

# Scrutiny Annual Report 2016 – 2017



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## **Introduction**

This report summarises the work of scrutiny in 2016/17. It covers the work of the Overview and Scrutiny committee, its two sub-committees (performance and finance and health), call-in committees, the programme of scrutiny reviews and the work of the scrutiny leads.

Through Scrutiny's overview of the budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy we have been aware of the increase in numbers of families presenting as homeless in the borough. The main reason for homelessness in Harrow is the loss of private rented accommodation and the unaffordability of accommodation for many people. This puts significant pressure on the Council to find affordable accommodation for families, as well as on the Council's budgets in the current financial climate. With the Government also debating the issue of housing and homelessness this year with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Bill it felt appropriate that scrutiny should also take a more in-depth look at the issue in Harrow. Homelessness has therefore been a major focus of our work this year, with a report coming to committee, questions being asked at budget monitoring and of the Leader and Chief Executive at our 6-monthly Question and Answer sessions and a scrutiny review taking place. We will continue to monitor the impact of the measures the council is taking and the Homelessness reduction bill during the course of next year.

Supporting the vulnerable is a corporate priority for the Council. This year we have focussed our scrutiny on the concerns residents have expressed at not being able to access primary healthcare at GP surgeries or Walk-in-Centres. We hope our insight and recommendations will help the local CCG in their efforts to enable more people to be seen out of hospital and therefore reduce the pressures experienced by A&E at Northwick Park.

We also continue our focus on the Council's regeneration programme. We have conducted a review into the social and community infrastructure needed to support the amount of new homes being built in the borough and are following this up with an in-depth review into the financing of the Council's regeneration programme which will continue into next year.

Finally, the Council undertook a Peer Review and had an Ofsted inspection this year. Scrutiny was involved in both and interviewed by the peer review team and Ofsted inspectors. The final report of the Peer Review team made some recommendations for how we could further improve the effectiveness of scrutiny in Harrow which we will be following up during the course of next year with the support of the Centre for Public Sector Scrutiny and we are hopeful for a good report from Ofsted.

As in previous years, the Scrutiny Leadership Group, comprising the chairs and vice-chairs of the committees and scrutiny leads, continues to provide 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 also to all the Members, members of the public who have work this year, and if you have any you think scrutiny should look into,



officers, partners and contributed to our scrutiny suggestions for issues that 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 so far met 7 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, met twice with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive for a question and answer session to consider the budget proposals and strategic direction of the Council (in July and February). 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:

- Corporate Plan
- Homelessness Pressures
- Welfare Reform Scrutiny Review Report
- Social and Community Infrastructure Scrutiny Review Report
- Scrutiny Work Programme 2016-17
- Community Involvement in Parks Scrutiny Review Report
- Implementation of New Youth Offending Case Management System
- Youth Justice Plan
- Adults Services Complaints Annual Report (Social Care only) 2015-16
- Children and Families Services Complaints Annual Report 2015-16
- Local Assurance Test Review
- Homelessness Scrutiny Challenge Panel
- Scrutiny Review of Health Visiting in Harrow
- Together with Families Programme
- Prevent Strategy
- Digitisation and accessing services online
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Peer Review
- Health Visiting Scrutiny Review Report

## ***Review Programme***

We have conducted a 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 will have completed four reviews:

- a) Community Involvement in Parks
- b) Homelessness
- c) Delivery of Harrow Out of Hospital Strategy
- d) Children's Health Visiting

Additionally, we have also started work on a major review into the financing of the regeneration programme which will continue into next year.

We have been helped in our work by members of the public, the voluntary and community sector, the CCG, 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) Review of Community Involvement in Parks**

#### General Context:

Open spaces which include parks play a vital role in our lives. Good quality green spaces and parks are an essential component of the urban fabric of Harrow and make a profound contribution to the quality of life of local communities. They are vital pieces of local infrastructure. The quality of parks and open spaces services has a proven effect on public perception of local authority performance.

Harrow has large green areas but this is unevenly distributed with less access from the deprived areas of Harrow in the south and east of the borough. As a result people living in these areas have less access to environments that support physical activity such as well maintained parks, open spaces or safe areas for play, and are more likely to have transport environments less amenable to active travel. This is likely to influence the amount of physical activity that households living in these areas undertake

Harrow is one of the most ethnically diverse boroughs in the country and 43% are from Asian/Asian British ethnic background. South Asian populations are at higher risk of type 2 diabetes at lower BMI.<sup>i</sup> There is some evidence that levels of physical activity are lower among South Asian groups than the general population which may contribute to increased risk of diabetes and coronary heart disease.

