

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> April 2014
<b>Subject:</b>	Scrutiny Work Programme, Closing Report
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Alex Dewsnap Divisional Director Strategic Commissioning
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member area:</b>	All
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Enclosures:</b>	None

**Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

This report summarises the review programme work which has been undertaken by the scrutiny committees during the last municipal year. As this is the final year of the administration, the report also includes recommendations to the 2014 – 18 administration with regard to projects which might be considered for inclusion in the subsequent work programme.

**Recommendations:**

Councillors are asked to:

- I. Note the conclusion of the work programme for 2013-14
- II. Agree to recommend to the successor Overview and Scrutiny committee the list of issues for possible investigation identified in this report

## **Section 2 – Report**

This is the final work programme update report to be made to the Overview and Scrutiny committee for this administration, 2010-14. The report updates councillors on the projects which have been undertaken and completed this year. The report also makes recommendation to the next Overview and Scrutiny committee on the projects and issues which have been identified by councillors during this administration which could be included in the next administration's scrutiny work programme, it does not recommend how these issues should be investigated.

### **Work Programme 2013 – 14**

During 2013 – 14, the scrutiny committees have completed an annual programme of review projects. The programme is shortened in comparison with other years as the onset of purdah and general preparation for local council elections mean that all projects must be completed in time for them to be considered by Cabinet by April 2014. The paragraphs below summarise the conclusion on the reports undertaken this year.

#### **Accessible Transport**

This project was pursued initially by the scrutiny lead councillors for Environment and Enterprise and was subsequently programmed as a specific, more detailed investigation. The project has enabled scrutiny to work with local residents, to highlight the difficulties in getting around the borough for our less mobile residents. Scrutiny was able to highlight the concern with regard accessible London Underground services with colleagues consulting on changes to local health provision and to draw the lack of accessible transport to the attention of the 'Shaping a Healthier Future' programme which has proposed the establishment of Northwick Park hospital as a major hospital. There is currently no fully accessible London Underground station to service this hospital.

The recommendations from the review were fully endorsed by Cabinet.

#### **Customer Care**

The council has a growing, and deserved, reputation for providing excellent customer care. However, despite this reputation, councillors still receive significant correspondence from local residents which raise concern about a number of aspects of customer care and how far our processes and procedures are embedded throughout the council.

In order to understand how the council can consolidate excellent customer care across the council, this project was undertaken and councillors experienced a range of customer care activities which enabled them to make recommendations to Cabinet for improvement, if not change in our activities.

All of these recommendations have been accepted by Cabinet

### **Deletion of Chief Executive's Post**

In November 2013, the departure of the Council's Chief Executive was confirmed along with the administration's proposal to move to the permanent deletion of the post. This was a controversial proposal and one which scrutiny councillors wished to consider and comment upon. The members of the panel which considered the issue were able to discuss the proposal with the Leader of the Council and to contribute to her consultation and in this way offer challenge and an alternative perspective to the proposal.

The findings from the project were considered as a part of the consultation process.

### **NHS Health Checks**

Scrutiny councillors were invited to participate in a national project being run by the Centre for Public Scrutiny to investigate the take up of NHS health checks. As Harrow's public health function is shared with Barnet, scrutiny councillors from both boroughs co-operated on this project which was designed to investigate how we might increase take up.

Recommendations from the project have been welcomed nationally and publicity for the overall national project, which was published as "Checking the Nation's Health", has suggested that the findings and recommendations may contribute £4m savings across the five areas that participated.

### **Shaping a Healthy Future Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Significant change is underway in the National Health Service. Proposals to change the configuration of hospitals in North West London have been made as part of the 'Shaping a Healthier Future' programme. Alongside Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster councils, Harrow has participated in a joint overview and scrutiny committee in order to contribute to NHS NW London's consultation on the proposals.

The joint committee made its comments on the proposals, which include the establishment of Northwick Park hospital as a major hospital and the closure of the Accident and Emergency service at Central Middlesex Hospital, and has continued to meet as a body in order to receive progress reports from NHS NW London.

Scrutiny councillors in the next administration will need to consider how/if they wish to continue to be involved with the joint committee in order to monitor progress.

### **Standing Scrutiny Review of the Budget**

This project has been running throughout the 2010-14 administration. Councillors have considered a number of issues in relation to changing local government financial policy. In particular, they have looked at

- Management of major contract renewal
- Implications of the Business Rate Retention Scheme
- Self financing of the Housing Revenue Account
- Implications of the localisation of council tax benefits
- Management and strategic of use of capital

Unfortunately, the work of the Standing Review has suffered this year due to the number of political changes in the administration which meant that membership of the review has been uncertain and thus, the specific projects to be pursued could not be confirmed.

Nonetheless, this has been an extremely influential project which has brought challenge to the council's approach to the changing policy context within which budgets are being developed.

With this in mind, councillors are asked to recommend to the subsequent scrutiny function that arrangements are made which can enable scrutiny to continue to contribute to the ongoing consideration of financial policy

## **Proposals for Future Investigation**

In concluding the scrutiny business for this administration, a number of potential projects have been identified for consideration by scrutiny councillors in the next administration. These are issues which have been identified during the final months of the administration but which there has been insufficient time to investigate or they are issues which current scrutiny councillors feel should continue to receive scrutiny consideration.

The issues are outlined below and it is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny committee refers this list to the subsequent Overview and Scrutiny committee for consideration after the next election to determine whether and if so how (by scrutiny lead councillors, by committee or by more in-depth investigation) these issues will be scrutinised in future.

Issues for future consideration by Harrow scrutiny:

- 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
- The Council's regeneration plans
- West London Waste plans
- Council Tax support consultation
- Tree Strategy
- Review of travel plans, their coverage and enforcement
- Children's Services' performance – including inspection outcomes, safeguarding by health partners, IT problems affecting the Youth Offending Team, Children Looked After health and dental checks
- Implementation of the Libraries and Leisure Services 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
- Continuing Harrow's contribution to the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Shaping a Healthier Future programme
- Tracking the progress of Public Health transition
- The merger of Ealing Hospital Trust and North West London Hospitals Trust

- Mental Health service provision
- Care Quality Commission's inspection of local care homes
- Care Quality Commission inspection of Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital results
- Care Quality Commission inspection of North West London Hospitals NHS Trust results
- Protocol for working together – Harrow Scrutiny and Harrow Health and Well Being Board.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

### **Performance Issues**

There are no performance issues associated with this report.

### **Environmental Impact**

There is no environment impact associated with this report.

### **Risk Management Implications**

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

### **Equalities implications**

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? No

No Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out as a result of this report as no changes to service delivery are proposed.

### **Corporate Priorities**

Scrutiny investigations support the delivery of all of the corporate priorities

## **Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance**

Not required for this report.

## **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** Lynne Margetts, Service Manager Scrutiny, 020 8420 9387

**Background Papers:** None