

SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

Report by the Scrutiny Leadership Group

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Report by the Scrutiny Leadership Group¹, supported by the Policy Team.

¹ During 2018-2022, the Scrutiny Leadership Group comprised the following members: Councillors Sachin Shah (Chair), Stephen Greek (Vice-Chair), Dan Anderson, Ghazanfar Ali, Michael Borio, Honey Jamie, Jean Lammiman, Dr Lesline Lewinson, Jerry Miles, Vina Mithani, Chris Mote, Janet Mote, Pritesh Patel, Kantilal Rabadia, Kiran Ramchandani and Rekha Shah

Foreword

This report marks the end of another four-year cycle of scrutinising the Administration of Harrow Council. From 2018 – 2022, we strived to make sure that Harrow’s scrutiny function was at the centre of decision-making at the Council. The focus on scrutiny among officers and councillors has improved decision-making and augmented policy formation. We continued to influence the issues that matter most to residents and asked that the Executive use us constructively and proactively as a ‘critical friend’ and sounding board.

The work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, its two sub-committees (Performance and Finance, and Health and Social Care), call-in committees, scrutiny reviews and scrutiny leads have investigated and reviewed some of the biggest issues facing the Council and Harrow residents.

Some of the key highlights have included: in-depth reviews into the Council’s budget; issues pertaining to increasing homelessness; maintaining healthcare provision; youth violence; community safety; maintenance of the borough’s highways; the Council’s ten-year priorities for the borough and its largest regeneration programme to date, as well as the Council and local partners’ response to and recovery from the pandemic.

From March 2020, our work was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and in response to the ongoing situation, we recalibrated our work plan to enable some flexibility. This meant focusing on essential issues including the condition of Council housing, licensing and enforcement processes, access to primary care services, personal safety, the Council’s IT Modernisation Programme, a review of its work on race, diversity and inclusion, and progress against the priorities in its 10-year Borough Plan.

During this municipal cycle, we have continued to closely scrutinise the development of the borough’s regeneration programme, specifically through the new Harrow Strategic Development Partnership (HSDP) and its move to new premises and associated finances. We created a new structure and process for ensuring that all aspects of the programme were reviewed in extensive detail and achieved through a series of preliminary informal and formal meetings before the signing of contracts with the Council’s new development partner – Wates - in late 2021. This contemporary approach brought together members across both parties to share their expertise and experience of the scrutiny process. We take great pride in having achieved this cross-party cooperation.

Over the past four years, we have been privileged to be able to meet, visit and hear from people impacted by issues and we heard first-hand the perspectives of Harrow’s residents. This subsequently reflected the real-life experiences back to policy makers and aimed to shine a light on the impact that policy decisions, service reductions and budget cuts have on our residents.

We are also extremely grateful to all of the Councillors, past and present, who have contributed to the work of the Scrutiny Leadership Group during this municipal cycle, including Cllr Jeff Anderson, who chaired the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from 2018-2019.

We would also like to thank members, officers, partners and residents who have contributed to our scrutiny work over the past four years. We appreciate the time and effort you have given and the skills and expertise you have brought to the table.



Councillor Sachin Shah
Chair, Overview and Scrutiny



Councillor Stephen Greek
Vice-Chair, Overview and Scrutiny

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Sachin Shah – Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Stephen Greek – Vice-Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Our role

As always, our vision for scrutiny in Harrow has been ‘**cross-party investigation of issues and decisions that are important to residents**’. This guides the development of our work programme and ensures a balance between holding the council administration and health partners to account, as well as investigating and influencing the Council and partners’ approaches to issues of concern to residents.

The Council’s scrutiny function is driven forward by the Scrutiny Leadership Group, made up of the chairs and vice-chairs of the committees and the scrutiny leads, whose work and achievements are highlighted in this report. The Scrutiny Leadership Group provides strategic direction to the scrutiny function and helps to ensure that we maintain an effective focus for our work, acting as a critical friend to the Council and influencing key decisions. Meetings are held bi-monthly and they bring together the feedback from scrutiny leads on progress in their different service areas. Appendix 1 on page **22** lists all the issues we have considered through our committee work.

During 2021-2022, our work continued to be dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the local response and related issues. Our Scrutiny Work Programme was revised accordingly so we could focus our efforts on the big issues for the Council and Harrow more widely. We remained on track to deliver robust scrutiny of the major issues detailed in our Work Programme for the final year of the current municipal cycle.

The committee met a total of nine times, during which various priorities were established:

- Covid-19 – the impact of the pandemic, emergency response, recovery and resilience, and the provision of business grants.
- Regeneration - the setting up of the Harrow Strategic Development Partnership for the redevelopment of various Council sites, including the construction of a new Civic Centre on the Peel Road site, has been ongoing throughout the past year. We ensured that our scrutiny function was properly factored into all decision-making timetables. We continued to scrutinise its progress, governance, budgets and development plans for sites across the borough through the continuation of informal and formal scrutiny meetings.
- Budget – we continued to scrutinise current and future financial challenges faced by the Council, and plans to manage budget shortages, while ensuring that vital services continue to be delivered to residents. Secondly, we have been keen to scrutinise the Council’s overall financial position to make sure that we (a) avoid the issues encountered by Croydon Council and have continued to question officers on the health of the budget, and (b) highlighted the risks and challenges of using Council reserves to balance the budget, as set in the Mid-Term Financial Strategy, which was approved by the Council in February 2022.
- The Council’s Accommodation Strategy and the impact on staff and services for residents, as a result of the move from the Civic Centre to re-developed premises in Wealdstone.