#### Aims of the Review:

- To examine the current levels of community involvement in Harrow's parks and benchmark against parks in neighbouring boroughs.
- To develop an understanding of what residents want from their local parks.
- To explore innovative practices in the delivery of park services by other councils and other initiatives demonstrating community involvement and volunteering in parks.
- To identify ways in which Harrow Council can best deliver 21<sup>st</sup> century parks for residents.
- To inform the development of Harrow's parks and open spaces strategy 2016-19.

- To develop the park users' forum so it is inclusive and representative of all park users across Harrow.
- To inform the progress of Project Phoenix and the commercialisation strategy for parks.

Recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Review Challenge Panel on Parks and the  
Cabinets' Response

Summary: The Cabinet agreed with all of the recommendations put forward by the Challenge Panel and provided updates on work (both planned and currently in-progress) which aims to deliver upon them.

<b>Recommendation Number</b>	<b>Recommendations made to Cabinet in O+S Scrutiny Review (June 2016)</b>	<b>Cabinet Response to Recommendations</b>
1.	We note the success of the Park User Groups and the energy and commitment they contribute to improving our Parks. We recommend that Council should continue to work with Park User Groups and the Parks Forum to ensure our parks are safe and secure environments in which all users feel safe and welcome, to promote the use of parks and open spaces by all sections of Harrow's diverse communities and to explore how sections of our community that do not use Parks can be encourage to do so.	A number of Park User Groups have established volunteering embedded into their ethos, which has enabled community events and activities to draw more users into our parks and involve differing members of the community to a shared use of parks. The Council is also working with those groups who have not completed a 5-year plan to create a joint vision for the park following the criteria of the green Flag Parks scheme. The Council will explore options to extend the usage of parks across the community and have started a programme to improve facilities and sports pitches
2.	That the Council works in partnership with Park User Groups in identifying projects, including capital, to improve parks and park facilities and works with those groups to apply to funding sources. The Council will continue to manage projects but, where appropriate Park User Groups can be involved in project delivery.	Parks with developed 5-year plans have benefitted from shared Council/community objectives, more effective deployment of resources, targeted capital expenditure, greater leverage for grant applications. As above the Council is working with those groups who have not completed a 5-year plan to create a joint vision for the park and to direct development and potential investment. Greater Stanmore Country Park and to a lesser extent Bentley Priory and Harrow Weald Common have Management Boards to

		oversee and procure services within pre-defined budgets. These models can be extended as circumstances allow including other Open Spaces.
2.	That the Council should investigate potential funding routes, such as grants, that could be available to properly constituted Park User Groups that would not be available to local authorities.	There have been successful Marathon Trust and Lottery bids previously, benefitting parks. The Council will continue to seek outside funding and support groups to make suitable applications. Development of Park Management Plans are considered an essential step to assisting with a competitive bid.
3.	That the Council should explore the use of existing buildings in Parks to maximise use/income, this should include an assessment of how existing buildings could be used to develop facilities that would include the provision of refreshments and toilets including community cafes run by Park User Groups as well as commercial lets.	A survey of park buildings assessing structure, condition, current and potential usage is underway to identify suitable assets for investment to sustain the property and increase usage and income. Currently the Council is tendering for facilities to provide refreshments for 3 parks.
4.	Those Commercial opportunities to develop sporting facilities should be explored as possible but that such schemes should offer access at affordable prices to residents.	The Council will continue to investigate commercial opportunities through the Project Phoenix Board. The Council is also working to upgrade the sports booking system to enable greater social media penetration to assist retaining and attracting sports club members.
5.	We note the success of the existing Park User Groups and recommend that the Council should continue to work in partnership with Parks User Groups through the Parks Forums and that the Council should actively encourage the creation of further Park User Groups where they do not exist. We note the existence of properly constituted groups promotes good governance and allows such groups to	The operational framework for Park User Groups is designed to set the parameters that will govern both the creation and operation of these groups, including setting the remit for these groups to undertake activities in parks. It is important that the framework ensures there is clear and unambiguous allocation of roles and responsibilities between the Council and groups.



	apply for grants as appropriate.	<p>The Council has worked on the successes and lessons learnt from older Park User Groups and are encouraging formation of new groups. Over the past year an additional six User Groups have formed which brings us to 21 operational User Groups. We have written a volunteers toolkit to help new groups through the start-up stage and ensure correct governance. Constituted groups have access to training such as 1st Aid, power tools and safe catering as well being able to apply to the Community fund for financial assistance.</p> <p>The Borough Parks Forum was founded in 2015 being led by Members and Officers. In May 2016 the Forum held elections and is now constituted and run directly by volunteers. We will continue to support the Borough wide parks Forum and encourage and nurture new Park User groups.</p>
6.	That the Council should encourage schools to utilise Parks for School activities including a "Daily Mile" to promote health and to combat child obesity. This will also have the benefit of improving concentration and performance by pupils in schools.	<p>The Council is establishing and actively promoting a schools daily walk programme across all Infant and Primary Schools. The Council is expanding the Community Champion scheme to include Young Champions. It is envisaged that the scheme will promote greater use and understanding of our parks.</p>

