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# Scrutiny Annual Report 2013-2014





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## **Introduction from the Chair and Vice Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny committee**

This is the final report from scrutiny for the 2010 – 2014 administration. The pages below outline our activity during this year, summarise some of our most important achievements and outline our legacy for the next administration.

This has been a tumultuous year. In May, the leadership of the organisation, until that point Labour, was replaced by an administration led by the Independent Labour Party. This saw a number of changes in the scrutiny function including the chairing of the committees, the membership of the committees and the lead members.

In September, the leadership of the council changed again, this time to be led by the Conservative group and again, this has resulted in significant changes to the scrutiny membership.

The changes mean that a number of councillors have moved on from scrutiny and we would like to place on record our appreciation for the scrutiny councillors who have served the committees during the last four years, and who left to take on roles in the administration following the changes during the year:

- Cllr Christine Bednell
- Cllr Kam Chana
- Cllr Tony Ferrari
- Cllr Zarina Khalid
- Cllr Barry Macleod-Cullinane
- Cllr Janet Mote
- Cllr Paul Osborn
- Cllr Stephen Wright

We would also like to thank Cllr Ann Gate for the contribution she made, particularly to health scrutiny. Cllr Gate resigned from the council in 2013 and we wish her well.

This year also saw the departure of the Chief Executive of the Council as the Conservative-led administration changed the structure of the council's senior management team. We would like to put on record our thanks to Michael Lockwood for all of the support he gave to our deliberations and we wish him well for the future. This change in structure also precipitated a scrutiny investigation, which we discuss further in the report from the Overview and Scrutiny committee below.

The council continues to grapple with serious financial difficulties and has been required to deliver a significant level of savings over the last few years and, as the impact of these reductions begins to bite, the role of scrutiny in championing the needs of our most vulnerable residents has increased. In these difficult times, as in previous years, it has been crucial that our activities have been targeted on the most important issues and that we use the most effective means of undertaking our investigations. As in previous years, the Scrutiny Leadership Group has continued to provide excellent strategic direction to the function and is helping to ensure we maintain an effective focus for our work. We are extremely grateful to all of the councillors who have contributed to the Leadership Group during the last year.

The two scrutiny sub-committees have also continued to play a key role in our deliberations:

- [The Performance and Finance sub-committee's](#) relentless focus on the performance and finances of the organisation has provided an excellent steer to our deliberations ensuring our limited resources focus on the most important issues.
- [The Health and Social Care sub-committee](#) has maintained a determined oversight of the activities of our health partners as they undergo similar significant change and budget challenge. Members of the committee have also played an active role on the Shaping a Healthier Future joint overview and scrutiny committee, which continues to meet to monitor the changes being proposed to hospital configuration in West London.

Reports from both of the sub committees are included below.

Similarly, the report includes a summary of the work undertaken by each of the lead councillor pairs.

As we approach the end of this administration, we have taken the opportunity to look back at some of our most memorable achievements over the last four years: this we feel, is our legacy to the next generation of scrutineers, we wish them well!



**Cllr Jerry Miles**  
Chair Overview and Scrutiny committee



**Cllr Chris Mote**  
Vice Chairman Overview and Scrutiny committee

# Report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## Our Committee

The committee has continued to meet on a virtually monthly basis and we have met 11 times this year. The papers and details of the outcomes from all of these meetings can be found [here](#)

There have been a number of changes to the membership of the committee this year; we'd like to thank Cllr Chana, Cllr Macleod-Cullinane, Cllr Osborn and Cllr Wright for their contribution to our deliberations over the last few years; we'd also like to thank Cllr Ashton, Cllr Dharmarajah, Cllr Henson, Cllr O'Dell, Cllr Phillips, Cllr Seymour and Cllr Teli for their contribution after joining the committee this year.

Our remit continued to be consideration of the council's and our partners' strategic direction and we are grateful for the support we have received in doing this from portfolio holders, council officers and representatives from partner agencies. A full list of the portfolio holders, who have supported our committee's discussions, is given at the end of this section of the annual report.

We are especially pleased that this year, following the recommendations of our review 'Redefining Youth Engagement', we have been joined at several of our meetings by representatives of Harrow Youth Parliament. We have really appreciated their engagement in our deliberations and look forward to their continuing involvement with scrutiny in Harrow.

We were also pleased to welcome representatives of Parent Governor and the Voluntary Aided Sector to the committee, we are grateful for their continuing input to the committee's deliberations.

## Our Meetings

During the course of the year we have, as in previous years, met with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive for a question and answer session to consider general council policy (in July) and budget proposals (in January). The July session was attended by Cllr Thaya Idaikkadar, then Leader of the Council and Michael Lockwood, then Chief Executive. The January session was attended by Cllr Susan Hall, Leader of the Council, Cllr Barry Macleod-Cullinane, Deputy Leader of the Council, Cllr Tony Ferrari, Finance Portfolio Holder, Paul Najsarek, Acting Head of Paid Service and Simon George, Director of Finance and Assurance. We are grateful for the information which they shared with us.

We also held a special meeting in January to consider the findings of our challenge panel which investigated the implications of the deletion of the Chief Executive post. This enabled us to present our views on the Leader's proposals to the Cabinet meeting which was making the formal decision on the deletion of the post.

The specific items which have been considered at ordinary meetings of our committee include:

- Preparation and provision of financial management reports
- Debt Collection Policy
- Site allocations, Harrow and Wealdstone area action plan and Development Management Policy Development Planning Documents
- Community Safety Plan and Strategic Assessment
- Business Continuity
- Youth Justice Plan
- Families First – Troubled Families
- Joint working to support the long-term unemployed
- Regeneration in North Harrow
- Welfare reform and channel migration impact on Access Harrow
- The Minerva Project
- The Corporate Plan
- The Climate Change Strategy

## **Review Programme**

As in previous years, we have continued to deliver our programme of more detailed scrutiny investigations, undertaken via standing review, in-depth review or challenge panel. The content of the review programme, generally identified through the Performance and Finance sub-committee's deliberations or via our scrutiny leads, is discussed at the Scrutiny Leadership Group and then agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny committee.

This year, the programme is slightly shorter than in previous years as we agreed that all projects would be completed and reported through to the Overview and Scrutiny committee in January. This means that all of our projects were reported to Cabinet and responded to prior to the period of purdah which started in advance of the local council elections in May.

As in previous years, we have been helped in our work by members of the public. We would like to thank all of those residents who either attended seminars or completed surveys as part of our investigations and we would particularly like to thank the following residents who gave up their time to join our review teams:

- Cliff Lichfield
- Julian Maw
- Tony Wood

The paragraphs below outline work which has been undertaken by scrutiny councillors on our projects during this year

## Customer Care

The council has made significant strides in recent years to improve our residents' experience of contacting the council.