- Race equality, diversity and inclusion - in 2021, the Council commissioned an internal Independent Race Review of the Council's role as an employer. A cross-party working group was set up to provide feedback on the Review and monitor outcomes of the Council's new Race Action Plan.
- Community Safety – we continued to highlight the importance of implementing personal safety measures across the borough.
- Enforcement and licensing - we scrutinised the approach taken on enforcement by the team during the last 12 months, reviewing planning, fly-tipping and enforcement of Public Protection Notices among other issues.
- The Council's 10-year Borough Plan, published in early 2020 – we reviewed the progress and achievements against the Council's eight key priorities and highlighted the need for benchmarking to help measure progress and opportunities to review lessons learned from the pandemic.

During 2021/2022, we 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 2021 and January 2022). We are grateful for the information shared.

Recommendations for a future work programme

Our main recommendation for a future work programme would be to align the work of Scrutiny with the priorities of the Borough Plan, and to support input and engagement to future strategies from residents and community partners.

Key issues for the scrutiny function should include:

- reviewing the impact of the pandemic on residents and lessons learned
- challenges in relation to health and social care and access to services
- community safety and personal safety priorities
- economic recovery and development
- the Council's commitment to race equality (and the broader Equality, Diversity and Inclusion agenda) and creating a diverse workforce
- the Council's ability to effectively measure progress and performance

In addition to this, we will need to look at the ongoing challenge of balancing the Council's budget as well as continuing scrutiny of its overall modernisation plan, its move to new premises and the regeneration plans under the Harrow Strategic Development Partnership (HSDP). We hope, like so many other people, that the scrutiny function is able to return to some form of normality as soon as possible, and it will be Scrutiny's responsibility to know what that means for the Council and Harrow residents.

“It's been both a privilege and honour to have chaired the Overview and Scrutiny Committee over the past three years.

While Covid-19 continued to present challenges during 2021-2022, the Committee was able to hold the Council's executive to account on a range of matters, including its work on race, diversity and inclusion, its financial position, as well as continuing to undertake a detailed review of the borough's regeneration programme - one of the most significant decisions the Council has taken in over a decade and one that impacts both staff and residents.

The scrutiny process overall has been strengthened, with increased opportunities and a willingness among members to work collaboratively and collectively, leading to improved accountability on the Council's part.

I am very proud of the work and impact of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during this municipal cycle."

Cllr Sachin Shah, Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

"I've really enjoyed my time being a part of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The role has provided me the opportunity to take on board issues raised by residents, look at them in more detail and understand the 'nuts and bolts' of key council priorities and shine a light on the impact of decisions on residents.

Helping the Council to recognise the value that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can bring has been a truly rewarding experience."

Cllr Stephen Greek, Vice-Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee



**Councillor Kiran Ramchandani – Chair,
Performance and Finance Sub-Committee**

**Councillor Pritesh Patel – Vice-Chair,
Performance and Finance Sub-Committee**

Our role

As members of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee, it is our role to challenge and scrutinise the council and its partners' performance against priorities in terms of finance, operational delivery and service provision. It is imperative that the scrutiny is performed in a constructive manner that is apolitical, is focused on improving the council's performance and most importantly, ensures the provision of efficient services that are considered value-for-money for the taxpayer.

Key Highlights of this Municipal Cycle

A key highlight of our work over the past four years was the launch of a cross-party commission looking into the roll-out of Universal Credit in Harrow and what practical support was available to our residents. We highlighted the inequalities faced by residents that did not have digital access and recommended that targeted support was made available to people struggling with completing the online application form.

We brought to the Council's attention issues with the distribution of COVID grants to businesses.

We also helped influence decisions around the Council's procurement processes while simultaneously ensuring the payment of the London Living Wage to staff and by Council contractors.

The focus of our work over the past year

Ordinarily, our attention is split between performance and finance. However, the corporate performance monitoring framework has had to be suspended for an indefinite period while organisational effort shifted to deal with the pandemic (although it is recognised that the Council moved to a Covid Gold performance reporting process during the pandemic). Furthermore, whilst our priority has been to scrutinise finance, examining the Council's performance will be a key priority moving forward.

At the start of the pandemic, we held a joint scrutiny meeting, which brought together members of the Overview & Scrutiny group and its sub-committees to consider the Council's response, focusing on looking at the pandemic through different lenses and perspectives and how we look after residents.