6.	We note the success and popularity of the “Green Gyms” and these should be expanded as appropriate and as funding is available with a specific focus on parks in the most deprived wards, especially near family homes without gardens.	The key objective is to promote health amongst those with potential cardiovascular, diabetes, mobility or obesity issues and also to promote social cohesion between differing groups of people who share a common desire to increase their fitness levels. The council has will explore opportunities to expand Green Gyms focusing on need and ensuring a range of activities to include cardio-vascular, core body mobility, upper & lower body strength. Where Park User Groups exist the location will be made in consultation with the group
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## **b) Homelessness Review**

### Context:

Harrow has a small social housing stock with a very low turnover of properties. There is a high demand for housing with increasing levels of homelessness. The number of families in B&B has risen dramatically over the last 5 years.

We rely heavily on the private rented sector. Private rents have risen but incomes have not kept pace. While most of the cost of homelessness to the council originates from Housing Needs there is also spend on emergency and temporary accommodation, deposits and rent in advance in Children’s Services.

There are approximately 4880 council homes and 4070 registered provider homes in Harrow (as at 1 April 2015), one of the smallest social housing stocks in London.

Half of our 10,000 homes have been sold since the Right to Buy (RTB) was introduced in 1979; home ownership has declined and the private rented sector has increased in size over the same period.

Many ex RTB homes are let out as private rented accommodation at market rents, which has an impact on Housing Benefit (HB) and on estates. Currently 46% of Harrow leaseholders are non-resident.

### Aims of Review - To Identify:

- What the problem is
- Who is presenting as homeless
- The breakdown of housing need
- What we are doing about it

- Which factors are being taking into account for planning purposes
- How effective our policies are in preventing homelessness

Recommendations Arising from the Scrutiny Review Challenge Panel on Homelessness and the Cabinets' Response

Summary: The Cabinet agreed with all of the recommendations put forward by the Challenge Panel and provided updates on work (both planned and currently in-progress) which aims to deliver upon them.

Recommendation Number	Recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Review Challenge Panel on Homelessness	Cabinet Response to Recommendations
1	To request that officers provide clarity on what plans there are to build more quality housing; high density, high rise (similar to the Harrow on the Hill development)	<p>Over the course of the next 5-10 years, the Borough will receive significant levels of investment in housing– a substantial proportion of the £1.75bn of investment in the Harrow and Wealdstone area will be directed towards housing. Officers consider that high quality design is central to Building a Better Harrow. Developing a reputation for design quality in Harrow will raise ambition and attract talent, improving the quality of architecture across the Borough, and the quality of life for Harrow residents and workers.</p> <p>The Council is promoting and managing design quality in a number of ways; in 2015, the Council's first Head of Design and Regeneration was appointed; a long-standing agreement with the GLA provides an Urban Design Officer with design expertise to secure high quality development and; a Harrow Design Review Panel is being established to provide independent external advice on applications. These measures enable the council to insist upon high quality and challenge substandard development. These measures have already yielded tangible results – the planning permissions at College Road and Gayton Road car park are examples of high quality, high density schemes.</p> <p>High quality, high density mixed use and housing schemes are being developed by the Harrow Regeneration Unit at the existing Civic Centre site (Poets Corner), Leisure Centre (Byron Quarter) and</p>

2	<p>To request that clarity be provided as to the financing of the Council's housing portfolio expansion and to investigate whether this Council could borrow General Fund housing revenue to act as a funding stream</p>	<p>The council currently has two streams of new development.</p> <p>The first is within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), and is largely comprised of infill development of small sites of spare land and disused or underused garage sites. This stream is constrained by the availability of development funding within the HRA, which has significantly reduced as a result of the requirement to reduce social rents by 1% per annum for a 4-year period.</p> <p>A December 2015 Cabinet report highlighted the significant increases in tender prices over recent years, and that the cost of building the approved programme would be higher than the original approved budget. We are currently reviewing the programme to assess how many new homes can be provided within the approved HRA budget, and the options for completing the programme. General fund borrowing could be an option for completing an extended infill programme as well as extending the property purchase initiative.</p> <p>The second stream is within the General Fund and is part of the Council's overall regeneration activity. This will entail building new housing for rent and sale and is likely to be funded from a combination of new General Fund borrowing (probably from the Public</p>
3	<p>To request that the Leader of the Council raises with London Councils, concerns around the Homelessness Reduction Bill and the impact this will have locally if implemented</p>	<p>Key issues and concerns regarding the Homelessness Reduction Bill will be raised with the Leader at the next monthly meeting. A range of possible financial impacts will be modelled in partnership with other councils, but it may take 6 months before sufficient clarity about the detail and impact of the Bill enables reasonable forecasting.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> The Leader will lobby London Councils. Report back on modelling of the likely impact on homelessness in Harrow, demand for the housing needs service and the financial impact of the proposed new statutory duties once completed.</p>