So much so that we now receive visits from a number of other authorities eager to learn from us how we have made the improvements we have. This project recognised the council's achievements but also recognised that there was still room for improvement, particularly on the evidence of councillors' case work. The report can be accessed [here](#)



The project report was discussed with Cabinet at their meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

*Councillors Asante and Bath fact finding for the review*

## Accessible Transport

For a number of years, councillors have been concerned about the accessibility of public transport which serves the borough and the impact that poor accessibility has on the social and employment opportunities of our less mobile residents. This year, we completed a scrutiny project which investigated the accessibility of our public transport networks but not just the high profile concerns such as the lack of accessibility of Harrow on the Hill station, which has received much public and political attention over the years.

Our investigation looked at what day-to-day travelling around the borough is like for residents with disabilities, from access to trains and platforms, to signage and information and road surfaces. The report can be accessed [here](#).

This report was discussed with Cabinet on 21<sup>st</sup> November and has been submitted to Disability Rights UK as evidence for their work on inclusive communities

## Deletion of the Post of Chief Executive

In November last year, the Leader of the council announced her intention to delete the post of Chief Executive of the Council. This marked a significant change in the senior management structure of the council and one which we felt warranted scrutiny's attention. As a result we held a challenge panel to discuss her proposals with the Leader and were able to contribute to the consultation she had launched. The report can be accessed [here](#)

## Standing Review of the Budget

This project has been ongoing for a number of years and it has given councillors an opportunity to consider how the changing financial policy environment has impacted on the council. It was chaired by Cllr Macleod-Cullinane until May 2013 and subsequently by Cllr Ferrari.

Since 2010, scrutiny councillors have considered the contract renewal process, implications of the localisation of Council Tax Benefit, the self financing of the Housing Revenue Account and the use of capital. A final report outlining the work of the group was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny committee in April 2013.



The group's comments were generally well received and the Housing Service responded positively to the challenge they received from the review group with regard to the self-financing of the Housing Revenue Account. The work of the review was also able to support the Overview and Scrutiny committee's meeting with the Leader and Acting Head of Paid Service which considered the 2014-15 budget by suggesting specific areas for questioning.

The significant changes to membership of this project, which have resulted from the changes in the leadership of the council, have meant that no more substantive work has taken place this year. However, this is an important area for scrutiny to consider and we would suggest that our successors consider how to continue to explore the policy context within which the council makes its financial decisions.

### **Safeguarding/A Child's Journey Through Care**

Last year's annual report outlined the work which members had undertaken with regard to Safeguarding Children Services. We had hoped to commission further work this year to continue this project on the conclusion of the Ofsted inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children's services. We prepared the work as 'The Child's Journey Through Care' review and hoped that the project would support Children's Services to respond to the Ofsted findings and also to identify any additional challenges to the service and the associated improvements.

Unfortunately, because of the significant pressures being experienced by Children's Services, this project has not been taken forward, though the potential benefits of undertaking the piece of work have been acknowledged by officers in the Service.

This may also be a piece of work which our successors wish to carry forward.

### **Our conclusions and next steps**

As we have already pointed out, this is our final year in office. The last four years have been extremely productive and we hope that we have been able to support the council through some very difficult times.

There have been a number of highlights in our work over the last four years which we would like to flag-up in this our final annual report:

- [Redefining Youth Engagement](#) – This project helped the council to improve the ways in which we engage with our younger residents and involve them in our deliberations. The project represented a new and innovative approach to undertaking a scrutiny review – a collaborative project with young people.



*HYP and scrutiny discuss the review*

We were extremely grateful to the Harrow Youth Parliament for agreeing to lead the review and steer its direction, and for co-owning the review's final report and recommendations. We were pleased, as a result of this review, to have been able to welcome co-optees from Harrow Youth Parliament onto the Overview and Scrutiny committee and we would like to thank them for bringing their perspective to the committee's work;

- [Debt Recovery](#) – This has been an extremely influential piece of work. Councillors were becoming increasingly concerned about the number of cases coming to their attention from residents falling foul of the council's debt recovery policy. Whilst none of the councillors wished to condone the behaviour of a minority of residents deliberately not paying their council bills, the casework seemed to suggest that our approach to debt recovery was not making any distinction between those who wouldn't pay and those who couldn't. We were able to consider a number of individual cases and worked with colleagues from Harrow Law Centre to recommend that the council take a more proportionate approach to debt recovery. We are delighted that these recommendations have been taken on board by the council and have been able to influence the council's policy;
- [Pinner Village](#) – One of the very earliest pieces of work which we undertook in this administration was the consideration of proposals to close the Pinner Village Surgery. This project saw Scrutiny respond to local people's very real concerns about NHS Harrow's proposals to close the surgery and enabled us to exercise our responsibilities to hold service providers, even those outside of the Council, to account on behalf of local people.

Through our investigation, we were able to develop links with local residents' associations, the Local Medical Committee and Harrow Link.

Although the surgery did eventually close, the intervention of Scrutiny meant that residents' concerns and potential implications of the closure were properly aired and that NHS Harrow was required to fully and publicly address these concerns;



- [Private Rented Sector Housing](#) – This review took place at a time when homelessness and the provision of affordable housing in the borough was becoming problematic. The project recognised that the provision of private sector housing is something which the council can seek to influence, but cannot control. In this context, by engaging with residents and landlords, the review was able to support the Housing Service to develop its strategic approach to working with private sector providers;
- [Use of Performance Information 1&2](#) – Performance information must be at the heart of the council's processes: it enables us to monitor how well we are meeting our stated objectives and helps us to identify areas which most need improvement. Phase One of this review ran alongside a corporate process which required directorates to review their performance information in the context of the abolition of the Comprehensive Area Assessment and the National Indicator Set. It thus enabled Scrutiny to offer constructive challenge to this important process. In its second phase, the review took a broader look at the future development of a local performance framework for the authority, in the context of the loosening Government requirements for performance reporting, and considered how a resident perspective might be incorporated in this reporting process. The review was able to support the redefinition of the council's performance management framework.

What the future holds for scrutiny in Harrow is not clear; we will continue to apply our processes to support the improvement of services across the borough and to work with the council to identify opportunities to improve. We clearly cannot be sure who will take the reins or how they will wish to deliver effective scrutiny. We can only commend to them the processes we have developed and the successful projects we have delivered as evidence of the effectiveness of these processes.

In identifying some of the projects they might wish to consider during their time in office, we would offer the following suggestions of projects which we have identified for consideration, but have not had time/resource to deliver:

- Continuing consideration of the impact of changing financial policy including the consideration of the use of capital
- A child's journey through the 'care' system and the inspection of our children's services
- The council's regeneration plans
- West London Waste plans
- Review of travel plans – their coverage and enforcement.
- Tree Strategy

We would like to thank all of the councillors, officers, partners and residents who have given their time and their expertise to help us, without their involvement, we would not be able to contribute to the council's improvement journey in the way that we have.

If re-elected, we look forward to continuing to contribute to the improvement of services; if not, we wish our successors well.