The impact and value of our scrutiny

Through the Performance and Finance Sub-Committee, where the Director of Finance and Cabinet member for Finance regularly met to report on progress and be held accountable, a space was provided for more robust scrutiny processes. Through undertaking in-depth scrutiny, we have continued to hold the Administration to account on financial matters, ensuring robust governance processes. This was exemplified most clearly through the meetings of the Performance and Finance Committee in December 2021 and a special Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in January 2022 to review the Council's financial position.

We have maintained pressure on the Executive and applied scrutiny on how budgets are set. Our questioning of quarterly budget reports has helped highlight deviations from planned versus actual performance, and the overall health of the organisation from a performance and finance perspective.

Recommendations for a future work programme

We will continue to robustly challenge financial and budgetary aspects of the regeneration scheme and the Council's finances in general.

As we come out of the pandemic, we need to get back to a balance of looking at performance as well as finance – we need to look across the board and dive deep into areas of specific concern.

There has been an impact on council services due to the pandemic. Therefore, questions pertaining to the post-pandemic status quo - its impact on our different services, what we have learned to do, to proceed with our work differently or better - have to be asked. We want to take a closer look at what is stated within Council plans and what has actually been achieved.

A watching brief should include a review of the performance of our contact centre which has been proactively contacting residents during the pandemic and making phone calls to check their welfare (which was part of the work specifically to support residents who were shielding or through Test and Trace).

“It's not that you take one subject to scrutinise and it's done - it's an ongoing process, holding officers to account and checking if things have improved.”

Cllr Kiran Ramchandani - Chair, Performance & Finance Committee

Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee



**Cllr Michael Borio, Cllr Rekha Shah-
Chair and the late Cllr Vina Mithani –
former Vice- Chair, Health and Social
Care Sub-Committee**



**Cllr Dr Lesline Lewinson-
current Vice-Chair, Health
and Social Care Sub-
Committee**

Our role

The role of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee is to consider health, social care and wellbeing issues key to Harrow residents on a local, London-wide and national level. The aim of our work has been to provide strategic support and a residents' perspective to the local Harrow Borough Based Partnership (formerly the North-West London Clinical Commissioning Group - CCG) and NHS, who strategically plan local services around access to primary and acute care. We also seek to identify what we councillors, as community leaders, can do to encourage residents to make the best and most appropriate use of the healthcare resources available to them in Harrow.

The Health and Social Care Sub-Committee has pursued this by scrutinising the main health stakeholders in Harrow. The sub-committee meets three times a year as well as organises additional meetings with stakeholders in private sessions.

Key Highlights of this Municipal Cycle

Over the last four years, the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Subcommittee has received regular updates from relevant stakeholders including representatives of Harrow Council, the CCG, London North-West University Healthcare NHS Trust, Healthwatch Harrow, CNWL, and received regular updates on the work of the North-West London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC). Prior to Covid-19, two key items of work were undertaken. These were:

- the Dementia Friendly Housing Scrutiny Review, which was conducted in 2017/18. For the review, we conducted visits and pulled together evidence, learning and best practice around meeting the health and housing needs of an older population with dementia, as projections for the number of people expected to develop the condition increase. In 2018/19, we were able to review and input into the Council's Draft

Dementia Strategy for 2018-2021, drawing upon the evidence and recommendations from our Dementia Friendly Housing Scrutiny Review of 2017/18.

- proposed changes to Walk-in Services in Harrow, particularly at the Alexandra Avenue Health and Social Care Centre and the Pinn Medical Centre. In 2018/19 we also looked at the changes to Walk-in Services at both these locations, hearing from a range of local stakeholders, including the CCG. This resulted in changes to the planned removal of Walk-In services at the Pinn Medical Centre.

During our time on health scrutiny, we have been very grateful for the support of Council officers in assisting with the work of the Sub-Committee - with special thanks to Nahreen Matlib and Farah Ikram.

We would like to thank Paul Hewitt, Corporate Director of People's Services, for keeping us well briefed on what is happening in the local health and social care arena and facilitating many of the discussions between scrutiny and NHS partner organisations. We very much appreciate Paul's openness to scrutiny and his active role within it. Paul has announced his intention to retire later this year and we wish him the very best in the future.

The focus of our work over the past year

Throughout 2021/22, Covid-19 has continued to be a major part of the work of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee as we assessed the situation in care homes and hospitals, community infection rates and testing, and the rollout of the vaccination and booster programme. At the same time, we have also continued to monitor:

- the reorganisation of CCGs in North-West London into a single CCG,
- the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre Review
- the CQC inspection of Northwick Park Hospital's maternity services and A&E department in April 2021
- progress on the Integrated Care Partnership in Harrow
- the response to Healthwatch reports on GP and primary care access in Harrow
- the Council's Adult Social Care Strategy, the Mental Health Strategy/Mental Health review
- updates on the work of the NW London JHOSC.

As Scrutiny Leads, we have continued to meet with relevant stakeholders through our regular meetings with the Director of People's Services and the Director of Public Health at Harrow Council.

