

Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny committee
Date:	12 th February 2008
Subject:	Appointment of Non-Voting Advisors to the Overview and Scrutiny committee
Key Decision: (Executive-side only)	No
Responsible Officer:	Jill Rothwell, Corporate Director, Strategy and Business Support
Portfolio Holder:	Strategy and Business Support
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Appendices 1, 2 and 3

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report outlines options for appointing non-voting advisors onto the Overview and Scrutiny committee

Recommendations:

Councillors are asked to:

- (i) Agree the amended role profile for the non-voting scrutiny advisor (Appendix One)
- (ii) Agree the proposal for the development of the pool of advisors (paragraphs 4 – 7)
- (iii) Agree the person specification (Appendix Two)
- (iv) Comment on and augment the list of possible organisations to be invited to participate in the pool of advisors (Appendix Three)

Section 2 – Report

Background (if needed)

- 1 Under the previous scrutiny configuration, the Adult Health and Social Care sub committee included in its membership non-voting advisors to support the work of the committee. Members of the current Overview and Scrutiny committee would like to continue to engage with local experts to ensure that the committee has appropriate advice and support. In September and November 2007 the Overview and Scrutiny committee received reports incorporating options as to how non-voting advisors might be included in the committee membership. At the November meeting, which agreed a role profile for non-voting advisors (amended copy attached as Appendix One) the committee asked for a further report as to how the proposed pool of advisors might function and what skills a member of the pool of advisors might be expected to have. A draft person specification for the role of advisor is attached as Appendix Two.

Current situation

2. The current Overview and Scrutiny committee does not currently include in its membership expert non-voting advisors who were members of previous sub committees

Why a change is needed

3. The lack of additional expertise means that valuable advice and information is not necessarily available to the Overview and Scrutiny committee. Councillors have also acknowledged that simply replicating previous arrangements may no longer meet the changing needs of scrutiny and in considering previous options councillors have asked officers to consider how a more innovative method might be adopted locally to secure a more strategic relationship with local experts who can support scrutiny investigations.

Main options

4. The establishment of a pool of advisors is proposed. This group of advisors will comprise representatives of local organisations and experienced local experts with specialist knowledge who can support the work of scrutiny by bringing to the committee and review groups' attention evidence and advice regarding particular groups of residents in the Harrow area. Local organisations will be asked to identify a representative from within their number who meets the criteria included in the person specification (Appendix Two). It will be made clear to the pool member that they will not be required to attend meetings unless specifically requested where it is apparent to the Chairman and Vice Chairman that a proposed agenda item will benefit from their specialist input. It is unlikely therefore that members of the pool will be expected to attend more than one or two meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny committee or Performance and Finance sub committee per year. A list of possible organisations to be invited to nominate a member of their group to join the pool of advisors is attached as Appendix Three. This list is indicative and should not be construed as closing the membership to other organisations. Councillors' views on the list are invited.

5. The members of the pool will also be a resource for the scrutiny review work programme and may be invited to participate in in-depth or light touch reviews or challenge panels.
6. In order to secure a strategic link between the committees and the pool of advisers, it is proposed that an annual informal meeting is scheduled between the pool and the Chairmen, vice chairmen and lead policy and performance members. It is proposed that this meeting is held in June or September each year.
7. The membership of the pool advisers should also be extended to individual residents (non-experts) who have supported the scrutiny review programme through their involvement in specific projects. These residents will not however, be invited to provide specific technical advice to either of the committees. They will still be eligible to participate in future reviews.

Other options considered

8. Other options were considered in the reports to Overview and Scrutiny committee in October and November 2007

Recommendation:

9. Councillors are asked to:
 - (i) Agree the amended role profile for the non-voting scrutiny advisor (Appendix One)
 - (ii) Agree the proposal for the development of the pool of advisers (paragraphs 4 – 7)
 - (iii) Agree the person specification (Appendix Two)
 - (iv) Comment on and augment the list of possible organisations to be invited to participate in the pool of advisers (Appendix Three)

Considerations

Resources, costs and risks

10. Any costs associated with the establishment of the pool of advisers will be met from within existing resources.

Staffing/workforce

11. There are no staffing or workforce implications associated with the recommendation

Equalities impact

12. The establishment of the pool of advisers will ensure that scrutiny councillors are provided with expert advice and information that can ensure they are able to appreciate the full equalities implications of the issues they are considering/investigating.