**Cllr Jerry Miles**  
Chair Overview and Scrutiny committee



**Cllr Chris Mote**  
Vice Chairman Overview and Scrutiny committee

## MEETING STATISTICS

Committee meetings	11
Attendance by Portfolio Holders	Cllr Susan Hall, Leader of the Council x 2 Cllr Thaya Idaikkadar, Leader of the Council x 2 Cllr William Stoodley, Planning and Regeneration Portfolio Holder x 3 Cllr Asad Omar, Community, Cultural Services and Housing Portfolio Holder Cllr Kamaljit Chana, Business and Enterprise Portfolio Holder Cllr Janet Mote, Children and Families Portfolio Holder Cllr Barry Macleod-Cullinane, Adults and Housing Portfolio Holder Cllr Tony Ferrari, Finance Portfolio Holder Cllr Paul Osborn, Communications, Performance and Resources Portfolio Holder

# Report from Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee

## Our Sub-Committee

The Performance and Finance scrutiny sub-committee looks in detail at how the council's services are performing in-year.

We monitor service and financial performance by analysing data and then requesting briefings or details of action plans in place where necessary. The sub-committee can make recommendations for improvement and if necessary make referrals to the Overview and Scrutiny committee if further work is needed.

This work includes, for example, regular review of the Cabinet's Revenue and Capital Monitoring report and quarterly Corporate Scorecard. In addition, we can decide to review and monitor the performance of the council's partners.

This is the last report from the Performance and Finance sub committee in this administration and we would like to thank the councillors – both scrutiny and executive – and officers who have supported the work of the sub committee during this time. We would like to thank Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane for his work as the vice-chairman for the majority of the administration, before his appointment as Deputy Leader. We would also like to thank Councillor Tony Ferrari, who chaired the sub-committee from May to September this year before joining Cabinet as Finance Portfolio Holder.

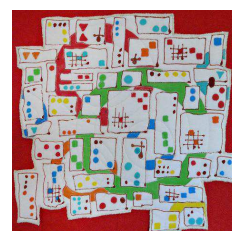
## Our meetings

Our regular Chair and Vice-Chairman's briefings and co-ordination of items with the Overview and Scrutiny committee together drive the work programme of the sub-committee. Our main areas of interest in 2013-14 have been:

- **Revenue and Capital Monitoring** – we have been briefed on a regular basis by the Director of Finance and Assurance on the revenue and capital position of the authority and have been able to seek assurance with regard to the council's likely outturn position and to question the Director on any particular areas of concern.
- **Complaints** – this is the second year that we have received the annual complaints reports for children's and families' services and adults' services rather than the Overview and Scrutiny committee. We were pleased with the detail provided in both reports. We noted that in Children's Services an increased number of complaints were received with regard to communications, policy decisions and staff attitudes. More reassuringly, complaints with regard to service reduction/withdrawal remain low. With regard to Adults' Services it was satisfying to note the small number of escalations between stages in the complaints process.
- **Residual waste and its impact on the budget** – we have been interested in the collection of waste in the borough, particularly the percentage of waste that is recycled. The council's target is 50% but this had not been met in quarter 1. During our briefing meetings, we have been informed that the total kilograms of waste per household have been going down so overall less waste has been sent to refuse. We recommend that briefings on the performance in this area continue.

- Children's Services' Performance** – During the previous municipal year, scrutiny councillors, including ourselves, became concerned about a number of areas of Children's Services' performance. We have continued to monitor this and a report on performance in the Children and Families Directorate was presented to the P&F sub-committee in July and a further report was presented in February. The report covered a number of areas around which we have raised concerns including Children Looked After education and achievement, Youth Offending Team performance and schools place planning. Officers also gave our committee an overall analysis of achievements and challenges in the Children's Services Directorate. We are particularly concerned about performance challenges faced by the Youth Offending Team (YOT) following problems arising from recent IT upgrades. We recommend that scrutiny continue to monitor this area of service delivery.
- Equalities** – we now receive, on an annual basis, a report on the council's performance in terms of progress against our corporate equality objectives. We were able to hear from officers from across the council who have responsibility for delivering these objectives. We look forward to continuing to receive these reports and to support the council in the delivery of equality objectives, both within the council and for our residents. We note that performance in this area is also recorded in the quarterly in the Corporate Scorecard.
- Business Continuity and IT Disaster Recovery** – following consideration of these areas at both the Governance, Audit and Risk Management committee and the Overview and Scrutiny committee we received a report to our February sub-committee. Given difficulties associated with recent IT upgrades, we recommend that scrutiny continue to monitor this area.
- Towards Excellence** – there has been significant change in the Council's Environment and Enterprise Directorate with changes to structures and staffing, ways of working and technology. We were pleased to receive an update from the Corporate Director on how the reorganisation of this important directorate is progressing.
- Staff sickness** – during our consideration of performance, we raised questions regarding the continuing deterioration in terms of staff sickness levels. On further investigation we were advised of the significant number of 'blank' returns made with regard to reasons for sickness and we have asked for further information on this. We would recommend that this is investigated further by our successors in the next administration.
- Third Sector Strategy** – we were pleased to receive an update on the Third Sector Strategy which has been developed by the sector itself, and we look forward to continuing to work with the council and the third sector to improve service delivery for our residents.
- Inspection of Food Premises** – we noted poor performance in this area and were therefore pleased to be briefed by the Service Manager Environmental Services Delivery about how the indicator is derived and the action being taken to improve the number of food premises in the area that are compliant with food hygiene law. We will propose to our successors that they monitor performance against this indicator as the new team in Environmental Health is established and beds in.

*Third Sector Strategy:  
All Together Now by dphock*



- **Repeat Incidents of Domestic Violence (NI 32)** – during our consideration of the Corporate Scorecard we have been concerned about the level of performance against this indicator. We have been briefed by the Violence Against Women and Girls Co-ordinator on what this complex indicator is showing. We recommend that this area continue to be monitored to determine whether actions put in place to improve performance are taking effect.
- **Past reviews** – we have continued to monitor progress on past reviews, including:
  - Private Rented Sector Housing: a report was presented to the July P&F meeting which outlined the progress of the implementation of the recommendations of the scrutiny review into Private Rented Sector Housing. The January meeting also received a report on the development of the Private Rented Sector Strategy, which was referenced during this review as our consideration of performance information had identified concerns.
  - Housing Revenue Account - Standing review of the Budget: a report was presented to P&F in January outlining progress on implementation of the Standing Review's comments.

During discussions with regard to the private rented sector and the self-financing of the Housing Revenue Account, concerns were raised with regard to the extent to which Harrow residents are using payday loans. This is something which we recommend is followed up by our successors.

- **Member development** – in October, the Director of Finance and Assurance provided a session on the process of setting the Council's annual budget. This session took councillors through the content of the regularly produced revenue and capital monitoring report, explaining the content and the implications. The session was well received and we plan to offer training on considering performance and financial information to new councillors after this election.