The impact and value of our scrutiny

Due to the various lockdowns and Covid-19 national restrictions, we have continued to hold committee meetings remotely in 2021/22. However, the Health and Social Care Sub-committee Scrutiny has ensured that the Council's response and effectiveness of responding to the Covid-19 pandemic in Harrow has continued to be monitored. At the same time, we ensured that other important areas of health in Harrow have continued to be scrutinised.

As health scrutiny councillors, we have provided a crucial public platform to discuss and seek assurance on issues around dealing with and responding to the pandemic across

health and social care partner agencies. It has also been important to us to determine what role councillors can play in sharing information and the right messages with residents in such challenging and unprecedented times.

We believe that our work on scrutiny will lead to improved outcomes for Harrow residents, with lessons learned, as we continue to deal with Covid-19 in the coming year. We have also used the messages highlighted to us by NHS colleagues in our own role as community leaders, for example around measures to prevent the transmission of the Coronavirus and challenging misinformation about the benefits and safety of the vaccination programme.

Our role on the NW London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee has meant that Harrow is represented in regional discussions with health leaders. For example, over the past year, we have scrutinised the development of the Integrated Care System, the regional response to the pandemic and roll out of the vaccination programme, as well as proposals for changes to the London Ambulance Service, the NHS digital strategy and palliative care in NW London.

Recommendations for a future work programme

For the third year running, Covid-19 will continue to dominate the work of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Subcommittee in 2022/23. Recommendations for future work include:

- the lessons learned from the pandemic, how we learn to live with COVID, the potential impact of long Covid on Harrow residents
- health care inequalities in Harrow- which have exacerbated through cancelled operations and appointments during the Covid-19 pandemic
- monitoring the reorganisation of CCGs in North-West London
- the implementation of the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre Review with its proposed relocation to Watford General Hospital
- plans to expand the chemotherapy unit at Northwick Park Hospital
- assess the impact on Harrow residents following the Government's White Paper on Social Care which was finally published in December 2021

We would also wish to see ongoing updates from the hospital trust on progressing the Maternity Action Plan and making long-term improvements to the service, development of plans to move St Mark's from the Northwick Park site, as well as continued participation in the JHOSC.

“As the Chair of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee for several years, I have developed an extensive interest in this sector. I have worked with the CCG, NW University Healthcare NHS Trust, Healthwatch Harrow, CNWL and also fed back regular updates from JHOSC to our Scrutiny Committee.

The scrutiny role has been particularly fulfilling and given us opportunities to scrutinise work of our local stakeholders, hold them to account and provide better outcomes for our local community when it comes to their health and wellbeing.”

Cllr Rekha Shah, Chair, Health and Social Care Sub-Committee

“Health remains a vital concern for us all, and I was pleased to join the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-committee in the past two years. There have been a number of challenging developments for the provision and delivery of healthcare going forward, requiring careful scrutiny. As a qualified nurse, Midwife, Health Visitor and Lecturer in Adult Nursing/research, I have an opportunity to contribute constructively on the committee from a sound knowledge base, as we examine matters of health and social care that affect the people of Harrow.”

Cllr Lesline Lewinson, Vice-Chair, Health and Social Care Sub-Committee

“Throughout my eight years as a councillor and serving on the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee, I have had a long-standing interest in health and social care issues. This originated in my previous policy work in the charity sector, and through my own personal family experience in recent years dealing with navigating the complexities of the social care system and related hospital admissions. I have therefore welcomed the opportunity to be able to scrutinise these decisions locally here in Harrow, working on behalf of our residents to hold key local stakeholders to account and to improve health outcomes for our residents.”

Cllr Michael Borio, Scrutiny Lead, Health and Social Care Sub-Committee

We would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to two councillor colleagues who were so integral to the health scrutiny function and have sadly passed away this year - Councillor Chris Mote and Councillor Vina Mithani.



Councillor Vina Mithani was the Vice-Chair of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee for many years and we worked closely together to ensure that we were raising and pursuing the issues on health and social that mattered most to local people. Councillor Mithani always put forward the perspective of residents, as well as advocating for the workforce – the staff delivering such vital services. Her contribution to the council and scrutiny will be greatly missed.



Councillor Chris Mote was a stalwart of the council. His approach to scrutiny came from a position as a passionate councillor who wanted to deliver the best for our communities. His knowledge of council and health services was immense, second to none, and this will be greatly missed.

People Scrutiny Leads



Councillor Janet Mote, People Scrutiny Lead

Councillor Jerry Miles, People Scrutiny Lead

Our role

As scrutiny lead members for the People Directorate, our role is to be a critical friend to the organisation and to help residents of Harrow of all ages – from birth to old age.

Key Highlights of this Municipal Cycle

The key highlights of our work over the past four years have regarded the Council's work around youth violence and the incorporation of priorities to tackle the issue within its overarching Community Safety, Violence Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy, published in 2018.

The focus of our work over the past year

In our role, it is so important to go out and meet people in the community. However, the onset of the pandemic in early 2020 made it difficult to do so.

Despite the status quo, we wanted to find out what people are doing through other ways and get to know all the good things being done for Harrow residents.

