

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

20 SEPTEMBER 2012

Chairman: * Councillor Jerry Miles

Councillors:

* Sue Anderson	* Krishna James
* Kam Chana	Zarina Khalid
* Ann Gate	* Paul Osborn
* Susan Hall (4)	* Stephen Wright

Voting Co-opted: (Voluntary Aided) (Parent Governors)

† Mrs J Rammelt	Mrs A Khan
† Reverend P Reece	

In attendance: * Phillip O'Dell Minute 305
(Councillors)

* Denotes Member present
(4) Denotes category of Reserve Member
† Denotes apologies received

298. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

Ordinary Member

Reserve Member

Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Councillor Susan Hall

299. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Item 9 – Community Safety Plan and Strategic Assessment

Councillor Susan Hall declared a non-pecuniary interest in that she was on the Board of the London Fire Brigade and also had a business in Wealdstone. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Councillor Susan Hall, during the course of the meeting, also declared a non-pecuniary interest in that she had introduced the 'Shut in Lift' policy. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

300. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2012, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

301. Public Questions

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were received at the meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 17.

302. Petitions

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions were received at the meeting under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 15.

303. References from Council/Cabinet

RESOLVED: To note that no references were received.

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

304. Changes to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Members received a report of the Divisional Director of Partnership Development and Performance which provided an update on changes to the areas of responsibility of the Community Health and Well Being and Health scrutiny lead members and proposals for representatives of Harrow Youth Parliament to be co-opted onto the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The officer reported that the proposal to co-opt representatives of the Harrow Youth Parliament onto the Committee arose from the Scrutiny Review 'Redefining Youth Engagement.' This position would be non voting.

RESOLVED: That the changes in the Scrutiny lead areas be agreed.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That a representative of Harrow Youth Parliament be appointed as a co-opted non-voting member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

305. Community Safety Plan and Strategic Assessment

Members received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which set out the joint response of the Council, the Police and other partners to the crime and anti-social behaviour issues identified in the Strategic Assessment. In addition, it broadened the definition of community safety by including other aspects of safety including safeguarding vulnerable adults and young people, addressing domestic violence, hate crime and community tensions and helping people recover from abuse of drugs and/or alcohol.

The officer advised that the Community Safety Plan was a statutory plan and differed from previous plans in that its scope was expanded. It was hoped that the next plan would be ready in February 2013. This would mean that there would be a common reporting date for the strategic assessment.

The Borough Commander reported that the plan contained retrospective figures and that there was a downward trend for burglary and violent offences. He reported that, in terms of the most up to date figures, there were reductions in terms of property crime (4.8%), robbery (7.7%), residential burglary (10.9%), theft of vehicles (14%), domestic violence (3%) but an increase in theft from vehicles (14%). These figures were available to view on the Metropolitan Police website. At the moment there was a significant reduction in crime but he reported that over the last 5 years there had been an increase in crime during the autumn and therefore there would be an increased deployment of resources.

Members made comments and asked questions as follows:

- A Member expressed his dissatisfaction at being provided with figures verbally that had not been included in the report as he had spent a considerable amount of time going through the report.
- A Member stated that whilst she was pleased to note that the remit of the Safer Harrow Partnership had expanded she was extremely concerned that it did not have cross party membership. Similarly, the Health and Well Being Board did not have cross party membership. The Borough Commander responded that traditionally it had been the relevant portfolio holder that had been the member of the Safer Harrow Partnership but that he would raise the comments with the group and Chief Executive.
- The officer undertook to provide a written response to a Member's query as to which budget funded the 24 hour Hate Crime line. Another Member questioned whether the helpline had been successful and was advised that it was an additional reporting mechanism and that it was difficult to ascribe a change in outcome to any particular measure.

