

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

Introduction

2006/07 has been a busy first year for the Sustainable Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

Having developed a provisional work programme for the four years of this council, until 2010, we have been able to be more flexible than might previously have been possible in planning and timetabling work, taking a long, strategic view when necessary and concentrating on items which have been identified as particular priorities.

With that in mind, we have already completed three pieces of work. Over the summer of 2006, members examined water management and drought, holding a challenge panel at which the Head of Strategic Planning at Three Valleys Water was asked about the drought situation over summer 2006. At the same time, other members of the committee took part in a light touch review looking at the possibility of producing a borough information pack for residents, which resulted in a number of recommendations relating to the accessibility of the council's website, partnership with other public bodies and community cohesion.

In October, another challenge panel, examining the borough's proposals for economic development and regeneration, resulted in a series of findings which have been used to support the development of Harrow's Economic Development Strategy. We also took this opportunity to update the findings and recommendations of last year's Review of Tourism, carried out by the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

At committee

Agenda items

At committee, we have conducted discussions with officers on a wide range of issues, including the Local Area Agreement and performance information, and particularly on local transport issues, on which we received a detailed report and engaged in discussion at our meeting in November. The new scrutiny methods recently developed have allowed some items which would previously have been considered at sub-committee to be considered at challenge panels or other such meetings – the economic development challenge panel is a case in point – which has led to agendas and meetings that have been more focussed and shorter.

Attendance by Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Enterprise attended the sub-committee on 28 March to answer members' questions..

In-depth review

This year work has been carried out on one in-depth review, of demography and demographic change. This review is currently midway through its evidence gathering process and it is hoped that it can be concluded in the 2007/08 municipal year.

Demographic change is a trend which will affect fundamentally the way the council and its partners deliver services to the local community. An ageing population, increase in ethnic diversity and increases in the number of people living alone are just three of the significant and ongoing trends that will affect the way that the council and its partners do business.

The purpose of the review of demography and demographic change was to analyse how the council and its partners are able to meet this challenge, how demographic information is used to plan services and how demographic information might be used to assist in bids for funding from grants.

A number of meetings were planned. At the time of writing, two preliminary seminars have been held to gather information about current demographic trends. The next stage of the project would be two further evidence gathering meetings, involving stakeholders from across the council and private and voluntary sectors. The scope for the review then makes provision for decisions on how to proceed with a broad public engagement exercise, canvassing local people for their views on demographic change.

Ongoing work of the committee

The Sustainable Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Sub-Committee has a number of items which continue to be reported on regularly as a matter of good practice. These include: the monitoring of a number of council strategies:

- Transport Local Implementation Plan
- Housing Strategy
- Economic Development Strategy
- Tourism Strategy

as well as the monitoring of services more generally through the use of the Strategic Performance Report and Quarterly Monitoring Reports, where appropriate.

Future plans

A number of other projects are in the pipeline, which have been taken from the 2006-2010 work programme prepared last year.

- Energy use – this light touch review, looking at the council's response to global concerns about energy relating to climate change and the phenomenon of "peak oil", has already been scoped, and will be conducted later in the year.
- Partnership – an in-depth review of the council's approach to partnership with other bodies, taking as a case study the West London Partnership, is timetabled for the 2007/08 period.
- Housing – a consideration of the council's Housing Strategy, and a wider discussion of house issues as they impact upon the private sector.
- Transport – an examination of the relationship between the council and TfL.
- Demography projects – additional small projects delving into specific issues highlighted as part of this year's review of demography and demographic change will be taking place.

The 2007/08 work programme will be confirmed in June.

Cllr Stanley Sheinwald

Chairman (appointment to be agreed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 March 2007), Sustainable Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Water management and drought planning challenge panel

Cllr Jerry Miles (Chairman)

Cllr Julia Merison
Cllr Yogesh Teli
Cllr Sue Hall
Cllr Eileen Kinnear (as portfolio holder)

Co-optees: Sarah Kersey (HA21)

Residents' information pack light touch review group

Cllr Ashok Kulkarni (Chairman)
Cllr Nana Asante
Cllr Yogesh Teli

Economic development and tourism challenge panels

Cllr Richard Romain (Chairman, Economic development)
Cllr Jerry Miles (Chairman, Tourism)
Cllr Lurline Champagnie
Cllr Thaya Idaikkadar
Cllr John Nickolay

Co-optees: former councillor Alan Blann, Martin Verden (Harrow Heritage Trust), John Hollingdale (HA21), Allen Pluck (Harrow in Business), Brian Noble (Business Link 4 London)

Demography review group

Cllr Richard Romain (Chairman)
Cllr Paul Scott
Cllr Graham Henson
Cllr David Ashton (as portfolio holder)

Statistics

Committee meetings:	4
Reports considered:	12
External witnesses involved:	4
Number of reviews:	4
Attendance by portfolio holder:	1