We have continued to engage regularly with Harrow Council's Corporate Director for People Services - Paul Hewitt - and officers working across Adult and Children's Services and Public Health, to review progress across the directorate, to better understand the challenges.

The focus of our work during 2021- 2022 included children and youth. We focused on schools, children's centres, the roll-out of the vaccination programme across secondary schools and the impact of closures on staff and learning.

Since 2020, many of the challenges have been Covid-related and its significant impact on adult social care, the elderly in care homes and the community, schools, children, and their families. Council officers, together with service providers and borough partners have worked tirelessly to support these groups under extremely challenging circumstances.

We also want to highlight the superb roll out of the Covid-19 vaccination programme in Harrow and thank all those involved in protecting our most vulnerable residents and wider communities.

The pandemic has had an impact on mental health – particularly young people in the Borough. This was evidenced within the How Are You Harrow survey, commissioned by the Young Harrow Foundation last summer, which captures the views of over 6,000 young people in the borough.

In addition, Harrow has a growing older population. Consequently, demand for support both within a care setting and at home, discharge into the community after a hospital-stay, coupled with responding to the COVID crisis and preventing the spread of the virus among residents in care and home settings, created significant resource and budgetary pressures within Adult Services.

The impact and value of our scrutiny

Scrutiny has provided us with a valuable oversight of what the Council is doing to address the impact of COVID-19 in schools. The Council's vaccination roll-out programme has been successful. Given our role within the community, we were able to bring to the attention of the Council a campaign to disrupt the take-up of vaccinations. As a result, the Council was able to act swiftly to reassure residents and reduce barriers to people taking up the opportunity to be vaccinated.

“Despite the challenges presented over the past few years, community spirit and resilience among residents remain strong. We look forward to resuming face-to-face engagement and making a difference to people’s lives - young and old.”

Cllr Janet Mote, People Scrutiny Lead

“One of the best things about Scrutiny is that it is cross-party and collaborative. We all work together.”

Cllr Jerry Miles, People Scrutiny Lead

Recommendations for a future work programme

Looking ahead, we need to continue to monitor the consequences of Covid-19 in relation to care homes, assess the recruitment and retention of care staff and enquire to what extent the vaccination programme was successful in reducing hospital admissions.

We want to understand further the impact of COVID-19 on young people's mental health as well as youth violence and the pressures on Adult Social Care, Children's Services and safeguarding children, while simultaneously assessing the impact on the Council's finances.

We want to review progress made through engagement with communities in Wealdstone. The Council's Regeneration Programme will continue to remain a key priority – in particular, the closure of the main Civic Centre and the relocation of services and staff within Adults and Children's Services across Council buildings.

Further to a review into the maternity unit at Northwick Park Hospital, we would recommend a review of progress against the improvement plan.

Community Scrutiny Leads



Community Scrutiny Leads Cllr Jean Lammiman and Cllr Ghazanfar Ali (until 2021)



Community Scrutiny Leads Cllr Jean Lammiman and Cllr Kairul Kareema Marikar (2021- 2022)

“Collectively, the Council and its members pride themselves as being an organisation that learns from its experiences and its work, both when things go well and not so well, and tries to do better each time. It’s an iterative process. The Scrutiny Leadership Team has made a valuable contribution towards achieving this.”

Cllr Jean Lammiman, Community Scrutiny Lead

Our role

In Community, we look at a wide range of issues; from the environment, libraries, and homelessness, to cleanliness, personal safety and roadworks - things that affect residents directly. The focus over the past four years has been on Harrow residents and ensuring that the needs of the community are considered when decisions are taken that impact their lives.

The focus of our work over the past year

A good part of our focus this year has been on housing, homelessness, and enforcement and the way in which residents are consulted.

During 2021, the media coverage concerning poor social housing conditions and its harm to people’s physical and mental health compelled us to think about the state of social housing within the borough and the importance of a healthy living environment. We engaged regularly with housing officers to find out more and will continue to monitor the situation, as well as referring matters to our Cabinet colleagues and the Senior management Board.

Our watching brief was around Enforcement processes within the Council, specifically Public Space Protection Orders, fly-tipping, licencing, and planning.

We worked closely with Enforcement officers to review and identify issues within certain elements of the function - and ways in which the processes could be transformed and delivered in a cohesive way that benefit residents and businesses.

We reviewed the Council's new Economic Development Strategy to 2030, focusing on the Council's immediate response to the impacts of Covid-19 on the community, businesses, housing and regeneration plans and future objectives to improve skills and job opportunities for residents.

The impact and value of our scrutiny

During this municipal cycle, we aimed to create a culture of open dialogue and collaboration alongside scrutiny colleagues and officers and worked across the organisation, through a process of cross-fertilisation and added value to other areas of the Council's work.

