

Scrutiny Annual Report 2015 – 2016



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Introduction

This report summarises the work of scrutiny in 2015/16. It covers the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, its two sub-committees (performance and finance and health), the programme of scrutiny reviews and the work of the scrutiny leads.

The cuts to public sector spending and local government budgets continue and show no signs of abating. The consequences of Government reforms and spending reductions, particularly in the area of welfare reform, have now started to show at a local level. On the one hand, as a council, we have been working successfully to get more people into work, but on the other hand, the numbers of families presenting as homeless is rising significantly and placing a strain on Council finances. That is why we have dedicated most of this year to conducting an in-depth review of the impacts of the benefit cap and low pay on the residents of Harrow and what the Council could do to respond to this.

The Council's response to the on-going budget challenges this year has been to agree a major regeneration programme for the borough and a commercialisation strategy to generate income to help pay for vital services. As these are two of the single biggest contributors to closing the Council's budget gap, scrutiny has been and will continue, to pay close attention to these areas. This year on regeneration, we have focussed on the delivery of the school expansions programme and on what it takes to turn new housing development into vibrant and cohesive communities. On commercialisation we have scrutinised the new commercial strategy and our procurement policy.

Supporting the vulnerable is a corporate priority for the Council. This year we have focussed our scrutiny on how the council is performing in supporting vulnerable disabled children by looking at the implementation of the Special Educational Needs reforms and vulnerable adults via the implementation of the Care Act. We also continue to pay close attention to the Council's performance in the area of youth justice and the performance of our health partners as our local hospital, Northwick Park, continues to miss its targets and is implementing wide-ranging reforms to healthcare in the borough.

As in previous years, the Scrutiny Leadership Group, comprising the chairs and vice-chairs of the committees and scrutiny leads, has provided strategic direction to the scrutiny 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 this year.

Thank you to all the Members, officers, partners and members of the public who have contributed to our scrutiny work this year, and if you have any suggestions for issues that you think scrutiny should look into, please do let us know.



Cllr Jerry Miles
Chair of Overview & Scrutiny



Cllr Paul Osborn
Vice Chair of Overview & Scrutiny

Report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Our Committee

The committee has met 8 times this year. The papers and details of the outcomes from all of these meetings can be found [here](#).

Our remit continues to be the consideration of the Council's and our partners' strategic direction and major projects and policy decisions 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.

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 the budget proposals (in January). We are grateful for the information which they shared with us. This year we received no major petitions for review.

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

- The Integration of Public Health within the Council
- Scrutiny Annual Report
- West London Waste Plan
- Report from the Libraries Scrutiny Review
- Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM)
- Community Safety Strategy
- Harrow Youth Offending Team Annual Report 2014-2015
- Harrow Youth Offending Partnership Youth Justice Plan 2014-2015
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Reforms Implementation
- Commercialisation Strategy
- Draft Scope for Scrutiny Reviews - Community Involvement in Parks and Social and Community Infrastructure; Welfare Reform
- Project Minerva Update
- School Expansion Programme
- Revised Policies under the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005
- Events Policy
- Corporate Plan

Review Programme

We have started a new programme of more detailed scrutiny investigations, undertaken mainly via in-depth reviews or challenge panels. The content of the review programme is identified through the performance and Finance Sub-Committee's deliberations or via our scrutiny leads and is discussed at the Scrutiny Leadership Group and then agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny committee.

This year we have conducted four reviews:

- a) Impact of Welfare Reforms on residents in the borough
- b) Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) scrutiny of Shaping a Healthier Future Programme
- c) Protocol for working together – Harrow Scrutiny, Healthwatch and Health & Wellbeing Board
- d) Regeneration: social and community infrastructure needs

We have been helped in our work by members of the public, the voluntary and community sector, other Councils and organisations, Members and officers and in particular the staff of the Policy Team. We would like to thank all of them for their time, evidence, research and constructive way in which they have engaged with the scrutiny of the Council.

a) Impact of Welfare Reforms on residents in the borough

The Welfare Reform Scrutiny Review was established with the following aims:

- To understand the experiences of benefit claimants and those who have needed to claim benefits in the past or may need to in future.
- To understand what services are available and what policies are in place to help people come off, live better on, or avoid needing benefits and how effective they are.
- To propose robust recommendations which are accepted and implemented by Cabinet that will help people come off, live better on, or avoid needing benefits.