- A Member expressed concern at the variation in statistics from one year to the next and from one ward to the next. The Borough Commander responded that as some wards had a low level of crime, percentages did not necessarily give a true reflection of the situation.
- In terms of the use of Local Area Agreement funding, the officer reported that £90,000 had been made available for equipment purchases but that the police had decided that this was not the way forward and that instead the resources could be used for the autumnal work.
- A Member stated that the Borough Commander had previously reported that snatch and robberies typically occurred at 4 o'clock in the afternoon and were carried out by young people. He questioned what work was being done with schools and the Borough Commander advised that he had met with all of the Head teachers but that no one school was a main source of victims or perpetrators.
- A Member commented that analysis behind the data would be helpful in order to give an indication of the difference between Harrow and other boroughs, for example, in relation to the percentage of women that were victims. The Borough Commander stated that policing was fast moving and resources needed to be deployed quickly and this would be done as the result of the use of intelligence received. Members were welcome to attend the Grip and Pace meetings. The officer added that there had been discussions with the scrutiny leads as to how best to provide Members with statistics drawn down from the Metropolitan Police website in terms of month, time and ward in order to be more time relevant.
- Referring to the proposal to save an additional £18.6m savings, a Member sought clarification as to what these included. The officer advised that this was in the context of the Council's budget.
- A Member expressed concern, in relation to the Wealdstone corridor, for the safety of children attending the I Foundation school and whether any additional resource was being deployed in this area. The Borough Commander responded that the profile of the borough was predominantly Black and Minority Ethnic and that the police would continue to work closely with local businesses and respond to any information received.
- A Member questioned, in terms of reducing re-offending, the number of young people the Youth Offending Team (YOT) were currently working with as the report only appeared to include figures for adults. The Borough Commander advised that the YOT had done effective triage work at the police station and that only 3 of the 100 seen had re-offended. He undertook to provide Members with some additional figures. In terms of robbery, he reported that the vast majority of victims and burglars lived in Harrow but that the main challenge facing the police were those burglars coming into the borough. He referred to

the work being done with Mothers against Gangs, which Harrow Boys' School was keen to support, and other ways in which to make an impact when a victim would not testify.

- A Member suggested that if statistical data was to be provided, it should be forwarded to Democratic Services for advance circulation to Members. In addition, the maps included in the papers were not legible and, in future, separate larger copies should be provided.
- A Member sought clarification as to the position on the community trigger and was advised that the provisions had not yet been enacted.
- In response to a Member's question, another Member outlined the 'Shut in Lift' policy which had been introduced as lifts were not being adequately maintained. This incurred costs to the Fire Brigade and this policy now meant that if the Fire Brigade was called to the same lift 3 times in a year, the person/organisation responsible for maintenance would be charged.
- In response to a question about prevention of domestic violence, the officer advised that White Ribbon Day had been introduced 2 years' ago and that the website provided advice. There was insufficient capacity to deal with the issue but the officer added the police in Harrow were excellent at dealing with it.
- A Member emphasised the importance of raising awareness of crimes involving sexual violence which were regarded as a taboo subject. The officer advised that considerable work was being done in schools by the Sexual Violence Adviser to raise awareness of the illegality of these hidden crimes. The officer undertook to provide the Member with the Violence Against Women Strategy.

The Chair thanked the Borough Commander, Portfolio Holder and officer for their attendance and responses.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That the Committee's comments be noted.

RESOLVED ITEMS

306. Reference from Cabinet - 19 July 2012 - 'Redefining Youth Engagement'

The Chair drew Members' attention to a revised version of Cabinet's response to the Scrutiny Review on 'Redefining Youth Engagement' which had been circulated on the supplemental agenda. He advised that as Cabinet had amended the minute on this item at their meeting on 13 September 2012, the reference back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had also required amendment.

The Chair reported that the review had been well received by Cabinet but that there were some financial implications arising from the recommendations. Work was being done with the Youth Parliament and the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee would review progress in January 2013.

A Member stated that he had concerns in relation to the Cabinet response as there was no indication as to what could be afforded. Some indication of affordability would assist in monitoring progress.

RESOLVED: That the response from Cabinet be noted.

307. Community Right to Challenge

The Committee received a report which set out the provisions and some of the implications of the Community Right to Challenge which was established by the Localism Act. The Director of Legal and Governance Services introduced the report and outlined the provisions of the Act.

Members asked a series of questions and made comments as follows:

- Clarification was sought on the types of service that the Council could choose to put out to tender. The Director of Legal and Governance Services advised that services such as Registrars or Planning (determination and decision making) could not be tendered out and that it was envisaged that the Council would choose which services it would open to the process.
- A Member sought the Director's view as to how many proposals to run services would be received annually and was advised that consideration was still being given as to how the process would be managed. For example, it was possible that bids may come in higher than the service was costing the Council in the first place.
- In response to a Member's question as to how malicious or time wasting bids could be prevented, the Director advised that this required consideration as there was nothing in the Regulations or guidance on this.
- A Member stated that it was unclear as to which services were exempt in terms of being put out to tender and that it appeared once a contract, for example the Leisure Services and Legal Services contracts, had been signed, it could not be challenged. He was therefore concerned that the Council was restricting its procurement opportunities. The Director confirmed that if, for example, the Council had let a contract for 10 years, a community group could not force the Council to break that contract.
- The Director of Partnership Development and Performance confirmed that, at this stage, there had been no interests expressed in Community Right to Challenge from individuals/groups in Harrow. The

Director of Legal and Governance Services added that, in theory, all 700+ services provided by the Council could be offered to bidders.