- We carried out a review of the Council's Highways and Maintenance Plans and reviewed how the Council consulted and communicated with residents, getting the utility companies to collaborate with us.
- Homelessness – a Homelessness Action Board was set up last year and we are engaging regularly with officers on what action the Council is taking to address issues in the borough.
- We requested a review of the business case and cost benefit analysis for the installation of heat pumps across the Council's social housing stock.
- Regular discussions with Enforcement Officers and input regarding its processes has helped us take a detailed look at how these are currently structured and can be adapted to look at new ways of working and help improve the way things are done in the future. The Enforcement department has now been restructured into cross departmental teams which will hopefully prove to be more effective.

Raising the importance of communication and consultation with residents has been a key priority for us - particularly during the pandemic - which proved to be a challenge.

The Scrutiny Leadership Group has made a real mark over this municipal cycle. It has, over recent years, developed a more focused approach to enabling change and facilitated opportunities to influence key decisions.

Our work on reviewing the Council processes has helped facilitate transformation and change and ensure that residents are being served better.

Recommendations for a future work programme

Looking to the future, the resuming of consultation and dialogue with our residents is imperative to help us gain a better understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on our residents.

Homelessness and its causes, as well as the condition of council housing and the Council's Regeneration Plan, continue to remain a key priority.

The murders of Sarah Everard, Bibaa Henry, Nicole Smallman and Sabina Nessa have shone a spotlight on the issue of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), highlighted the importance of personal safety, and reinforced the need to create a safe environment across the borough. We would like to influence and shape the Council's Community Safety,

Violence Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy in the coming years to take account of the above.

We would also like to review the Council's work around supporting Syrian, Afghan and Ukrainian refugees and migrants to settle in the borough.

“As former mayors and scrutiny lead members, we have brought to the table our deep links with the community and an ethos of collaborative working, which has been invaluable in performing our scrutiny work effectively.”

Cllr Kairul Kareema Marikar, Community Scrutiny Lead

Resources Scrutiny Leads



Resources Scrutiny Leads Councillor Honey Jamie and Councillor Kantilal Rabadia



Councillor Dan Anderson, Resources Scrutiny Lead

Our role

We are involved in shaping the Scrutiny Work Programme as part of the Scrutiny Leadership Group. Our focus is to ensure that services and programmes within the Resources directorate are reflected in scrutiny's work.

We work with the Corporate Director of Resources to review and understand the improvements made by the directorate as part of the Modernisation Programme.

Key Highlights of this Municipal Cycle

Some of the key highlights of our work over the past four years have included a review of the Council's customer service function and its move towards improving the Council's website and online access for residents.

Between 2019 and 2021, we undertook a review into the Council's shared services arrangements with other local authorities. This review examined examples of existing and past shared services, with a view to determining the success and learnings from such arrangements and processes. We reported back our conclusions to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April 2021 and have asked that the Cabinet consider the recommendations when Executive capacity allows.

The focus of our work over the past year

Over the past few years, a significant amount of the organisation's capacity has been directed towards responding to the pandemic and supporting residents and businesses to deal with the impact.

This has required Harrow's technology and IT systems to move with the times and placed emphasis on how the council interacts with residents.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the implementation of the Council's new IT services and channel migration.

The Council had to adapt to new ways of working due to the challenges faced because of the pandemic. Therefore, new IT infrastructure was implemented to ensure the work of the Council was able to continue.

The impact and value of our scrutiny

The Council's Accommodation Strategy, its regeneration plans for the borough, and its Modernisation Programme and budgets have been a constant feature of the Scrutiny Leadership Group's work programme during this municipal cycle. Deeper questioning around plans, and practical and financial implications has helped provide further clarity in relation to the decision-making process.

We have continued to monitor the implementation of plans in an effort to better understand and recommend improvements in productivity and efficiency of services to residents and pushing for value for money, and better outcomes for residents.

"The Scrutiny process over the past four years has been robust, comprehensive and in-depth, and strengthened our ability to influence decisions and make recommendations and provide better outcomes for residents."

Cllr Kantilal Rabadia, Resources Scrutiny Lead.

Recommendations for a future work programme

The move from the Civic Centre to new premises later this year, practical implications and impact on staff, and levels of productivity and performance arising from remote working should remain a priority for future scrutiny.

Close monitoring of the Council's Modernisation Programme, progress and impact, productivity and efficiency should be an ongoing priority. The transition to new technology and an assessment of whether the programme has the right calibre of skills and expertise to deliver outcomes in accordance with expectations, and whether this will lead to improvements in the way the Council operates, should be reviewed.

The IT budget and disposal of old technology should also be reviewed.

Harrow Strategic Development Partnership: Financial viability, as well as the legal, financial and contractual governance processes are important.