## **Our Conclusions and Next Steps**

This is the end of our time as scrutiny councillors. The Performance and Finance sub-committee has grown in strength and authority during this administration and is now ensuring that the scrutiny structures truly have performance at their core – by focussing on those areas that are performing less strongly, we have ensured that precious scrutiny resources are targeted at areas which most need our oversight.

But the improvement journey does not stop because the administration ends and we believe that there are issues which scrutiny should continue to monitor.

With this in mind we would recommend that our successors continue to use performance and financial information to drive their deliberations and that in particular, the following areas are considered by the next scrutiny administration:

- Children’s Services Performance – including inspection outcomes, safeguarding by health partners, IT problems affecting the Youth Offending Team (YOT), Children Looked After (CLA) health and dental checks
- Implementation of the Libraries and Leisure contract
- Use of payday loans
- Staff sickness absence
- Number of food premises compliant with food hygiene legislation
- Implementation of IT systems, and business continuity with a particular focus on IT disaster recovery
- Repeat incidents of domestic violence (NI 32)



**Councillor Sue Anderson**  
Chair, Performance and Finance  
Scrutiny sub-committee



**Councillor Anthony Seymour**  
Vice-Chairman, Performance and Finance  
Scrutiny sub-committee

## MEETING STATISTICS

Committee meetings	5 ordinary
Attendance by Portfolio Holders	<b>Cllr Macleod-Cullinane</b> , Adults and Housing Portfolio Holder



# Report from the Health and Social Care Lead Members and the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee

## Our Sub-Committee

The Health and Social Care sub-committee considers health, social care and wellbeing issues key to Harrow residents on a local, London-wide and national level. Much of the scrutiny activity undertaken in 2013/14 was focused on a number of local changes which are being progressed and implemented, alongside broader changes to the NHS landscape as an outcome of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

As Chair and Vice-Chair of the committee and Health and Social Care Scrutiny Lead Members we consider a range of important health and social care issues that affect Harrow at both committee level and also outside of committee. As part of our role to champion health and social care issues for residents we work closely with the Corporate Director of Community, Health and Wellbeing, the Director of Adult Social Services and the Director of Public Health, colleagues at Harrow Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), North West London Hospitals NHS Trust and with other key providers of health and social care services in the borough.

## Our key areas of focus throughout the year

### Shaping a Healthier Future for North West London

*Shaping a Healthier Future (SaHF)* is a programme set up by NHS NW London with an aim to improve healthcare for the two million people living in NW London. The Joint Committee of the Primary Care Trust made its decision on the future configuration of services at its meeting on 19 February 2013.



For Harrow this means that Northwick Park will remain as one of five major hospitals in NW London to provide A&E and Urgent Care Centre services.

From a local perspective it is vital that we continue to monitor the pressure on Northwick Park due to the loss of emergency facilities for Ealing and Brent residents.

The Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) was set up at the beginning of the SaHF consultation to provide external scrutiny on the impact of the proposals. The JHOSC consists of eight London Boroughs, including Harrow, and will continue monitoring SaHF until it is fully implemented.

### Accident & Emergency Waiting Times

The committee is monitoring how North West London Hospitals NHS Trust (NWLHT) is improving the emergency care at Northwick Park Hospital and Central Middlesex Hospital. We are concerned that the current performance level at Northwick Park Hospital is unacceptable and whilst there are signs of improvement, the system has not been operating or delivering outcomes as it should. We hope that the £21m investment in a new emergency department will bring expansion and improvement. However, until the committee is satisfied we will continue to monitor performance. We are also very concerned with ensuring that the downgrading of A&E at Central Middlesex Hospital does not coincide with the renovations at Northwick Park Hospital. We will be keen to ensure that capacity is available for our residents.

## **Merger of Ealing Hospital Trust and North West London Hospitals**

Throughout the year, the sub-committee has been regularly updated on progress on plans to merge Ealing Hospital Trust (EHT) and North West London Hospitals Trust (NWLHT). The merger proposes to realise savings by replacing the two trust boards with one, and sets out a vision for a clinically-led and patient-centred organisation for residents in Brent, Ealing and Harrow. Due to the outcome of *Shaping a Healthier Future* and other financial challenges the merger has incurred delays. Approval for the revised business case will be sought in April 2014; consideration of the business case will be something that the committee should look at in future.

## **Mental Health**

In April 2013 the sub-committee considered performance of mental health service providers. Particular concern around Payment by Results and the outcomes for residents was a key issue we all felt we needed further information on.

The committee therefore requested that Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL), Harrow Clinical Commissioning Group and council officers (as providers and commissioners) return to the committee. In view of this, an informal briefing meeting with the Chief Operating Officer – CNWL, the Psychological Medicine Borough Director for Harrow - CNWL and ourselves was held in early 2014 to go through some of our concerns.



As a result of this, at the committee meeting on 11 February 2014, CNWL provided a detailed presentation on:

- The work they do across the eight North West London Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and the challenge of managing fewer resources while improving joint working with partners and other relevant stakeholders
- The move from Payment by Results (PbR) and the evolution towards tariff based funding to be implemented over the next two years
- The new emphasis on moving from in-patient services to a community-based model of recovery, which would allow service users greater involvement in their care plans
- The reconfiguration of Day Services and a review of rehabilitation services
- The Recovery College initiative which offered a wide range of courses and workshops which were co-designed and co-delivered by peer recovery trainers (people with lived experience of mental health issues) and mental health practitioners

The presentation was very well received by the committee as it provided a full insight into the work of CNWL and some of the key developments and challenges they are presently faced with. We recommend that our successors follow up on some of the issues and challenges CNWL have informed us of in 2014/15.

## **Harrow Community Nursing Service**

District nursing provision in Harrow has been an area of concern for the committee. In October 2013, partners advised the committee on the changes to the delivery model aimed at improving efficiency and reported an increase in patient satisfaction. We do however continue to have concerns about the skill mix of staff in front line services and whilst we understand that savings are required, members agree this is a key service for residents and therefore we recommend our successors continue to monitor performance in 2014/15.

## Carers

During the summer we also met with the Head of Commissioning, Mental Health Learning Disabilities and Carers from NHS Harrow CCG who provided an update on work streams involving carers. We were happy to hear of the work being done to help identify hidden carers but raised concerns over the lack of a Carer Strategy or borough-wide coordination with social care and health in relation to support of carers. We also queried the CCG's commissioning intentions for 2014/2015.

The importance of the Carers Hub providing an opportunity for carers to have their say was also stressed and the Head of Commissioning, Mental Health Learning Disabilities and Carers agreed and provided some assurance that further consultation and events were planned for the future. We recommend our successors continue to monitor the progress being made in respect of supporting carers in the borough.

## Projects

### NHS Health Checks

In April 2013, the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) launched a programme to support local authority scrutiny functions to review their local approach to NHS Health Check and improve take up. NHS Health Checks are a mandatory service which local authority public health functions have been required to deliver since 1 April 2013. A bid for support was made by the London Boroughs of Barnet and Harrow (who have a shared Public Health function) and the bid was successful.



