

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17 DECEMBER 2013

Reference from Cabinet Meeting held on 21 November 2013

Accessible Transport - Scrutiny Review Group Report and Recommendations

Cabinet received a report of the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise, which recommended the actions to be taken in response to the Scrutiny Review Group's recommendations on Accessible Transport.

In accordance with the Cabinet/Scrutiny Protocol, the Leader of the Council invited the Chairman and a Member of the Review Group to address Cabinet. They

- thanked those who had participated in the Review Group and the assistance that had been received from the bus companies and Transport for London (TfL), including residents. They particularly thanked Anthony Wood, Harrow Public Transport Users Association, for his invaluable knowledge and contacts, including his knowledge of transport in Harrow;
- stated that the driving force behind the Review was the different life opportunities experienced by people who could not readily access transport facilities. Additionally, during the Review issues such as being able to reach the buttons in lifts, being able to access dropped kerbs, had also been highlighted. Small changes such as double yellow line markings near dropped kerbs helped. They hoped that Harrow would emulate and learn from the measures implemented in other boroughs, and welcomed the provision of a community bus stop in Harrow. The Chairman of the Review Group referred to the issue of access at Harrow-on-the-Hill Station and the cost of £35m to make it fully accessible. She also explained the various measures that other boroughs had put in place and welcomed the response report. However, she would have liked timescales and target to have been included.

In response to a question associated with the political pressures in obtaining funding, the Leader of the Council stated that she was meeting with the Deputy Mayor for London and would be raising the issue of accessibility, including the provision of facilities for people with disabilities, at Harrow-on-the-Hill Station and other stations. She appreciated that other areas of Harrow also needed to be made accessible, and that she was aware of the nuances such as the doubts over TfL's community project in Harrow on the Hill Ward. She assured Cabinet that all such aspects would form part of her discussions with the Deputy Mayor for London the following day. A non-voting non-Executive Member was pleased to learn that the Mayor's office was being lobbied and he suggested that it was also important for the Council to have a commercial outlook and to encourage and attract private investment.

The Deputy Leader was of the view that it would have been helpful if the Review Group report had set out the challenges and costs associated with various proposals. He suggested that the work being carried out by the Health and Wellbeing Board in respect of children and adult care ought to be incorporated, in particular the empowering elements of that work. The Chairman of the Review Group responded that discussions had taken place on the financial aspects, however it was agreed not to include these as the financial aspects were also dictated by other contributory factors.

The Leader of the Council agreed that it was important that consideration was given to people with disabilities in all aspects of the work carried out by the Council, including awareness. She would support and encourage private sector investment. In conclusion, the Leader thanked the Members of the Review Group for their report and asked officers to submit a further report on the achievements to a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That the actions recommended by officers in response to the recommendations made in the Accessible Transport Scrutiny Review Group report be approved.

Reason for Decision: To improve accessibility on the borough transport network.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: None.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

FOR INFORMATION

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Background Documents: Draft Minutes of Cabinet – 21 November 2013