

**PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE****6 NOVEMBER 2007**

Chairman: \* Councillor Mark Versallion

Councillors: \* Ms Nana Asante \* Barry Macleod-Cullinane  
 \* Robert Benson \* Paul Scott (1)  
 \* B E Gate \* Mrs Rekha Shah  
 \* Mitzi Green \* Dinesh Solanki  
 \* Ashok Kulkarni

\* Denotes Member present  
 (1) Denotes category of Reserve Member

[Note: Councillor Mrs Margaret Davine also attended this meeting to speak on the item indicated at Minute 27 below, and Councillor Jeremy Zeid attended to speak on the items indicated at Minutes 28, 29 and 30 below].

**PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL****PART II - MINUTES**

16. **Councillor Mrs Janet Cowan:**  
 Before the business of the meeting a minute of silence was observed in memory of the late Councillor Janet Cowan.
17. **Attendance by Reserve Members:**  
**RESOLVED:** To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Member:-
- | <u>Ordinary Member</u>       | <u>Reserve Member</u> |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Councillor Christopher Noyce | Councillor Paul Scott |
18. **Declarations of Interest:**  
**RESOLVED:** To note that there were no declarations of interests made by Members in relation to the business transacted at this meeting.
19. **Arrangement of Agenda:**  
**RESOLVED:** That (1) agenda items 9, 10 and 11 be considered after items 12, 13 and 14;  
 (2) all items be considered with the press and public present.
20. **Minutes:**  
**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2007 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.
21. **Public Questions:**  
**RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions were put at the meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 8.
22. **Petitions:**  
**RESOLVED:** To note that no petitions were received at the meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 9.
23. **Deputations:**  
**RESOLVED:** To note that no deputations were received at the meeting under the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 10.
24. **References from Council and Other Committees/Panels:**  
**RESOLVED:** To note that no reports were received.

25. **Chairman's Report:**

**RESOLVED:** That the Chairman's Report be noted.

26. **Report from Scrutiny Policy and Performance Lead Members' Quarterly Briefings:**

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

27. **Performance Issues:**

Councillor Mrs Margaret Davine, Policy Lead Member on Children and Young People, updated Members on her understanding of the contents of the Queen's Speech, published the previous day, and briefed Members on some of the implications of the Government White Paper, *Care Matters – Time for Change*. A Member suggested that the implications should be quantified and costed, with a view to assessing the value of the White Paper's potential contribution.

**RESOLVED:** That the verbal update and comments be noted.

28. **By Exception: Officers' Report on Performance in Customer Satisfaction:**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Strategy and Business Support, setting out key points in relation to performance issues in the area of customer satisfaction. Members noted falling levels of customer satisfaction in some areas, as recorded in the annual MORI survey. The officer reported that the Council's new vision and Corporate Plan aimed to deliver improvements by reducing the number of priorities. However, there would inevitably be a time-lag between service improvements and customers' perception of them. Members were concerned that a reduction in priorities should not mean that the Council would be seen to be doing fewer things better.

Members discussed the need for customers to be better informed about Council services, noting that better-informed customers were generally more satisfied. The officer reported that proposed changes to *Harrow People* included using it for publicity campaigns to this effect.

**RESOLVED:** That (1) the report be noted;

(2) a further report on customer satisfaction, to include the draft questions for the MORI survey, be considered at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

29. **By Exception: Officers' Report on Performance in Housing:**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Divisional Director, Adults and Housing Services, setting out key points in relation to performance issues in the area of housing. The officer reported that the Council's contractor, Kier, delivered two services - bringing houses up to the Decent Homes Standard (DHS), and a high-volume repairs service. Delivery of the DHS programme had started later than planned, leading to slippage. The officer informed Members that, despite the late start, Kier believed it could still deliver the programme. Asked about any penalties in relation to slippage, the officer told Members that there were no penalties as such, and that Kier's performance would be assessed at the end of the year.