Using a range of methodologies, this scrutiny review enabled us to identify ways in which NHS Health Checks can be promoted within each borough under the leadership of the Joint Director of Public Health. This included exploring the extent to which NHS services promote the NHS Health Check to eligible residents and considering the capacity of GPs, local pharmacies or other suitable settings to undertake Health Checks. Broadly, our recommendations include measures to improve these issues and focus on service promotion, targeting specific groups who statistically have a higher prevalence of certain diseases, and better understand barriers to take-up.

### Other areas of work

This year the Health and Social Care Scrutiny sub-committee were consulted on;

- Proposals for redistribution of resources from day assessment unit to memory services in Harrow.
- Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust application for Foundation Trust status.
- The Harrow Local Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2012/13
- Director of Public Health Annual Report
- The Quality Account of key providers in Harrow including North West London Hospitals, Royal Orthopaedic Hospital and Central and North West London Foundation Trust.

## Looking to the future

Working closely with health partners locally and across London, we would suggest that our successors continue to keep engaged with emerging policies and monitor service development changes. Areas of focus might include:

- Continuing Harrow's contribution to the JHOSC - Shaping a Healthier Future programme
- Tracking progress of the public health transition
- The merger of Ealing Hospital Trust and North West London Hospitals Trust
- Mental Health service provision.
- CQC's inspection of local care homes.
- CQC inspection results in respect of Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital and North West London Hospitals NHS Trusts



**Cllr Vina Mithani**  
Chair, Health and Social Care sub-committee



**Cllr Victoria Silver**  
Vice-Chair, Health and Social Care sub-committee



**Cllr Ben Wealthy**  
Policy Lead for Health and Social Care



**Cllr Sachin Shah**  
Performance Lead for Health and Social Care

## MEETING STATISTICS

<b>Committee meetings</b>	5
<b>Attendance by Portfolio Holders</b>	None
<b>Attendance by Partners</b>	Medical Director, Shaping a Healthier Future
	Chief Operating Officer, North West London Hospitals NHS Trust
	Senior Responsible Officer, North West London Hospitals NHS Trust
	Head of Commissioning for Mental Health and Learning Disability, Harrow CCG
	Deputy Chair, Harrow CCG
	Chief Operations Officer, Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust
	Service Director, Central and North West London NHS

	Foundation Trust
	Deputy Service Director, Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust
	Head Clinicians, Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (2)
	Consultant Psychologist, Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust
	Care Pathway Project Manager, Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust
	Senior Responsible Officer, Ealing Hospital NHS Trust
	General Manager, Harrow Community Services Ealing Hospital NHS Trust
	Deputy Director Nursing and Clinical Practice Ealing Integrated Care Organisation
	Head of Public Affairs, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust
	Head of Compliance, Care Quality Commission

## **Report from the Children and Families Lead Members**

The role of the Children and Families lead members is to consider issues which impact on the well-being of children, young people and families in the borough. Throughout this year we have had a great deal of engagement with the Children and Families Service Directorate in both formal Overview and Scrutiny meetings, Performance and Finance Scrutiny sub-committee meetings and informal lead members' briefings.

### **Performance and Data Quality**

The Ofsted inspection undertaken in May 2012 highlighted issues around performance and data quality in Children's Services and had also been a concern of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Performance and Finance sub-committee for a while.



As a result of these concerns, monthly performance monitoring meetings were held between December 2012 and July 2013 in order to facilitate the consideration of performance information. The meetings involved us, the Corporate Director for Children and Families and her management team, the Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny committee and the Chair and Vice-Chairman of the Performance and Finance sub-committee. The areas that we looked into included:

- Attendance and achievement of Children Looked After (CLA)
- Delivery of the post Youth Offending Team inspection improvement plan
- Delivery of the post Ofsted inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children improvement plan.

### **Children Looked After education, attendance and achievement**

At the monthly performance briefings as mentioned above we monitored both attendance and exclusion for CLA. We are aware that the education of CLA is a priority for improvement in the directorate and that the factor with the greatest impact on attendance is the stability of the care placement and having a Personal Education Plan in place. We recommend our successors continue to liaise closely with the Corporate Parenting Panel and review their quarterly reports on the progress of CLA to ensure performance in this area continues to improve.

### **The Youth Offending Team**

The progress of the Youth Offending Team (YOT) has been another area which we have paid close attention to due to the fact that the service has experienced significant difficulties in recent years. We discussed the performance challenges with the Corporate Director at the performance briefings. We also took a keen interest in the development of the YOT inspection improvement plan. We recommend our successors follow up on how the YOT team is doing in the new municipal year.

### **Recruitment and Retention Issues**

Recruitment and retention of children's Social Workers in the Children and Families Directorate has been one of the main challenges faced by the directorate. This is also something that we have been monitoring throughout the year. As leads, we are aware that there is a nationwide issue with social worker recruitment and retention and we have sought reassurance about establishing some stability with regard to this.

Throughout our discussions with colleagues we have been mindful of the need to ensure that the directorate maintains morale at a good level amongst existing staff. Positive measures such as the 'outcomes on the wall' posters put up throughout the division have gone some way in reassuring us in terms of the changing approach to service commissioning and provision and hence the culture. We will suggest a close eye is kept on how to ensure that this remains the focus.

### **Child's Journey through Care Scrutiny Review**

The Overview and Scrutiny committee agreed to carry out a review of *The Child's Journey through Care* as part of their work programme. It was decided that this would be considered following the outcome of the Ofsted inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children and also as a follow on from the '*Scrutiny Review of Children's Safeguarding*' carried out in June 2012. This project was due to be delivered in the summer/ autumn 2013.



The aim of the '*Child's Journey through Care*' scrutiny review was to understand the definition of 'good' practice (in terms of what good means for each child) and compare our own performance and services against this definition. In this way we hoped to identify potential gaps in service and thus possible solutions to help improve the services for vulnerable children.

The project was not undertaken as there were insufficient resources in the Children and Families Directorate to support the investigation. A number of political changes in leadership in the council and consequent changes in our scrutiny membership also meant that this piece of work did not get underway. We recommend our successors follow upon this work in some way in future.

### **Support for Young Carers**

The work being done with young carers in the borough has been another area that we have spent some time considering. We were happy to hear that the induction for new staff now includes a section on working with young carers and the voluntary sector. Part of the challenge with young carers is that many of them are not known to the directorate. Some proactive work is now taking place with schools and youth centres in highlighting those adults receiving a service who have children, to gain a better idea of unidentified young carers.

### **Special Educational Needs Changes**

A special briefing seminar for all members was organised on our advice in December 2013 detailing the Government's reforms to special educational needs (SEN) provision. The changes extended the SEN system to apply from birth to 25. The seminar also provided an outline on the changes the council is making to meet the requirements. We found the seminar extremely helpful, as did other councillors, and it will be important to follow up on progress with regards to implementation next year.

We have also taken some time to consider the prevalence of autism in the borough, exploring how diagnosis is made and where children, young people, their families and carers go for advice, support and advocacy. The amount of support available in the borough is something we have concerns with and hope this can be followed up in future.