Community safety (s17 Crime & Disorder Act 1998)

13. The establishment of the pool of advisers will ensure that scrutiny councillors are provided with expert advice and information that can ensure they are able to appreciate community safety implications of the issues they are considering/investigating.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications in this report. Any costs associated with the establishment of the pool of advisors will be met from existing resources.

Performance Issues

There are no performance indicators relevant to this report

Scrutiny performance management issues

The development of the pool of advisors will help to improve the engagement of community representatives in the work of scrutiny

Recommendations matrix attached as appropriate

Not appropriate

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Sheela Thakrar	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 30 th January 2008		
Name: Helen White	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 30 th January 2008		

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Lynne McAdam, Service Manager Scrutiny
020 8420 9387

Background Papers: None

If appropriate, does the report include the following considerations?

1.	Consultation	YES
2.	Corporate Priorities	NO

APPENDIX ONE: NON-VOTING SCRUTINY ADVISOR

DRAFT ROLE PROFILE

PURPOSE OF THE ROLE

To support the performance of the Overview and Scrutiny committee by ensuring that a pan-organisational perspective provides the basis for its considerations and by offering specialist advice to the committee.

ADVISOR FUNCTION

- To draw knowledge from and feed information back to their respective agencies subject to rights and responsibilities set out below.
- To provide high-level, impartial expert advice to the members of the Overview and Scrutiny committee on behalf of their specific organisation
- To support the Overview and Scrutiny committee to interpret information that is provided to them
- To act on behalf of the agency for which they are providing advice to the Overview and Scrutiny committee
- To provide specific briefings on issues within their expertise which scrutiny may wish to consider
- To bring to the attention of the Overview and Scrutiny committee emerging policy or performance issues from their organisation.
- To support the development of policy co-ordination between the council, police and health in order to develop joint solutions to local problems and to improve the quality of life of local people
- To attend by invitation committees for those items in which they have a special expertise.

RIGHTS

Subject to the provision of the protocol on Confidentiality of Reports contained in Part 5 of the Council's Constitution and unless otherwise determined by the Overview and Scrutiny committee, non-voting advisors will have the right to:

- Receive all agenda papers including confidential papers
- Be notified of all meetings
- Contribute advice to the consideration of items for which they have been invited to the committee

RESPONSIBILITIES

- To declare all personal and prejudicial interests in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.
- Not to disclose confidential or exempt information as defined in the Access to Information Procedure rules
- Not to commit a breach of trust by imparting information yet to be made public to others
- To observe all relevant protocols for membership of council committees when undertaking their role
- To provide a conduit between the council and their respective organisations

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APPENDIX TWO: NON-VOTING ADVISORS, PERSON SPECIFICATION

Members of the pool of scrutiny advisors will act as non-voting advisors to the Overview and Scrutiny committee, the Performance and Finance sub committee and to scrutiny reviews. They will attend meetings at the request of either the chairman and vice chairman of the committees or the chairman of the review groups.

In order to become a non-voting advisor to scrutiny, potential members of the pool must should meet the following specification.

- The advisor should have a minimum 6 months experience of the specialist service area and of working and providing services in the borough (in an employed or voluntary capacity) *OR*
- The advisor should have a proven track record of providing specialist advice in another borough
- The advisor should be prepared to make a commitment to providing advice to Harrow's scrutiny function
- The advisor must be prepared to act in accordance with the role profile for non-voting advisors (Appendix One)

In order to enhance accountability the advisor will preferably be linked to a local organisation. (Appendix Three)

APPENDIX THREE: LIST OF POSSIBLE ORGANISATIONS TO BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE

- Primary Care Trust
- NW London Hospitals NHS Trust
- Metropolitan police service
- Probation service
- Harrow Association of Voluntary Service
- Harrow Council for Racial Equality
- Harrow Association of Disabled People
- Harrow Agenda 21
- Harrow in Leaf
- Harrow in Business
- Harrow Mencap
- Mind in Harrow
- Harrow Refugee Forum
- Age Concern Harrow
- Stroke association
- National Autistic Society in Harrow
- Diabetes UK
- Alzheimer's Society
- Crossroads
- Harrow Carers Association
- Organisations affiliated to Harrow Association of Voluntary Service
- Representatives of local LINKs – when established