Appendix 1: Scrutiny Committee Business and Attendance 2021-2022:

Performance and Finance Sub-Committee		
<p>Chair: Councillor Kiran Ramchandani Vice-Chair: Councillor Pritesh Patel</p> <p>Other Members: Councillors; Kairul Kareema Marikar, Ajay Maru, Nitesh Hirani, Pritesh Patel, Niraj Dattani (Reserve), Dean Gilligan (Reserve), David Perry (Reserve), Ameet Jogia (Reserve), Amir Moshenson (Reserve).</p> <p>Co-optees:</p> <p>Committee details & agenda papers for meetings available on Harrow Council Website [insert in link form].</p>		
Meetings	Attendees	Main Items
13 December 2021	<p>Portfolio Holders: Councillor Simon Brown Councillor Christine Robson</p> <p>Scrutiny Members: Councillor Kiran Ramchandani (Chair) Councillor Pritesh Patel (vice-chair)</p> <p>Councillor Kairul Kareema Marikar Councillor Ajay Maru Councillor Nitesh Hirani</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue and Capital Monitoring 2020/21 Final Outturn, Draft Revenue Budget 2022/23 Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25 Draft Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25 Children and Families Services Complaints Annual Report 2020/21 Adults Services Complaints Annual Report (social care only) 2020/21
29 March 2022	<p>Portfolio Holders: TBA</p> <p>Scrutiny Members: Councillor Kiran Ramchandani (Chair) Councillor Pritesh Patel (vice-chair)</p> <p>Councillor Kairul Kareema Marikar Councillor Ajay Maru Councillor Nitesh Hirani</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenue and Capital Monitoring Report 2021/22 (Q3) Final Revenue Budget Report 2022/23 Final MTFs Report 2022/23 to 2024/25

Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
<p>Chair: Councillor Sachin Shah Vice-Chair: Councillor Stephen Greek</p> <p>Other Members: Councillors Dan Anderson; Jeff Anderson; Sarah Butterworth; Ajay Maru; Jean Lammiman; Janet Mote; Kanti Rabadia; Ms M Trivedi; Harrow Youth Parliament Representative.</p> <p>Co-optees: Mr N Ransley, Reverend P Reece</p> <p>Committee details & agenda papers for meetings available on Harrow Council Website</p>		
Meetings	Attendees	Main Items
5 May 2021 (Special)	<p>Scrutiny Members: Councillor Sachin Shah (Chair) Councillor Stephen Greek (Vice-Chair)</p> <p>Councillor Dan Anderson Councillor Jeff Anderson Councillor Sarah Butterworth Councillor Jean Lammiman Councillor James Lee Councillor Jerry Miles Councillor Chris Mote Councillor Kanti Rabadia Councillor Ajay Maru</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of Vice-Chair • Establishment of Sub-Committees 2021/22. • Appointment of Scrutiny Leads 2021/22.
17 May 2021	<p>Portfolio Holder Councillor Graham Henson</p> <p>Scrutiny Members: Councillor Sachin Shah (Chair) Councillor Stephen Greek (Vice-Chair)</p> <p>Councillor Dan Anderson Councillor Jerry Miles (Substituted representative of Cllr Jeff Anderson) Councillor Sarah Butterworth Councillor James Lee (Substituted representative of Cllr Ajay Maru) Councillor Jean Lammiman Councillor Chris Mote Councillor Kanti Rabadia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's Accommodation Strategy and the Harrow New Civic Centre
1 July 2021	<p>Portfolio Holders: Councillor Graham Henson Councillor Natasha Proctor</p> <p>Scrutiny Members:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harrow Strategic Development Partnership - Contract Close and Establishment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Q &A - Governance and Structure

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	<p>Councillor Sachin Shah (Chair) Councillor Stephen Greek (Vice-Chair)</p> <p>Councillor Dan Anderson Councillor Jeff Anderson Councillor Sarah Butterworth Councillor Angella Murphy-Strachan Councillor Jean Lammiman Councillor Chris Mote Councillor Kanti Rabadia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business Planning - Monitoring, Finance and the Business Plan, Risk Register, Housing, Accommodation.
12 July (Special)	<p>Portfolio Holders Councillor Graham Henson Councillor Natasha Proctor Councillor Krishna Suresh</p> <p>Scrutiny Members: Councillor Sachin Shah (Chair) Councillor Stephen Greek (Vice-Chair) Councillor Dan Anderson Councillor Jeff Anderson Councillor Sarah Butterworth Councillor James Lee (Representative, Substituted for Councillor Ajay Maru) Councillor Jean Lammiman Councillor Ramji Chauhan (Representative, Substituted for Councillor Kanti Rabadia)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion • Q & A Session with the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive - The Covid-19 Pandemic - Council Finances - Equality - Performance issues and Consultations - General strategic direction of the Council - Harrow Strategic Development Partnership
14 September 2021	<p>Portfolio Holder: Councillor Graham Henson Councillor Varsha Parmar Councillor Krishna Suresh</p> <p>Scrutiny Members: Councillor Sachin Shah (Chair) Councillor Stephen Greek (Vice-Chair) Councillor Dan Anderson Councillor Jeff Anderson Councillor Sarah Butterworth Councillor Ajay Maru Councillor Jean Lammiman Councillor Kanti Rabadia</p> <p>Guests: Councillor Graham Henson Councillor Varsha Parmar</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race Equality in Harrow Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Race Equality Action Plan