## Looking Ahead

We have considered a wide range of issues in the Children and Families Directorate and have been well supported in doing this by the Corporate Director and her management team. Although it has not been possible to complete all of the work we would have liked to have undertaken during this administration, in future we hope our successors can continue to provide constructive challenge to the Children and Families Directorate in those areas which appear to struggle.



**Councillor Lynda Seymour**  
Policy Lead  
Children and Young people



**Councillor Victoria Silver**  
Performance Lead  
Children and young people



## ***Report from the Community, Health and Wellbeing Leads***

### **Our areas of focus**

This has been a busy year for us. In addition to her role as performance lead for Community Health and Wellbeing, Cllr Asante, has also taken on the keynote role as the borough's first citizen and Mayor, and we are grateful that she has also been able to continue as a scrutiny lead.

Our remit for Community Health and Wellbeing is extremely broad, including adult social care, housing and now public health. In this, our final year, we decided to focus on areas which had been priorities for us previously. The key areas which we considered are outlined below.

### **Community use of the borough's parks**

Part of our remit is the 'well being' of residents and we were pleased to hear from the Service Manager Public Realm Maintenance about how developments in the parks are encouraging our citizens to lead more active lives through the introduction of 'Green Gyms'. We were also pleased to hear that use of the gyms is also encouraging more social interaction between residents who would otherwise be unlikely to engage with each other.

The use of our urban green space is critical to the future healthy and inclusive development of our borough and we were really pleased to hear about how work is progressing in this important area, we look forward to further developments in the borough's parks.

### **Impact of the Libraries and Leisure contract**

Our interest in this area is not with regard to the performance of the new contracts for the provision of these services as this, we feel, is more within the remit of the Performance and Finance sub-committee.



We are more interested in the impact of the contract in terms of usage of facilities and the contribution they make to the health and wellbeing of our community. We were very grateful to the Divisional Director Community and Culture who provided us with detailed information with regard to the services being provided by the contractors providing the Leisure and the Library services and how these are contributing to the health and wellbeing of our residents.

We were particularly pleased to hear about the detailed performance information which will be required from the contractors to demonstrate:

- The provision of high quality activities and access to opportunities for sport and leisure, particularly for children and under-represented groups
- The contribution to achieving a healthier and active lifestyle
- The broader community service provision – including libraries as community hubs

The performance of the contract will be recommended to be considered by the Performance and Finance sub-committee in the next administration but as the scrutiny leads for community health and wellbeing we welcome the effort which is clearly being made by the organisation to ensure that our Leisure and Library services are able to contribute to the continuing health and wellbeing of residents.

### **Impact of Changing Housing Policy**

There have been significant changes to housing policy during the lifetime of this administration, some of which may have a beneficial impact on our residents and some which may not. In the light of these changes we were delighted to have been invited to the Housing Management Team to discuss the changes and the council's response to them. We recommend that scrutiny continue to monitor the level of housing need in the borough as well as the council's response. In addition we recommend that scrutiny keep an eye on longer term action including the council's future investment strategy.

### **Looking ahead**

This is our final report and we may or may not return as scrutiny Community Health and Wellbeing leads after the election. We have considered some interesting aspects of council service during our time in office and we would propose to our successors that they continue to monitor these areas, in particular as highlighted above, the council's longer term housing strategies, the ongoing impact of the libraries and leisure service contract and the effective use of our parks.



**Cllr Chris Mote**  
Policy Lead  
Community Health and Wellbeing



**Cllr Nana Asante**  
Performance Lead  
Community Health and Wellbeing

## ***Report from the Environment and Enterprise Leads***

### **Our areas of focus**

The policy areas we focus on as leads for Environment and Enterprise cover planning services, community safety, support for businesses and environmental services ranging from waste collection to street cleaning services and maintenance of parks.

We have met with the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise and her officers regularly during the last year and we would like to thank her for the information and advice she has been able to give us. We have considered the service planning undertaken by the directorate as well as service and financial performance by discussing the finance monitoring report and the directorate performance scorecard. We have also kept an eye on the capital programme and disposals.

We would like to thank Councillor Stephen Wright for his work as a scrutiny lead up until his appointment as a portfolio holder earlier this year. We would also like to thank Councillor Sue Anderson for her work in this area for three years of this administration. Scrutiny has benefited from their tireless work during the course of the administration in pursuit of a number of the issues we have highlighted in our annual report this year. Their persistence has enabled these issues to remain on the scrutiny radar.

Given our broad brief, over the last twelve months we have considered the following issues:

- **Towards Excellence Programme** (successor to the PRISM project) – The *Towards Excellence* programme covers all the change projects within the Environment and Enterprise Directorate. It includes an organisational restructure, developing new ways of working and improving the technology the directorate uses. Two projects on service review and operational improvement are also included. Throughout the year, we have discussed the new structure within the directorate and the process of implementing these changes. This included staff forums, the pause in the PRISM project, and the projected savings as a result of the project. In January 2014, a report on the implementation of the programme was presented to the P&F sub-committee. Given that full implementation will stretch into the next administration we recommend that the programme continue to be monitored by our successors.
- **Regeneration Strategy** – The new strategy contains three broad themes headed Business, Places and People and will form a basis for the council's work with local businesses, employment projects and major planning decisions. We look forward to the strategy being formally considered by scrutiny in the next administration and hope that our observations thus far have been helpful.
- **Xcite employment scheme** - We have discussed the Xcite Scheme, a council project that supports unemployed residents back into work, in our meetings with the Corporate Director. The scheme appeared very successful at supporting a significant number of people into employment. As a result, a report on the scheme was presented to the October O&S committee, which allowed Members to assess in more detail the type of residents supported through this scheme, the resources involved and the long-term result of the work. Our discussions around the theme of employment at the Scrutiny Leadership Group have also led to a report on regeneration in North Harrow being presented to O&S in September.

- **Residual Waste** - We have followed the council's performance regarding the amount of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting. We have been briefed on the absolute amount of residual waste, the absolute amount of 'recycled' waste and how the two relate to each other. Performance in this area is being monitored by the Chair and Vice-Chairman of the P&F sub-committee
- **Energy Company Obligation** – We were briefed on progress in this area and how the scheme can help us to support our residents to reduce fuel bills and increase warmth – we were particularly concerned in this context to hear that one in eight of our households are impacted by fuel poverty.
- **Accessible Transport Review** – We have been concerned for some time with the very poor access to public transport available to residents of Harrow who have disabilities.

We have considered this as Environment and Enterprise leads during the course of the administration but as we have remained unhappy with performance, on our advice, the Scrutiny Leadership Group and the Overview and Scrutiny committee decided to dedicate time to a more detailed investigation

More information on this project is included in the report from the Chair and Vice Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny committee.



*The review group travelling around the borough*

- **Tree Strategy** – In March we were briefed on the new draft strategy which will clarify the council's role as well as setting out a programme of cyclical tree maintenance. We recommend that the strategy be considered by scrutiny in the next administration.