4	To request that officers be instructed to investigate options around utilisation of green belt land and allotments; and rationalise where you could develop housing in green belt areas and swap land elsewhere	<p>Officers investigate all options to increase the supply of housing – there are planning restrictions on the use of green belt land and allotment land which combined with other lengthy statutory legal processes mean that these will always be long term options.</p> <p>The government is due to publish a Housing White Paper this year which will focus on increasing housing supply – at this time we do not know if this will allow for some opportunities to be taken forward which are currently restricted.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Review all council land assets for potential to increase housing supply. Report back on Housing White Paper when published.</p>
5	To request that officers advise as to the work being undertaken with families on low incomes, whether there is close working between departments working with families at risk of homelessness, and how effective is this	<p>For 2016/17 the council has secured funding to support households on low wages to increase their skills and wages. The performance for this financial year from the DCLG's Transformation Challenge Award Skills Escalator is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35 residents provided with independent Information Advice and Guidance</li> <li>• 17 residents entering training</li> <li>• 12 residents increasing their earnings.</li> </ul> <p>Please note this is based on Q1 performance and there has been a change in staff with the broker role vacant from July-October.</p> <p>Harrow's Together with Families programme has referred 45 people, of which 12 have entered employment, 7 are now volunteering and 3 are in training.</p> <p>The council's Xcite employment programme is closely working with Housing. The Xcite programme has been featured in Homing In, the quarterly magazine for council tenants and leaseholders. Housing officers refer their clients to Xcite. Housing rent statements sent to council tenants have also advertised Xcite. Information about Xcite is included on key housing leaflets and web pages. Xcite has attended a range of housing events, including the summer housing fair for council tenants and leaseholders and recent residents meetings at the civic</p>

		<p>centre and in the community.</p> <p>The Revenue and Benefits Service provides Xcite with list of Housing Benefit claimants affected by the Benefit Cap. As of September 2016 there were 175 households affected by the benefit cap in Harrow (as per the Economic Dashboard). Unemployed residents that secure employment are not subject to the Benefit Cap. In this financial year Xcite has supported 159 people into work, of which 117 were claiming Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support. 5 of these cases were direct referrals from Housing.</p> <p>The Xcite project has seconded a worker to Central and North West London (CNWL) NHS Foundation Trust to support residents with complex mental health problems into work and a target of supporting 12 residents into work has been achieved.</p> <p>Economic Development has worked with Home Group and Jobcentre Plus to secure money from the DWP Community Fund to provide ESOL training and support residents into employment and self-employment. The "In the Mix" project has only recently begun and it has engaged 91 residents, supported 5 into work, 2 into pre-apprenticeship training, 52 into ESOL provision and 14 into business start-up training.</p> <p>In practice every council department is contributing towards the creation of job opportunities through procurement processes and application of social value criteria in the tender processes.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> The West London Alliance (WLA) has secured new ESF funds for the Skills Escalator. Contract to be signed with lead borough. Programme to be launched to relevant council services. Promotion to community and voluntary sector and Registered Providers (RPs). Continue to embed joint working with Housing Needs. Xcite to attend</p>
6	To request that officers provide data on the correlations between up-skilling the workforce, incomes, households on	In September 2016 the Housing Benefit caseload was 16,000 households (as per the Economic Dashboard). There are circa 91,000 households (DCLG Household Estimates) in Harrow so approximately 18% claim housing benefit.

	benefits and housing supply	There are between 23-25% of Harrow residents in low paid jobs (ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2011 – 2013).
7	To request that Cabinet and officers ensure that the maximum amount of affordable housing under planning policy is achieved	<p>The Planning and Housing teams work closely together to ensure that the maximum viable proportion of affordable housing is negotiated under planning policy. Financial viability assessments are required for all relevant planning applications and are independently scrutinised to ensure the maximum amount is provided – however this is much less than the policy target of 40% due to financial viability. Clawback mechanisms are considered in legal agreements so that any uplift in financial viability during the life of the development can be captured.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Current robust approach to continue. Appropriate clawback mechanisms to be included in all legal agreements where possible.</p>
8	To request that the Leader of the Council enters discussions with the Mayor of London on housing supply issues, highlighting that average wages in Harrow are low so we need to ensure access to a supply of genuinely affordable housing (please refer to final bullet point above).	<p>Officers meet regularly with colleagues in the GLA and brief them on Harrow's specific requirements for affordable housing. Housing supply issues are discussed in Housing Zone Board meetings.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Discussions to continue with the GLA highlighting Harrow's specific circumstances to maximise funding opportunities for increasing the supply of affordable housing.</p>
9	To request that consideration be given to the resourcing of the housing needs and housing regeneration teams in the event that these teams require extra resources in order to maintain and build on progress to date, particularly on homelessness prevention	<p>As a result of the CSB Challenge Panel on Homelessness Demand CSB agreed extra staffing provision for Housing Needs and recruitment is underway.</p> <p>The Housing Regeneration team has increased its resources to ensure delivery of current development programmes. However it has proved difficult to recruit suitably skilled and experienced staff on the grades agreed through the job evaluation process.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Resource levels in both teams to be kept under review and increased where proved necessary. Continue current recruitment process.</p>