- A Member stated that whilst he would not wish to see all services constantly exposed to bidders, he also would not want to prevent procurement opportunities; the key was getting the balance right. The Director of Partnership Development and Performance responded that the Council would need to be clear in how it was going to deal with legislation and if the intention was to prevent certain services being offered at a local level, he would welcome the opportunity to discuss it with Members.
- Members were advised that even if a community group triggered the procurement process for a service it may not result in that particular group running the service.

The Chair thanked the officers for their attendance and responses and indicated that a further report on this issue would be helpful.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

308. Report of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee Chair

Members received the report of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee Chair which provided a summary of issues to be taken forward by the Sub-Committee following their meeting on 24 July 2012.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

309. Standing Review of the Budget - Quarterly Report

Members received a report of the Divisional Director of Partnership Development and Performance which provided an update on the work undertaken by the Standing Scrutiny Review of the Budget. Attention was drawn to the recommendations that had been circulated on the supplemental agenda and Members agreed to consider them for the reasons stated.

The Chair commended the work of the Review Group and, in particular, the Chair of the Review Group for his work on the Housing Revenue Account and Capital funding.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the work of the standing the review of the budget be noted;
- (2) the recommendations made in respect of the management major contract renewal process be approved.

310. Scrutiny Work Programme Update

Members received a report which provided Members with an update on the projects currently underway as part of the scrutiny work programme. The

officer reported that, in terms of future projects, a list of 4 or 5 areas would be prepared for consideration by Members at a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress on the individual projects be noted;
- (2) the proposals for identifying further projects for inclusion in the work programme be agreed.

311. Standing Review of Better Deal for Residents - Closing Report

Members received a report of the Divisional Director of Partnership Development and Performance which provided an update on the work undertaken by the Standing Scrutiny Review of the Better Deal for Residents and proposed closure of the project.

The Chair of the Review Group expressed concern that there appeared to be a reluctance by certain departments to demonstrate the Public Realm system to Members despite numerous attempts by officers to arrange a date. Members of the Committee indicated that if the demonstration was not forthcoming, they would request the relevant officers to provide a demonstration of the system at a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the work of the Standing Scrutiny Review of the Better Deal for Residents be noted;
- (2) the closure of the project be agreed;
- (3) the proposals for the ongoing monitoring of T2 be agreed.

312. Scrutiny Lead Member Report

Members received the report from the Environment and Enterprise Scrutiny Lead Members. Members were advised that the directorate was now reaching the end of savings that could be achieved through efficiency and was moving towards service reduction.

A Member indicated that it would be helpful to receive reports from each lead area to ensure that work was not being duplicated. The officer advised that there would be reports from the Children and Resources leads to the October meeting of the Committee.

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

313. Any Other Business - Recommendation from the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee - 12 September 2012 - Terms of Reference

The Committee received a recommendation from the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee which sought agreement to amend its terms of reference. The Committee agreed to consider the item as a matter of urgency for the reasons set out on the supplemental agenda.

RESOLVED: That the Sub-Committee's Terms of Reference be revised as set out at Appendix A to these minutes and referred to the Constitution Review Working Group for consideration.

Appendix

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.33 pm, closed at 9.32 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR JERRY MILES
Chairman

APPENDIX A

PROPOSED REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE

PERFORMANCE & FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE

The Performance and Finance Sub-Committee has the following powers and duties:

1. To be the key driver of the scrutiny function's work programme and the body responsible for monitoring the performance of the council and partners in relation to their stated priorities;
2. To consider/monitor, on an exception basis, the financial and service performance of the organisation;
3. To consider/monitor the performance of the council's partners;
4. To undertake specific investigation of identified 'hot spots' through Q&A, reports or challenge panels – subject to endorsement by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
5. To refer 'hot spots' to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for more detailed investigation where necessary;
6. To consider such urgent items as are appropriate – ad hoc, Councillor Calls for Action, area scrutiny.

Deleted: the Local Area Agreement

Deleted: &