The group held several meetings that focussed on the Benefit Cap and Low Pay and had the opportunity to speak to the Child Poverty Action Group, Harrow Law Centre, Harrow Citizens Advice Bureau, MIND in Harrow, Share Action and the Learning and Work Institute.

In addition, several Councillors visited local organisations to speak to people affected by the benefit cap and the organisations that provided support to them.

The last meeting of this review was on the 30th April 2016 and the full report, with recommendations, will be submitted to Overview & Scrutiny Committee early in 2016/17.

b) Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) scrutiny of Shaping a Healthier Future Programme

We continue to be active members of the JHOSC that provides a cross-borough forum for discussing and scrutinizing issues relating to Shaping a Healthier Future Programme (SaHF) for North West (NW) London. This programme looks to reconfigure acute services in NW London. Our participation in this committee ensures that scrutiny of the issues relating to the programme is maintained at a regional level and that Harrow residents' perspectives are put forward to the NHS as it implements the SaHF programme across NW London.

The JHOSC met twice during 2015-16 with Harrow hosting one of these JHOSC meetings. In the last year, the JHOSC has considered a range of issues:

- Progress updates on the SaHF programme including the transformation and benefits tracker
- Development of the Implementation Business Case for the programme
- Maternity services
- Accident & Emergency performance across NW London
- London Ambulance Service
- Mental Health
- Clinical Commissioning Groups 'out of hospital' programmes
- The interface with the Independent Healthcare Commission led by Michael Mansfield QC, and to which Harrow provided evidence.

We continue to receive regular updates on the progress of the JHOSC at our Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee meetings so that the implications for Harrow residents can also be considered at a local level.

c) Protocol for working together – Harrow Scrutiny, Healthwatch & Health & Wellbeing Board

Following a piece of work led by scrutiny, there is now a health protocol in place for the working relationship between Scrutiny, the Health & Wellbeing Board and Healthwatch Harrow. All three bodies agreed and adopted the protocol in Spring/Summer 2015.

Given the many different partners and boards involved in health policy, this protocol outlines the independent, but complementary, roles and responsibilities of the Council's health scrutiny function, the Health and Wellbeing Board and the local Healthwatch. Each body has distinct roles but there are potential overlaps in work and therefore scope for duplication. This duplication can be positive if the bodies are approaching the issues from different angles and adding value, however where the duplication is unnecessary, this does not represent the best use of resources. Working collaboratively and making the best use of resources is particularly warranted at a time when resources in the public sector are being stretched.

Health scrutiny has a strategic role in taking an overview of how well integration of health, public health and social care is working and how well health and wellbeing boards are carrying out their duty to promote integration. The Francis report into the failings of care at Stafford Hospital included some clear messages for the role of council scrutiny in the local framework for health service accountability and as a result local authorities need to satisfy themselves that they have open and effective channels by which the public can communicate concerns about the quality of NHS and public health services to health scrutiny bodies and that complaints information is used to get an impression of services overall and commissioners and providers are questioned about patterns and trends.

Given the common aims across the three bodies to improve health and wellbeing outcomes and ensure the commissioning and delivery of high quality, appropriate and efficient services, the following set of shared principles to drive forward joint working has been adopted:

- Working together for the good of residents – achieving better outcomes for local people by working in partnership to improve services
- Working in a climate of mutual respect, courtesy, openness and transparency in partnership
- Having a shared understanding of respective roles, responsibilities, priorities and different perspectives

- Promoting and fostering an open relationship where issues of common interest and concern are shared and challenged in a constructive and mutually supportive way
- Ensuring a consistency across the council – ensuring individual activities are complementary, add value and reduce duplication, by developing work programmes together and sharing intelligence gathered
- Aligning work programmes so that they are complementary and add value – to decision making, exercising wellbeing powers, holding to account, policy development, fostering better partnership working, addressing health inequalities, and commissioning intentions for health and social care
- Monitoring performance
- Respecting independence
- Using resources effectively and efficiently - making best use of ever-stretched resources, that of both of the council and NHS
- Adding value to the democratic process
- Ensuring that the voice of the public and patients are heard and acted upon
- Proactive solution finding

d. Regeneration: social and community infrastructure needs

The Social and Community Infrastructure Review was established to look at the factors that could contribute to a new residential development becoming a community by considering examples across from across the country. This includes

- How an existing community can accept and integrate with new residents and vice versa;
- The contribution that can be made by the Council and community and voluntary sector organisations to developing less tangible community benefits such as cohesion, self help, volunteering, neighbourliness and mutual support;
- Initiatives that could facilitate community development in the Heart of Harrow.