10	To request that clarity be provided as to the impact of the additional resources in the housing needs team approved by the Corporate Strategic Board. (Please refer to final bullet point above).	Once all the additional staff are recruited, separate monitoring for these posts will be carried out in order to demonstrate the impact on performance (homelessness prevented or relieved) and the savings generated, as a result of the additional resources agreed by CSB. This will be reported using a dashboard.
11	To request that Cabinet make representations to the Government concerning the impact on the Council's finances of the changes to the treatment of the Temporary Accommodation Management Fee (Please note that this recommendation was added by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 November).	<p>Officers have responded to consultation regarding the government's proposal to change the subsidy given for temporary accommodation and accommodation used for homelessness prevention. The West London Housing Partnership has been actively involved in the consultation.</p> <p>Action: The Leader will lobby London Councils for the details of the new formula to be released as soon as possible and/or once the details of the new scheme are confirmed and the likely impact on Harrow has been modelled.</p>

### **c) Health - Out of Hospital Strategy: Walk-in Centres**

#### Context/Rationale:

The Scrutiny Leadership Group dedicated extra support to health scrutiny members (channelled through the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee) to fulfil the council's health scrutiny responsibilities. The Chair and other members of the sub-committee agreed to conduct a programme of visits in 2016/17 to the three walk in centres and pull together some local intelligence around residents' access to primary care. This is an issue identified locally as needing attention and reflected in numbers attending the Urgent Care Centre at Northwick Park Hospital to relieve pressures on A&E. It is also especially important given the stretched capacity at NPH and with NPH being asked to take on more capacity as a consequence of the Shaping a Healthier Future programme. Scrutiny's visits focused on the boroughs' walk in centres and the intelligence used from other sources included the Council's community engagement evidence for the Independent Healthcare Commission as well as Healthwatch Harrow's research on accessibility of GP surgeries.

#### Aims of Review:

To examine the continued roll-out of 'Shaping a Healthier Future' and its impact on the performance of Northwick Park Hospital and the delivery of Harrow Out of Hospital Strategy, and access to GPs remain important issues for Harrow residents following the Independent Healthcare Commission report.



## **d) Children's Health Visiting Service**

### Context:

The responsibility for Health Visiting transferred to local authorities on 1 October 2015.

- Performance on most of the five mandated checks has been low. While they managed to achieve 90% for the new birth checks in Q1, only 22% of children received a 12 month check, and only 14% received a 2 year check. Other LAs (our statistical neighbours) achieve much higher rates, closer to 60% - even up to 80%.
- We need to retender this service for 1 January 2018 so need a new service specification. There is a recommendation going to Cabinet on 17 November that we combine this with the School Nursing Service to create a 0-19 service. It would be very useful to have members' input on the new spec.

### Aims of the Review:

- To understand the current service performance and how it compares to other London Boroughs
- To make recommendations for a service specification for new 0-19 service

### Scope:

The suggestion is that it includes:

- Understanding the service on the ground through work-shadowing, meeting parents and meeting London North West service managers.
- Understanding how other boroughs' HV service works.
- Understanding how it fits with LBH Early Years' Service
- Understanding the current budget
- Examination of the expenditure involved in provision of the service
- Meeting national representative of e.g. PHE or Institute of Health Visiting to understand the national picture.

Report providing recommendations to cabinet has not been completed at the time of writing this report and is due to be considered by O&S at their April meeting.

## **e) Regeneration Finance Review**

### Aims of Review:

- To assess whether the Council's proposals for the financing of its regeneration programme are realistic, affordable, robust and deliverable
- Ensure that financial risks are properly considered and that proposed mitigations are appropriate and balanced

- Appraise the projected financial benefits of the Council's regeneration programme.

Report providing recommendations to cabinet has not been completed at the time of writing this report and is due to be considered by O&S at their April meeting.

