school packed lunches, availability of water, involvement of parents and governors, resources for school nurses and extension of existing good provision.
 - The distribution of SEN Statements was not unreasonable and many schools have dealt well with aspects of special educational needs.
 - Specific recommendations were made in relation to the timely arrival of SEN resources and equipment, the possible extension of Parent Partnership, the training and pay of learning assistants, and opportunities for schools to share good practice in the area of SEN.

- 7.4 Our scrutiny of Core Education Strategies and Plans has included the Education Service Review, the Cultural Strategy, the Annual Library Plan, the Early Years Development and Childcare Plan and the LEA Inspection Action Plan. We looked at the Early Years Development and Childcare Plan in a pilot two stage process, with a small sub-group of Members initially working closely with

officers on the details contained in the plan followed by a further discussion at the Sub-Committee. We believe that this worked particularly well and anticipate rolling out this process to other areas of our responsibilities, as appropriate. With regard to the other plans,

COMMITTEE STATISTICS	
Committee meetings	6
One off Working Group meetings	2
In-depth reviews	2
Review meetings	8
Visits/informal meetings	5
Attendance by Portfolio Holder	2
Statutory items considered	3

we recommended a more streamlined document for the scrutiny of the Education Service Review in future and have decided to become involved with the development of the Annual Library Plan at an earlier stage in future. The LEA Inspection Plan was monitored at three meetings before it was signed off with all of the key actions having been completed.

- 7.5 Over the year, the Portfolio Holder attended two of our meetings to answer questions on the Education Service Review and the 2003-04 Budget proposals.
- 7.6 Other issues which we considered during the year included the 2003-04 Budget proposals and provision at the Harrow Tuition Service for pupils excluded from school. The Mayor reported on his visit to the Harrow Tuition Service and the positive developments he had observed.
- 7.7 In addition, we arranged a very well-attended training session for Members and officers involved in the scrutiny process. The session focused on the variety of approaches which Members could use in their scrutiny role and the ways of ensuring that they obtained the kind of information that would assist them in their work. The outcomes of the training have influenced the planned programme for the Sub-Committee during 2003-04.
- 7.8 We are very grateful for the support which we have received from officers, particularly in relation to our reviews. As noted elsewhere in this report, however, we wish to be in a position whereby we have access to the adequate dedicated administrative, and research, resources which we consider essential for us to function at maximum effectiveness.

Mitzi Green
Chair, Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub-Committee