During the course of the Review, Members have refined the scope to include an examination of how best to attract good quality employment opportunities to the Borough to help maintain a thriving local economy, (which is seen an essential component of a successful community), and the contribution that the design of residential development can make to community cohesion.



Cllr Jerry Miles
Chair of Overview & Scrutiny



Cllr Paul Osborn
Vice Chair of Overview & Scrutiny

MEETING STATISTICS Committee meetings	8
Attendance by Portfolio Holders	Cllr Simon Brown - Children, Schools & Young People Portfolio Holder Cllr Graham Henson - Environment, Crime & Community Safety Portfolio Holder Cllr Kiran Ramchandani - Performance, Corporate Resources & Policy Development 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 where necessary. The Sub-Committee can make recommendations for improvement and 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. The papers and details of the outcomes from all our committee meetings can be found [here](#).

Our meetings

Our regular Chair and Vice-Chair'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 2015-16 have been:

- Revenue and Capital Monitoring – we have been briefed on a quarterly 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.
- Adults' Services Complaints Annual Reports 2014-2015
- Children's Services Complaints Annual Reports 2014-2015
- Equality and Diversity Annual Report
- Update on implementation of Scrutiny Review Recommendations - Council Tax Support scheme, Budget Setting Process Challenge Panel, Capital Challenge Panel, Libraries Challenge Panel
- Community grants scheme

MEETING STATISTICS	3
Committee meetings	
Attendance by Portfolio Holders	Cllr Sue Anderson - Community, Culture & Resident Engagement Portfolio Holder Cllr Simon Brown - Children, Schools & Young People Portfolio Holder Cllr Sachin Shah – Finance and Major Contracts Portfolio Holder Cllr Anne Whitehead - Adult and Older People 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 2015-16 was focused on the performance of the hospitals and health services that serve the residents of Harrow and our on-going participation in the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee that scrutinises the implementation of 'Shaping A Healthier Future', the NHS Programme which is implementing significant re-configuration of acute healthcare in North West London. Our work on scrutinising the 'Shaping a Healthier Future' programme is outlined in more detail in the Review Programme section of this report, as is our work on developing and setting in practice a health protocol for the working relationship between scrutiny, the Health and Wellbeing Board, and Healthwatch Harrow.

Our health scrutiny work has seen us out and about during the year. In July, members of the committee (councillors, our advisors to the committee, as well as other interested members) visited the new Accident & Emergency facilities at Northwick Park Hospital. A number of staff from the London North West Healthcare Trust, which manages the site, showed us around and answered our questions about the new A&E, performance levels, staffing issues, coping with the increasing volume of visitors, the impact of primary care on acute services, as well the experience of forming a new trust following the merger of North West London Hospitals with Ealing Hospital.

On this visit we did some patient journey mapping by undertaking the patient's journey through A&E first as a walk in patient and then as someone brought in by the London Ambulance Service. We used this intelligence and insight into the patient's experience to inform our discussions with the Trust when they came to committee in October to answer our questions on the progress made as a merged trust, addressing the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection action plan, and preparations for winter pressures. We also used our visit to guide our feedback to the CQC as they prepared to again inspect London North West Healthcare Trust last autumn.

Our meetings

Our main areas of interest in 2015-16 have been:

- Harrow Local Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report
- Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee Update
- Central North West London Draft Quality Account
- Healthwatch Update Report
- Harrow's Local Account
- Developing a protocol for the working relationship between Scrutiny, the Health and Wellbeing Board and Healthwatch Harrow
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Annual Report of the Director of Public Health

- London North West Healthcare NHS Trust Update Report
- Denham Intermediate Care Unit – transfer of service to Central Middlesex Hospital site

MEETING STATISTICS	4
Committee meetings	
Attendance by Portfolio Holders	N/A

Report from the Children and Families Lead Members

In 2015/16 we addressed a range of important issues that affect children and young people in Harrow. We have had meetings with the Corporate Director of Children's Services and officers . The issues we have raised and discussed include:

Housing Needs

Concerns were continued to be raised over children leaving care and the connection between Children's and Housing services. The housing service and Children's and Families Services will continue to work in partnership and actively manage and respond to care leavers' housing needs.