<b>MEETING STATISTICS</b> Committee meetings	7
Attendance by Portfolio Holders	<p>Cllr Sue Anderson – Community, Culture &amp; Resident Engagement Portfolio Holder</p> <p>Cllr Simon Brown – Adults &amp; Older People Portfolio Holder</p> <p>Cllr Christine Robson – Children, Schools and Young People Portfolio Holder</p> <p>Cllr Glen Hearnden – Housing &amp; Employment Portfolio Holder</p> <p>Cllr Christine Robson – Children, Schools and Young People Portfolio Holder</p> <p>Cllr Kiran Ramchandani – Performance, Corporate Resources &amp; Customer Service Portfolio Holder</p>



Cllr Jerry Miles  
Chair of Overview & Scrutiny



Cllr Paul Osborn  
Vice Chair of Overview & Scrutiny

# 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 on corporate performance 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 2016-17 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.
- Draft Revenue Budget 2017-18 and Medium-Term Financial Statement 2017/18 – 2019/20
- Corporate Equalities Objectives - Annual Progress Report 2015/16
- Community Grants Scheme 2015/16
- Social and Community Infrastructure - Update on Implementation of Scrutiny Review Recommendations

Committee meetings have been reduced by 25% this year, which impacts on the ability to monitor performance and finance quarterly.

<b>MEETING STATISTICS</b> Committee meetings	3
Attendance by Portfolio Holders	Cllr Varsha Parmar – Health, Equality and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder  Cllr Adam Swersky – Finance and Commercialisation Portfolio Holder  Cllr Sue Anderson – Community, Culture & Resident Engagement Portfolio Holder



Cllr Phillip O'Dell

Chair of Performance and Finance



Cllr Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Vice-Chair of Performance and Scrutiny

# **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. The aim of our work is to provide strategic support and a residents' perspective to the local CCG and NHS who strategically plan local services around access to primary care, as well as identifying what we councillors as community leaders can do to encourage residents to make best and most appropriate use of the healthcare resources available to them in Harrow.

## The local picture:

Harrow has one of the highest proportion of those aged 65 and over compared to the other boroughs in NW London. More than 50% of Harrow's population is from black and minority ethnic (BAME) groups. Cardiovascular disease is the highest cause of death in Harrow, followed by cancer and respiratory disease. With regard to primary care, in Harrow there are 34 GP practices, 3 walk in centres and the UCC at Northwick Park Hospital.

## Our Work this Year:

Much of the scrutiny activity undertaken in 2016-17 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' (SaHF), the NHS Programme which is implementing significant re-configuration of acute healthcare in North West London.

The Chair and other members of the Health and Social Scrutiny Sub-Committee agreed to conduct a programme of visits in 2016/17 to the three Harrow walk in centres and pull together some local intelligence around residents' access to primary care from sources including the Council's community engagement evidence for the Independent Healthcare Commission (summer 2015) as well as Healthwatch Harrow's recent and on-going research on accessibility of GP surgeries.

The latter in particular demonstrates how as a locally elected body we are drawing on the health protocol agreed in 2015/16 and better triangulating intelligence gathered by the Health and Social Care Sub, Health and Wellbeing Board and Healthwatch Harrow. We were also able to draw on the intelligence from our discussions with local people and healthcare providers through our sub-committee work, our role on the NW London Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee examining the implementation of the Shaping a Healthier Future (SAHF) programme regionally, Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection reports of local services, our roles as scrutiny leads, as well as residents' concerns brought to our attention in our roles as local councillors and health champions.

The issue of residential access to primary care is an issue that has been identified locally as needing attention and is reflected in the numbers attending the Urgent Care Centre (UCC) at Northwick Park Hospital which was aimed at relieving pressures on A&E. It is

also especially important given the stretched capacity at Northwick Park Hospital (NPH) and with NPH being asked to take on more capacity as a consequence of the SaHF programme.

The nature of our enquiries was not intended to be a comprehensive scrutiny review but rather a snapshot look using intelligence pulled together over the last 18 months to build up a picture of local trends or recurring issues identified through various sources. The main focus of our 2016/17 scrutiny visits were Walk In Centres and the Healthwatch Harrow research focussed on GP surgeries, and therefore most of our observations relate to GP access (surgeries and walk in centres).

The aim of our work has been to provide strategic support and a residents' perspective to the local CCG and NHS who strategically plan local services around access to primary care, as well as identifying what we councillors as community leaders can do to encourage residents to make best and most appropriate use of the healthcare resources available to them in Harrow.