Discussing performance relating to the repairs service provided by Kier, Members noted, among other things, the introduction of a diagnostic tool to help Access Harrow staff better to identify works required.

In answer to a question from a Member, the officer reported that the average cost of refurbishing a property was £1600-£1800, although more had been spent recently on one to which the Council had not had access for a long period of time.

The officer agreed to supply written answers to Members' questions on:

- progress against the projected number of properties to be refurbished as part of the DHS programme in the current financial year;
- details of the Council's leverage in terms of managing the Kier contract, for example, if Kier were unable to make up the shortfall in the DHS programme within a given period;
- the number of cases of the wrong tradespeople sent to deal with repairs.

**RESOLVED:** That (1) the report be noted;

(2) a further report be considered at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

30. **By Exception: Officers' Report on Performance in Public Realm Services:**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Community and Environment, setting out key points in relation to performance issues in the area of public realm services. The officer reported that currently only 14% of the 15,000 flats in Harrow had access to kerb-side recycling. The aim was to increase this to 18% by the end of the financial year. Government funding was available to support this development for one year, and details of how to deliver the programme successfully were being worked out on a site-by-site basis.

Following the completion of a review of public realm services, it was also hoped that the Council would be able to develop trade recycling, as well as recycling for schools. In answer to questions from Members, officers reported that 35% of building rubble was recycled currently, but the aim was to reach a level of 65-70%.

The officer reported that the issue of street cleanliness would also be covered by the review of public realm services. Currently Harrow was one of the lowest-spending authorities on street cleaning, and the service needed strengthening. The monitoring of street cleaning and some effects of recycling, for example, fly-tipping, would also be covered in the review, after which challenge panels would be organised.

**RESOLVED:** That (1) the report be noted;

(2) performance information on extending recycling to 18% of flats by the end of the financial year be monitored by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman on a "by exception" basis;

(3) a further report, focusing on street cleanliness, be considered at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

31. **Culture of Performance Management:**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Strategy and Business Support, setting out information for Members on the development of a robust performance management culture in Harrow Council. Members noted that the culture of performance management was at an early stage, and that Members, including non-Scrutiny Members and Portfolio Holders needed further training. An officer reported that training would be provided for all Members. Some Members felt that the role of Scrutiny should be acknowledged in final decision-making, as Scrutiny's involvement had sometimes been substantial but not referred to. A Member suggested that it would be easier to measure the impact of Scrutiny if its individual recommendations were listed in reports to Cabinet and the outcomes of the recommendations recorded.

**RESOLVED:** That the report and the comments above be noted.

32. **Reference to Overview and Scrutiny Committee:**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Strategy and Business Support, recommending that resolutions and findings from this meeting be reported to the next available meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**RESOLVED:** To approve the drafting of a reference report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, setting out findings and resolutions, and identifying any issues on which the Performance and Finance Sub-Committee recommended that an item be escalated for further consideration.

33. **Scrutiny Scorecard:**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director, Strategy and Business Support, setting out Scrutiny performance in the previous quarter, as recorded in the Scrutiny Scorecard. The officer reported that this process was still at an early stage, but it would prove useful as a basis for future analysis. With a view to making clearer the impact of Scrutiny, Members discussed the possibility of reformulating performance indicator PE5, which related to the percentage of Scrutiny recommendations approved by Cabinet.

**RESOLVED:** That (1) the report be noted;

(2) the reformulation of performance indicator PE5 be discussed at the Chairman's meeting.

34. **Dates of Future Meetings:**

**RESOLVED:** That the following dates of future meetings be noted:-

- 22 January 2008
- 29 April 2008.

35. **Extension and Termination of the Meeting:**

In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 6.6 (ii) (Part 4F of the Constitution) it was:

**RESOLVED:** At (1) 9.58 pm to continue until 10.13 pm;

(2) 10.13 pm to continue until 10.23 pm.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.40 pm, closed at 10.23 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR MARK VERSALLION  
Chairman