Education and Children Looked After

The Virtual head has been working well with the Children Looked After and progress is being made with the stability and security of reviewing Personal Education Plans. A virtual school improvement board has also been set up.

Youth Offending Team

We have continued to monitor how the action plan is being implemented and the impact it is having throughout the year.

School Expansion Programme

We have been monitoring the progress of the building programme and an update report on the development, progress and lessons learnt will be going to O&S .

Care Act

We will need to monitor the effect on young carers next year with the reorganisation of the Early Intervention.

Looking Ahead

Our focus in the forthcoming year will be to monitor the Early intervention reorganisation and People services merger with adults and children, the bed and breakfast impact on children's education, trouble families phase 2, Young unaccompanied asylum seekers and finally monitoring the efforts to increase awareness and reporting of child sexual exploitation and mutilation.



Cllr Lynda Seymour
Policy Lead for Children's and Families



Cllr Janet Mote
Performance lead for Children's and Families

Report from the Resources Lead Members

Access Harrow performance

Access Harrow continues to perform well in most areas, and the roll out of MyHarrow accounts continued apace with face to face visitors down 17% on the previous year. Access Harrow continued to receive approximately 51000 calls a month, however, calls relating to 'Revs and Bens' were down by 10% due to the introduction of online forms. Calls relating to council tax had a wait time of approximately 4 minutes, while 'Revs and Bens' had a call wait time of 12 minutes. There appears to be a difference from the internally reported Access Harrow waiting times and waiting time reported by residents. The Public realm call abandonment rate of 16% suggests there is a problem here that should be investigated further". Customer satisfaction rates were circa 95%, and a robust policy to handle complaints was in place. Roughly 80% of complaints were about waiting times, and 95% of complaints were resolved at first contact. Staff agency costs continue to be a drain on resources, but this remains a council wide concern.

Commercialisation

The council's commercialisation strategy continues to make excellent progress. Some services, particularly HB Law, are well advanced and successful. The council continues to look at the provision of other shared services, such as HR and procurement. Naturally, commercialisation presents some risk and progress will be closely monitored in the coming years.

New IT system

The council undertook a change in its IT provider this year, with a move from Capita to Sopra Steria taking place on 1 November 2015. Implementation appeared to have gone smoothly with some expected minor glitches. Scrutiny should review how successful this change has been in the coming year when the new provider has had a chance to bed in.

And finally...

We would like to thank Tom Whiting, Corporate Director and his team for the helpful support we have had over the 2015/2016 civic year.



Cllr Stephen Wright
Policy Lead for Resources



Cllr Primesh Patel

Report from the Health Lead Members

The Leads have been monitoring the performance of A&E services at Northwick Park Hospital as it's continued to be an area of challenge. Northwick Park had been operating at maximum bed occupancy levels for past 2 years, often medical patients occupying surgical beds and vice versa.

Public Health Report

The Public Health Director provides the annual report. The team will look at mapping loneliness and take a targeted approach tackling it. It would work closely with other providers such as Age UK and participate in its initiatives such as the 'be friendly programme'.

PHE is working to prevent and treat to empower residents to seek appropriate help and implement changes in the lives which would contribute to improved mental health. The focus on 2015 report is mental wellbeing- how can partnership working between the NHS and Council facilitate to improve their mental health through the 5 key messages of: connect, be active, keep learning and give.

The establishment of local health champions whose role it would be to raise awareness and disseminate information regarding health and wellbeing.

Implementation of the Care Act

The Care Act received Royal assent in May 2014, the draft guidance and regulations were published for consultation in June 2014, and the consultation closed in mid-August 2014. The final guidance and regulations were published 23rd October 2014 for Part one with Care Act coming into force in April 2015. Last autumn the government announced that it planned to delay the planned implementation of the second part of the Care Act in April 2016 – the £72,000 care cap and increase in eligibility for financial assistance (from £23,250 to £118,000) – until 2020. This has been a welcome development which has been supported by local authorities across the political spectrum and the Local Government Association (LGA) with current funding gap in adult social care predicted to reach £4.3 billion by the end of the decade. To remedy this Harrow Council together with the LGA has asked the Department of Health to continue to provide Care Act implementation funding to local authorities and allow them to instead invest this money in their severely stretched social care budgets.