### Our meetings

Our main areas of interest in 2016-17 have been:

- Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital Draft Quality Accounts
- Healthwatch Harrow Annual Report and Operational Plan 2016-17
- CCG update on walk-in centres procurement and plans for 2016/17
- Annual Report Of the Director of Public Health 2016
- CQC Inspection Report For LNWHT and Action Plan & Update
- North West London (NWL) Sustainability & Transformation Plan (STP)
- Harrow Diabetes Strategy
- Age UK – Befriending Service
- Access to Primary Care in Harrow – Findings of Members' Visits to WICs and Healthwatch Survey of GP Surgeries
- Shaping a Healthier Future – Update from NW London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

<b>MEETING STATISTICS</b>	
Committee meetings	3
Attendance by Portfolio Holders	N/A



Cllr Michael Borio

Chair of Health and Social Care



Cllr Mrs. Vina Mithani

Vice-Chair of Health and Social

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

In 2016/17 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**

After concerns were raised over children leaving care and Housing services a housing officer now comes to Corporate Parenting Panel when required. 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, Health and Children Looked After**

The Virtual head has been working well with the Children Looked After and although progress is being made with the Personal Education Plans they are not consistent with schools especially with schools out of borough with regard to timeliness. This has been mentioned at the Virtual school improvement board and therefore will be monitored with various strategies put into place. The health assessments have improved tremendously and now the timeliness needs to be sharpened up. Three Social workers from India have arrived and more are expected later on to help with the pressures in Children Services.

### **Youth Offending Team**

We have continued to monitor how the action plan is being implemented and the impact it is having throughout this year. IT has been a tremendous challenge for YOT because of the Councils hard and soft ware compatibility. Concern has also been raised on CLA reoffending in the recent YOT report and this will need to be addressed.

### **School Expansion Programme**

We have been monitoring the progress of the building programme and an update report on the development, progress and lessons learnt went to O&S. The report set out how the school expansion programme has equipped schools to accommodate the additional children requiring places in Harrow schools. Unfortunately the finance differences between Keepmoat and the council have yet to be resolved.

### **Care Act**

We will continue to monitor the effect on young carers next year and the reorganisation of the Early Intervention, which unfortunately has been delayed.

### **Looking Ahead**

Our focus in the forthcoming year will be to monitor the Early intervention reorganisation once it is up and running, effect if any on the merger of adults and children, review of health visiting and school nurses, the bed and breakfast impact on children's education, free school meals take up, MASH for timeliness of assessments, Young unaccompanied asylum seekers, monitoring the efforts to increase awareness and reporting of child sexual exploitation and mutilation and finally budget implications as demand increases.





Cllr Richard Almond  
Policy Lead for Children's and Families



Cllr Janet Mote  
Performance lead for Children's and Families

## **Report from the Resources Lead Members**

The Resources leads met with the Corporate Director on a quarterly basis and each time were given a presentation on Access Harrow performance. We also shared and discussed the directorates' performance board reports. Items also discussed included the backlog of new Housing Benefits claims, the accuracy of Housing Benefit awards that has led to changes to the HB process and documentation to reduce errors, the resolution of the Council's dispute with CAPTIA and the operation of the arms-length Council owned company recently set up to deliver housing.

The leads also regularly attended the Scrutiny Leads meeting which discussed wider scrutiny issues and set the work programme for Scrutiny in the coming year.

Overall, the Leads note the diminishing resources being made to scrutiny which may impact of the effectiveness of scrutiny to play a critical friend to the Council.



Cllr Stephen Wright  
Policy Lead for Resources



Cllr Phillip O'Dell  
Performance Lead for Resources

## Report from the Health Lead Members

The Health leads met with the Senior Management Team on a quarterly basis and were briefed on Healthcare issues. The leads also regularly attended the Scrutiny Leads meeting which discussed wider scrutiny issues and set the work programme for Scrutiny.

As a council we are doing a lot to raise awareness of mental health and challenge the stigma and discrimination associated with mental ill-health, both within the Council workforce and wider borough community.

To achieve this, the Council has signed up to 'Time for Change' and developed an Action Plan for 2017 with the assistance of two newly appointed Mental Health Champions (Cllr Kairul Kareema Marikar & Corporate Director of Resources – Tom Whiting) as well as officers from across different departments in the Council workforce. The Plan has been submitted to 'Time to Change' – the growing social movement run by charities Mind and Rethink Mental Illness which supports people to open up to mental health problems – who have enthusiastically supported our bid to sign their Employer Pledge. We are therefore looking forward to signing this with a public event during Mental Health Awareness week in May 2017.

As a council we want to bring people with and without experience of mental health problems together on an equal footing; creating situations where people without mental ill-health can learn about the issues which those with these difficulties often face. This is one of the most powerful ways of breaking down the stigma around mental illness.

We will provide additional training; educating staff at all levels of the Council workforce as well as those who care for young people at local schools about how to identify common mental health problems and signs of stress in both themselves and others, and the best ways to promote mental wellbeing. Furthermore, we will provide various wellbeing activities, such as Healthy Harrow Walks, Mini-Workout Sessions, and meditation & yoga classes. This will form part of our wide efforts to encourage the public to take positive steps towards being more active and healthy.

The Health Lead members are also working to raise the topic of mental health during Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee meetings, ensuring that the issue remains a priority consideration at all levels of Council decision-making and encouraging staff to communicate openly about mental health.