**Areas we recommend for follow up by our successors:**

- Towards Excellence project
- Regeneration Strategy
- Tree Strategy



**Councillor Yogesh Teli**  
Policy Lead  
Environment and Enterprise



**Councillor Phillip O'Dell**  
Performance Lead  
Environment and Enterprise

## ***Report from the Resources Leads***

### **Our areas of focus**

The services which fall within our remit include the corporate support services and the customer access points of Access Harrow and the Revenue and Benefits services.

We have continued to meet with the Corporate Director and his team throughout this municipal year. This year we have experimented with combined briefings between ourselves and the Chair and Vice-Chairman of Performance and Finance sub-committee to see if these meetings could make the best use of everyone's time. We recommend that our successors consider similar arrangements.

The following are the key issues which we have considered during the year:

- **Debt Recovery**

During the early part of this municipal year, Cllr Ferrari, who chaired the scrutiny project, championed by the Resources leads, into the council's debt recovery policy, pressed officers for further information as to progress on the implementation of a revised corporate debt policy. This issue was also picked up by the Overview and Scrutiny committee. We are delighted to see that this revised policy has now been implemented and we commend the involvement of scrutiny in this process, we believe that this demonstrates the significant contribution good scrutiny can make to improving the council's process and services.

- **Consolidation of the new Resources Directorate**

During the course of this year, the Resources Directorate has been consolidated, and now includes within its responsibilities the finance functions. We are aware of the significant amount of work which the Corporate Director Resources has undertaken to ensure the smooth transition from the two previously separate directorates to the new one and to support the staff within the Directorate through the process of change. In this context, we would like to welcome the new Corporate Director of Finance and Assurance who has also participated in our briefings and enabled us to understand the impact of the changing financial situation on the council.

- **Capital Debt Structure**

We raised our concerns with the Corporate Director with regard to the council's Capital Debt Structure, and were happy to have had the opportunity to discuss this with both the Corporate Director and the Director of Finance and Assurance. However, our concerns were such that we requested that a more detailed investigation into the capital debt be included in the scrutiny review programme. Unfortunately, there has been insufficient time or resource for this project to take place during the final year of this administration.

- **School Place Planning**

This has been an issue which the Resources Leads have followed for a number of years. We continued to monitor the analysis of the number of schoolchildren and the availability of school places to meet their educational needs for the first months of our tenure this year, until relatively satisfied that officers had addressed our concerns.

- **Performance of the Resources Directorate**

The Directorate incorporates a number of the key services upon which the service departments rely: from Access Harrow to Human Resources and Development. We have been regularly briefed by the Corporate Director on the performance of all of these services. We would like to thank him for the frankness of his interaction with us. Key issues which he has highlighted for us include:

- Access Harrow and in particular the move towards channel migration and the impact on Access Harrow's performance
- Revenue and Benefits and in particular the impact of the localisation of Council Tax Benefit both on Council revenue and on residents' ability to pay.
- IT and in particular difficulties which the council has experienced during the last year in a number of aspects of the council's IT service
- Human Resources, which has reported an increase in sickness absences across the authority
- Increase in the level of parking revenue and the increase in the level of complaints about the service
- Completion of the restructure in both Finance and Procurement divisions
- Success of the shared legal practice with Barnet Council

- **Project Minerva**

We have begun to monitor the work of Project Minerva which is a significant project designed to support the Resources Directorate to identify the significant savings which are required in the coming years. The project has investigated the feasibility of three options for the delivery of our core support services:

- Externalisation
- Sharing delivery with other authority
- Continuing in-house delivery.

Detailed work on each of these options has been undertaken and further services have also been included in the scope of the project. We are grateful for the briefings the Corporate Director has provided on the project and we recommend that monitoring this project is something taken up as a priority by our successors.

We have both taken over responsibilities as Scrutiny Resources leads during the course of this municipal year. We cannot complete our annual report without acknowledging the significant commitment made by our predecessors, Cllr Jerry Miles and Cllr Tony Ferrari, who have maintained close oversight of the activities of the Resources Directorate since the election in 2010 until very recently. We would also like to thank Cllr Kam Chana for the contribution he made as a Scrutiny Resources Lead during the year. We would like to place on record our gratitude for their commitment to this role.



**Cllr Varsha Parmar**  
Policy Lead  
Resources



**Cllr Amir Moshenson**  
Performance Lead  
Resources

## Scrutiny Member Development Activities

Member development activities for scrutiny members that focus on generic skills and knowledge, useful to members in their roles as effective councillors, are incorporated in and delivered through the corporate member development programme. Member development activities specific to scrutiny members are detailed further below.

As this is the final year of the administration, there has only been a limited amount of training organised specifically for scrutiny councillors. Our major activity was the seminar '*How to Analyse Financial Information*'. This training session took place in October at the request of the chair of the Performance and Finance sub-committee. She was keen that in particular, scrutiny councillors felt confident in analysing and challenging the detailed financial information they are presented with. In response, the Director of Finance and Assurance undertook a session in which he dissected a typical Revenue and Capital Monitoring Cabinet report, detailing the following:

- Areas of particular interest and importance
- Areas where members may want to ask particular questions
- Areas that it was important to follow over time, to ensure the long term financial viability of the council was being appropriately scrutinised by members

This session was well received by the members who attended.

## Looking Ahead

Next year is the start of a completely new administration and a comprehensive member induction process will be designed to meet the needs of new councillors and to reinforce the skills of returning councillors. Detail on the role of scrutiny councillors and how they fit into the Council's overall decision making process will be central to this programme as will training with regard to some of the very specific skills required of scrutiny councillors, especially with regard to understanding and analysing performance and financial information.

## Report from the Call-In Sub-Committee

The Call-In sub-committee met four times during the 2013/14 municipal year:

- 5 August 2013
- 1 October 2013
- 5 November 2013 and
- 25 February 2014

There were no meetings of the Call-In Education sub committee

On [5 August 2103](#), the Call-In sub-committee met to consider the decision made by Cabinet on 18 July with regard to the Transformation of Day Opportunities.

The decision had been called in by 150 members of the public.

Official notice was received from the lead signatory that the call-in notice should be withdrawn: this request was noted and the call-in did not proceed.