Another aspect of the Care Act which could have significant financial implications for Harrow is the welcome introduction of portability or 'ordinary residence'. This new measure enables social care clients to move across local government boundaries with their care packages automatically following them without the requirement for a new assessment first. However, Ealing Council has decided to interpret this measure retrospectively and they have attempted to backdate their claim to Harrow to include periods before the introduction of the Care Act. In this instance, should their interpretation be upheld it will cost Harrow Council around £1.7 million.

Future of the NHS walk-in centres in Harrow

Harrow CCG has introduced a re-tendering process for the Harrow NHS walk-in clinics, at Alexandra Avenue and the Pinn Medical Centre, which may result in a new private provider replacing the current local GP led consortium delivering these services. Contracts for the two existing centres have

been running since 2009 and are now due to expire having been extended twice before. Harrow CCG has not engaged in a specific formal consultation for the re-procurement of the two GP Access walk-in centres on the basis that there are no plans to change services at the two established centres. Harrow CCG is also consulting on the location for a new walk-in centre to be opened in Harrow East. Whilst we understand the rationale for not consulting on the new tendering process, it is disappointing that they did not inform Harrow Council and relevant councillors ahead of the start of the re-tendering process. The re-tendering process, together with the new walk-in centre to be opened in Harrow East, will need to continue be monitored by Scrutiny Leads going forward.

Looking forward..

Our focus would be to have regular briefing on local CCG developments and projects, having briefing with Public Health Director and London North West Healthcare Trust on performance of GP waiting times and A&E waiting times at Northwick Park Hospital.



Cllr Michael Borio



Cllr Vina Mithani

Report from the Environment & Enterprise Lead Members

We have been honoured to be the Scrutiny Leads for the Environment for this municipal year. It has been a very busy year with lots of challenges; mainly trying to protect our frontline services whilst maintaining efficiency. Most of our work has been conducted with the former Director Caroline Bruce. The biggest challenges we identified were maintaining consistency in our services and improving our responsiveness to services. This has been an incredible area of concern which members have identified, following an increase in complaints from residents. The public have struggled to get through to Harrow Council's call centre, often holding for an hour. We have been informed that there were glitches over the summer, which have now been resolved. Call teams are now more responsive and calls are monitored better.

One of the biggest changes has been the introduction of a Brown Bin charge. This has had a mixed response with a number of impacts on the department. Black bins have been rolled out and the charge will be introduced in April 2016. To counter this, one of the main priorities has been to make reporting issues online easier. The Council website has improved, although we believe further improvements can be made.

A funding officer was also appointed, designated specifically for helping Harrow Council to secure extra funding. This has been essential in projects such as the Headstone Manor restoration and Harrow Arts Centre.

A regret for the department has been the negative food hygiene report for the borough last summer which is being addressed.

The LED street lights have been rolled out across the borough which has been very welcome.

Fines for littering have been introduced. There were concerns about implementing it. However patrols have been working well.

Route optimisations of the in teams were trialled with some hiccups. However, the team have worked to address backlogs during the year with the position being closely monitored.

A scrutiny review of Community Infrastructure is currently in progress and a review of Community Involvement in Parks is due to begin imminently. In terms of successes, it was pleasing to see that the improvement board scores were up for quarter four. We look forward to our roles for the next municipal year.



Cllr Ameet Jogia



Cllr Jeff Anderson

Report from the Community, Health and Wellbeing Leads

Our focus this year has been to view the performance of Northwick Park A & E as we did last year. Whilst there are some long waits in A & E at times, things have improved.

It must be noted that the A & E is the fourth busiest in Europe. The old forty beds for admissions from A & E unit has been extended to one hundred beds and opened recently, this will have a great effect on A & E as patients will be able to given beds and supported better when they are first admitted.

The third urgent care centre is being selected and will be in the east of the borough; this with the other two will help reduce the load at A & E. We must as an authority encourage all newcomers to the borough to register with a GP surgery so as to take further strain of A & E, as so many people just go to A & E as they have nowhere else to go as they have no GP.

Library closures have had an effect on our communities but where we have a potential volunteer library service at North Harrow bricks seem to be kept being thrown in the way of its progression to an opening.

Looking ahead...

We will still need to monitor parks as the user groups work with the council to see if they are as successful as they were.



Cllr Chris Mote



Cllr Margaret Davine

Report from the Call-in Sub-Committee

There has been one meeting for the call-in Sub-Committee this year. The main issues discussed were:

- Protocol for the operation of the call-in sub-committee
- Call-in of the cabinet decision

There have been no meetings this year for the call in sub-committee for education.