

Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny
Date:	28 January 2008
Subject:	Scrutiny review of partnership with Accord MP.
Key Decision: (Executive-side only)	No
Responsible Officer:	Jill Rothwell, Corporate Director, Strategy and Business Support
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Paul Osborn
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Final report of scrutiny review group

SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report sets out the findings and recommendations of a scrutiny review group which has investigated the first year's operation of the Accord MP partnership, which have now been considered by Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a) That the findings of the review be noted.
- b) That the recommendations be endorsed, and their implementation monitored.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To contribute towards the strengthening and development of the council's partnership with Accord MP.

SECTION 2 - REPORT

Background

In July 2007, the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee agreed to conduct a review into the first year's operation of the council's partnership with Accord MP to provide public realm infrastructure services. Following the agreement of a scope for the review, members gathered evidence during the autumn of 2007 and have now drafted a final report.

The review looked at a number of issues relating to the position of services before the Accord MP partnership came into effect, the changes that have been made in the past year, and prospects for the future.

In doing so, it concentrated on a number of issues:

- The principles behind partnership working
- Governance
- Performance management and financial control
- Design quality
- Communications

The review received evidence from a number of different individuals and organisations, and carried out investigative work into three case studies – the construction of vehicle crossings, the reconstruction of Uxbridge Road in Stanmore and responsive maintenance (including emergency response).

Five recommendations were made on two of these issues (performance management, communications). They are outlined below.

Current situation

The report has now been drafted.

Ordinarily a scrutiny report would be cleared through (and discussed by) a scrutiny committee prior to submission to Cabinet. In this instance, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny have agreed to waive this requirement. This is because, unless the issue is considered at this meeting, it would likely have had to be held over until March Cabinet (on account of budget decisions for 2008/09 taking up the February meeting).

The Chairman of the review group was of the opinion that this would constitute an unacceptable delay and as such the special step of asking Cabinet for their endorsement before formal committee consideration is being taken. Consequently, the report has already been considered by Cabinet, and a verbal update on the Cabinet meeting will be provided on 28 January.

Article 6.03(b) of the Council's Constitution, and O&S Rule 26.3, make it explicit that it is for an O&S Committee to submit reports to Cabinet, this being the agreed method for ensuring that scrutiny's confirmed recommendations are properly considered.

However, Executive Procedure Rule 22.3 states that, “Any non- Executive Member of the Council may request the Leader to put an item on the agenda of an Executive meeting for consideration. If the Leader agrees, the item will be considered at the next available meeting of the Executive. The notice of the meeting will give the name of the Councillor who asked for the item to be considered. The Councillor will be invited to attend the meeting and may be invited to speak as set out in Rule 20.”

Legal advice was sought and received which indicated that, following this rule, Cabinet could consider this scrutiny review report in this instance. Given that this is a departure from existing protocol, the matter was discussed between members and officers at length during December and it is only because of exceptional circumstances – that is, the fact that if O&S Rule 26.3 were adhered to in this case it would result in a delay of more than two months before another opportunity would arise for Cabinet consideration. It was the view of the Chairman of the Review Group, and following consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, that such a delay would be unacceptable, that has led to this exceptional course of action.

Cabinet’s decision is now being reported to a this meeting of Overview and Scrutiny, which will consider the report in detail. Following Cabinet’s decision on the endorsement of the recommendations, work will be carried out between Property and Infrastructure Services and the Scrutiny Unit to discuss how the implementation of those recommendations will be monitored.

Details on officers’ response to the recommendations can be found in the Cabinet report, and can be provided to members verbally at the meeting on 28 January.

Why a change is needed

The detailed reasoning for the recommendations is given in the main body of the scrutiny report, which is attached as an appendix.

Main options

Overview and Scrutiny may decide to do one of the following:

- 1) endorse the report and its findings
- 2) not endorse the report and its findings

Members are reminded that the recommendations and findings in the report have already been considered by Cabinet.

Other options considered

Not applicable.

Recommendation: - that the findings of the review be noted and the recommendations endorsed, with their implementation to be monitored by scrutiny in six months.

Considerations

Resources, costs and risks: There are minimal considerations in this area and where applicable they have been included within responses by the Community and Environment directorate, to the recommendations later in the report.

Staffing/workforce: There are minimal considerations in this area and where applicable they have been included within responses by the Community and Environment directorate, to the recommendations later in the report.

Equalities impact: None in relation to the recommendations.

Legal comments: None in relation to the recommendations.

Community safety: None in relation to the recommendations.

Financial Implications

Implementing the recommendations would have the following financial implications: None in relation to the recommendations.

Performance implications

The partnership impacts directly upon 8 BVPIs, 3 of which are in the CPA Environment block. These are:

- E11 (BV 224b): Condition of non-principal unclassified roads
- E16 (BV 165): Percentage of crossings with disabled facilities
- E18 (BV 187): Condition of footways

The other BVPIs are:

- BV 223: Condition of principal roads
- BV 215a: Average time for lighting repairs
- BV 215b: Rectification of street lighting faults
- BV 224a: Condition of non-principal roads
- BV 100: Number of days traffic control in place

One of the targets this year is to consolidate the position of BV 224b, which is currently low in the middle threshold. A further seven local performance measures are directly influenced by the partnership.

The general condition of Harrow's roads and footways figures high in the MORI residents' survey, this against generally improving BVPI performance. Improved communications should improve residents' perception.

In London, against our immediate neighbours in particular, BVPIs are average but improving. Targets for the current year are forecast to be met and new targets set for next year based on that performance.

SECTION 3 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE

Name: Stephen Dorrian	<input type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 8 January 2008		
Name: Sheela Thakrar	<input type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 7 January 2008		

SECTION 4 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact:

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Background Papers:

None relevant

IF APPROPRIATE, does the report include the following considerations?

1.	Consultation	N/A
2.	Corporate Priorities	N/A
3.	Manifesto Pledge Reference Number	N/A