On [5 August 2013](#), the call in sub-committee also met to consider the decision made by Cabinet on 18 July 2013 with regard to Concessionary Travel - Changes to the Taxicard Scheme that:

- (1) the scheme changes as recommended by officers in the body of the report, namely the adoption of Option (2), a maximum of 40 trips per annum for all users with effect from 1 October 2013 be agreed;
- (2) the scheduled review of all existing members during 2013/14 be noted;
- (3) it be noted that officers would be liaising with London Councils regarding the issues raised by users and HAD regarding the operation of the Taxicard Scheme;
- (4) the implementation of additional trips on top of the new scheme allowance for the period 1 October 2013 to 31 March 2014 to support phasing from current scheme into new scheme be agreed; however:
  - (i) for those users who were previously allocated 104 trips, an additional allocation of 20 trips for the year 2013/14 only for the period 1 October 2013 until 31 March 2014, be agreed so long as no more than 52 trips had been used by 30 September 2014, otherwise scheme holders would be given the balance of 72 trips minus their trip usage to 30 September 2013;
  - (ii) for those users who were previously allocated 52 trips, an additional allocation of 20 trips for the year 2013/14 only for the period 1 October 2013 until 31 March 2014, so long as no more than 26 trips had been used by 30 September 2013, otherwise scheme holders would be given the balance of 46 trips minus their trip usage to 30 September 2013.
- (5) resolution (4) above would provide transitional arrangements and would ensure that all scheme members had at least some trips for the rest of the year and specifically to use during the winter months when bad weather and lack of transport facilities could lead to unnecessary isolation



The call-in was made on the grounds that:

- d) The action is not proportionate to the desired outcome.

The sub committee resolved unanimously that:

'The call in on the grounds that the action is not proportionate to the desired outcome not be upheld'

It was resolved that the following statement by the Chairman on behalf of the sub-committee be submitted to Cabinet for noting:

"The sub-committee notes the transitional arrangements put in place for high end users; the sub-committee further notes that the changes to the scheme are due to be implemented on 1 October 2013, and requests that the changes are not implemented until the scheme users are made aware of alternative arrangements with other transport providers, particularly in respect of transport for doctor and hospital appointments."

On [1 October 2013](#), the Call-In sub-committee met to consider the decision of the portfolio holder for Property and Major Contracts on 16 September 2013 with regard to granting of a lease to Flash Musicals that

- (1) The Corporate Directors Community Health & Wellbeing and Environment & Enterprise be authorised to approve the leasing of the premises at Methuen Road, Edgware Middlesex, HA8 6EZ to Flash Musicals on the terms outlined in 2.2.2 of the report together with any other terms considered appropriate.
- (2) The Director of Finance & Assurance be authorised to make payment from the Council's General Fund in respect of previous services delivered to the Council, subject to final verification of the services delivered by Flash Musicals to Harrow Council by Flash Musicals, to settle monies outstanding to the Housing Revenue Account on the rent of the above premises as outlined in paragraph 2.2.2 of the report.
- (3) The Corporate Director Community, Health & Wellbeing be instructed to enter into Service Level Agreements with Flash Musicals for the delivery of services as outlined in paragraph 2.2.2 of the report.

The call in was made by six members of council on the grounds that:

- a) Inadequate consultation with stakeholders had taken place prior to the decision
- b) Absence of adequate evidence on which to base a decision
- c) The decision was contrary to the policy framework or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget framework
- d) The action was not proportionate to the desired outcome
- e) A potential human rights challenge
- f) Insufficient consideration of legal and financial advice

The sub committee resolved that:

- the call-in on ground (a) – inadequate consultation with stakeholders prior to the decision – be upheld as the stakeholders were the voluntary sector and should have been consulted;
- the call-in on ground (b) – the absence of adequate evidence on which to base a decision – be upheld due to issues with the invoice and the need to get it substantiated;

- the call-in on ground (c) – the decision was contrary to the policy framework, or contrary to, or not wholly in accordance with the budget framework – not be upheld;
- the call-in on ground (d) – the action was not proportionate to the desired outcome – be upheld in the context of the current financial climate;
- the call-in on ground (e) – a potential human rights challenge – not be upheld
- the call-in on ground (f) – insufficient consideration of legal and financial advice – be upheld in terms of financial advice in that it must be noted that:
  - the decision committed the Council to expenditure through a five year Service Level Agreement that was not available to other providers, was outside of the current commissioning process and was not open and transparent;
  - it undermined the Outcome Based Grants Process; and
  - before the Council had made the decision it should have consulted the voluntary sector

On [5 November 2013](#), the Call-In sub committee met to consider the call in submitted by six Members of Council in relation to the decision made by Cabinet on the Parking Review: 20 Minutes' Free Parking Initiative that:

- (1) the review of the Rayners Lane free parking trial, as set out in the report, be noted;
- (2) having considered the implications of on-street free parking borough-wide and reviewed the options available, the following preferred option be agreed: Do not implement 20 minutes free parking in the borough and remove the Rayners Lane trial of 20 minutes free parking.

The decision was called-in on the grounds that:

- a) Inadequate consultation with stakeholders had taken place prior to the decision
- b) Absence of adequate evidence on which to base a decision
- c) The action was not proportionate to the desired outcome
- d) Insufficient consideration of legal and financial advice

The sub committee resolved that:

- the call-in on ground (a) – inadequate consultation with stakeholders prior to the decision – be upheld as the business community and ward councillors had not been consulted;
- the following grounds for call-in:
  - ground (b) – the absence of adequate evidence on which to base a decision;
  - ground (d) – the action was not proportionate to the desired outcome;
  - ground (f) – insufficient consideration of legal and financial advice;

all be upheld for the following reasons:

- detailed financial information was provided in the report;
- financial viability was a main driver in determining the decision;
- it was not appropriate to consider money received from penalty charge notices as parking income and this money should not have been taken into account in reaching the decision.

On [25 February 2014](#) the Call-In sub-committee met to consider the call-in submitted by six Members of the Council in relation to the decision made by the Community Safety and Environment Portfolio Holder on 12 February that:

- (1) the current policy to allow three free tips per annum at the civic amenity site in Forward Drive by residents using vans, be suspended;
- (2) all deposits of waste by vans be chargeable as trade waste;
- (3) this suspension to be reviewed in June 2014 to determine if any further action is required.

The decision was called-in on the grounds that:

- a) Inadequate consultation with stakeholders prior to the decision
- b) The absence of adequate evidence on which to base a decision
- c) The decision is contrary to the policy framework, or contrary to, or not wholly in accordance with the budget framework
- d) The action is not proportionate to the desired outcomes
- e) A potential human rights challenge

The sub committee resolved that call-in on the grounds below was not valid:

- b) the decision is contrary to the policy framework, or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget framework
- c) that the action is not proportionate to the desired outcomes

The sub committee further resolved, unanimously, that call in on the following grounds not be upheld:

- a) Inadequate consultation with stakeholders prior to the decision
- b) The absence of adequate evidence on which to base a decision
- e) A potential human rights challenge



**Cllr Jerry Miles**  
Chair Call-In sub-committee  
5 August 2013  
25 February 2014



**Cllr Chris Mote**  
Chairman Call-In sub-committee  
1 October 2013  
5 November 2013

## Conclusion

This is the end of another administration. Scrutiny councillors have worked hard for the last four years to ensure that we deliver challenge to the decisions of the executive, that we contribute to improving the services and that we support the council to make the right decisions in what continue to be very challenging times.

We may or may not return as scrutiny councillors for the next administration; if we do, we will continue in this important role, if we don't, then we urge our successors to continue to work independently, across party political boundaries, to improve and protect the services which the council and our partners provide for local people.