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	<p>Councillor Kiran Ramchandani</p> <p>External Agencies: Harrow Youth Parliament Representative</p>	
14 December 2021	<p>Portfolio Holder: Cllr Peymana Assad</p> <p>Scrutiny Members: Councillor Sachin Shah (Chair) Councillor Stephen Greek (Vice-Chair)</p> <p>Councillor Dan Anderson Councillor Jeff Anderson Councillor Sarah Butterworth Councillor Sasi Suresh (Substituted representative for Councillor Ajay Maru) Councillor Jean Lammiman Councillor Janet Mote Councillor Kanti Rabadia</p> <p>Guest: Councillor Kairul Kareema Marikar</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Lead Member for Health appointed • Council's approach to Enforcement: Licensing and Enforcement Update • Community Safety Strategic Assessment 2021
11 January 2022 (Special)	<p>Portfolio Holder: Councillor Natasha Proctor</p> <p>Scrutiny Members: Councillor Sachin Shah (Chair) Councillor Stephen Greek (Vice-Chair)</p> <p>Councillor Dan Anderson Councillor Jeff Anderson Councillor Sarah Butterworth Councillor Jerry Miles (Reserve for Ajay Maru) Councillor Jean Lammiman Councillor Janet Mote Councillor Kanti Rabadia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q&A with Leader of the Council and Chief Executive. • Draft Revenue Budget 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25 • Draft Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25 • Quarter 2 Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring 2021/22
8 February 2022	<p>Portfolio Holder: Councillor Graham Henson</p> <p>Scrutiny Members: Councillor Stephen Greek (Vice-Chair)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's Borough Plan – Key achievements and future intentions

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	<p>Councillor Dan Anderson Councillor Jeff Anderson Councillor Sarah Butterworth Councillor Jean Lammiman Councillor Janet Mote Councillor Kantilal Rabadia Councillor Sasi Suresh Councillor James Lee Councillor Norman Stevenson</p> <p>Guest: Councillor Kairul Marikar</p>	
8 March 2022 (Special	<p>Portfolio Holder: Councillor Graham Henson</p> <p>Scrutiny Members: Councillor Sachin Shah (Chair) Councillor Stephen Greek (Vice-Chair) Councillor Jerry Miles (reserve) Councillor Dan Anderson Councillor Jeff Anderson Councillor Jean Lammiman Councillor Philip Benjamin (reserve) Councillor Norman Stevenson (reserve)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harrow Strategic Development Partnership - Progress Update
5 April 2022	TBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Annual Report

<p>Health and Social Care Committee</p> <p>Chair: Councillor Rekha Shah Vice-Chair: [Current] Councillor Dr Lesline Lewinson</p> <p>Other Members: Councillors; Michael Borio, Kairul Kareema Marikar, Hitesh Karia, Niraj Dattani (Reserve), Dan Anderson (Reserve), Chloe Smith (Reserve) Chetna Halai (Reserve)</p> <p>Co-optees: Julian Maw (Advisor), Dr Merali (Advisor)</p> <p>Committee details & agenda papers for meetings available on Harrow Council Website</p>		
Meetings	Attendees	Main Items
22 June 2021	<p>Portfolio Holder: Councillor Simon Brown Councillor Christine Robson</p> <p>Scrutiny Members:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covid and Vaccinations Update for Harrow • Progress of the Integrated Care Partnership in Harrow

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	<p>Councillor Rekha Shah (Chair) Councillor Vina Mithani (Vice-Chair) Councillor Michael Borio Councillor Kairul Kareema Marikar Councillor Dr Lesline Lewinson</p> <p>Guests: Julian Maw (Advisor) Dr N Merali (Advisor) Representatives from Partner Organisations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCG, NWLH NHS Trust, Healthwatch Harrow, CNWL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> System response to the Healthwatch reports on GP and Primary Care Access Mount Vernon Cancer Centre Review Update Update from NW London Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee
11 November 2021	<p>Scrutiny Members: Councillor Rekha Shah (Chair) Councillor Dr Lesline Lewinson (Vice-Chair)</p> <p>Councillor Michael Borio Councillor Kairul Kareema Marikar Councillor Hitesh Karia</p> <p>Guests: Julian Maw (Advisor)</p> <p>Representatives from Partnership Organisations: - London North-West University Healthcare NHS Trust</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covid-19 and Vaccinations Update for Harrow- Presentation from the Director of Public Health. Update from the CQC Inspection of Maternity Services at Northwick Park Hospital- presentation from the London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust. Update from NW London Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
22 February 2022	<p>Scrutiny Members: Councillor Dr Lesline Lewinson - Vice-Chair, in the Chair</p> <p>Councillor Kairul Kareema Marikar Councillor Hitesh Karia Councillor Dan Anderson (Reserve)</p> <p>Guests: Julian Maw</p> <p>Partners: Harrow Integrated Care Partnership North-West London ICS Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub - Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covid-19 Response and Vaccination Programme - Update Recovery and Management of Systems Pressures Progress of Integrated Care System - Harrow Borough Based Partnership Implementation of Maternity Services Action Plan - Update NW London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Update