Cllr Kairul Kareema Marikar  
Policy Lead for Health



Cllr Vina Mithani  
Performance lead for Health

## **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 Tom McCourt, the new Corporate Director for Community and Simon Baxter, Divisional Director of Environment and Culture, there have been regular Scrutiny Leads meetings with them throughout the year.

Despite the difficult financial position and the challenges in both maintaining consistency and addressing areas that needed attention there has been a number of improvements to the service in this area, these include:

- Improving our responsiveness to issues raised by the public and improvements to the website and reporting procedures. The difficulties residents faced getting through to Harrow Council's call centre with very long delays have been addressed
- Every road in Harrow is now swept weekly
- The very long delays and difficulties getting through on the phone have been reduced
- The expansion of the Fly tipping service to a 24 hour service.
- The introduction of the "Your Place Your Space" App will further improve reporting for the public and the Council's responsiveness. This was rolled out to Councillors and Community Champions first and is now being advertised to residents. This will enable a report of an incident to be made instantly and automatically identify the exact location, which has been a problem in the past.

There has been a Challenge Panel looking at and reporting on Community Involvement in Parks which made a number of recommendations – see above.

In the E&E Area there have been reports to committee covering areas such as:

- Digitalisation and access to services online which explored and highlighted the ongoing improvements in this area.
- Homelessness pressures

In terms of the Council's visibility in this area the new management have successfully introduced an identification and branding of the operatives and services, this has led to better public identification as the Council's vehicles are now clearly identified and staff wear high quality/identifiable uniforms allowing the public to better identify the council in action. As well as better visibility this has had the benefit of allowing the operatives to recognise they are valued and have pride in their work. This has happened at the same time as new systems of working being introduced so less staff time is spent in vehicles allowing more staff to be out on the street working.

Overall there has been improvement in this area of the council's delivery, more innovation in delivery and in responsiveness to residents and the public. We look forward these improvements being continued and our roles in scrutinising for the next municipal year.



Cllr Jeff Anderson  
Policy Lead for Environment & Enterprise



Cllr Manjibhai Kara  
Performance Lead for Environment & Enterprise

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

Our focus this year was to continue and view the performance of Northwick Park A & E. The work load is steadily increasing but the quality of care (including care and attention from staff) is excellent. However at some times the amount of time before treatment is rising.

It must be noted that the A & E Department was the fourth busiest in Europe but it is now the second busiest. The new expansion of the hundred-bed for initial holding has helped. The Hospital is often full because it has problems with the delayed discharge of patients who no longer require hospital care. There can be up to a 3 – 4 hours delay from the point at which it is agreed you will be discharged – due to patients waiting for meds, sign off by doctor etc.

It may be that hospitals are currently short-staffed – this was mentioned by at least one hospital member of staff, and it is clear that being admitted from A & E is not as quick as it could be. However it is not clear whether or not this is because of elderly patients being discharged late, or whether it is due to overall high demand for beds on the wards.

We need to make sure our Occupational Therapy staff fully equipped and able in preparing packages for the easy and safe return home of patients. This will help free hospital beds quicker and budget restraints need to be monitored closely to make sure that this happens. This issue is particularly concerning due to the additional pressures which are being caused by local population increases. It is not clear to what extent the new walk in centre at Belmont will mitigate this.

A further piece of work this year will be to monitor cases of delayed patient discharge and hospital release, with our side doing its utmost to make sure home packages are completed quickly and efficiently. The old A & E department is now the Ambulatory Urgent Care Clinic and it is do an amazing job in connecting with A & E.

We are still waiting for the council's decision in supporting the opening of North Harrow Library by volunteers. This needs to be followed up as it is over eighteen months since its closure. The volunteers are getting very despondent in not having a firm decision made and will lose the will to take the library on.

The delay with this library is because the trustees did not want to accept the three year lease at a peppercorn rent that the landlord was prepared to offer them. An alternative longer lease is being prepared but will need to be accepted by the landlord before it can be offered to the trustees. We would like an update on where officers are on this.

### **Looking forward...**

Further study is required on hospital patient discharge delays and patient release packages.

A quick decision on North Harrow library and what support the council will give.

We will need to study the effects of budgets restraints on the Voluntary Sector.

We also need to assess the effect of the move of the STARRS team to Honeypot Lane.



Cllr Chris Mote

Policy Lead for Community Health & Wellbeing



Cllr Chika Amadi

Performance Lead for Community Health & Wellbeing

## **Report from the Call-in Sub-Committee**

There have been no meetings this year for either the call-in Sub-Committee or the Sub-Committee for Education.

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<sup>i</sup> [http://www.harrow.gov.uk/downloads/file/7359/jsna\\_2015-2020](http://www.harrow.gov.uk/downloads/file/7359/jsna_2015-2020)