

Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	21 <sup>st</sup> April 2009
Subject:	Report from Lead Scrutiny Members
Responsible Officer:	Tom Whiting Assistant Chief Executive
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Paul Osborn Communication and Corporate Services Portfolio Holder
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Appendix One: Report from the Sustainable Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Lead Councillors

## Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the items that have been considered by the scrutiny policy and performance leads at their quarterly briefing in March, and details the recommendations they would like the committee to consider with regard to further action/escalation.

### **Recommendation:**

Councillors are recommended to:

- consider the report from the Scrutiny policy and performance leads and
- consider recommendations as included therein.

**Current situation**

Not appropriate to this report.

**Why a change is needed**

Not appropriate to this report.

**Main options**

Not appropriate to this report.

**Other options considered**

Not appropriate to this report

**Recommendation:**

To consider and endorse the reports from the scrutiny policy and performance leads.

***Considerations*****Resources, costs and risks**

Any costs associated with these recommendations will be met from within existing resources. Where specific projects are escalated for more detailed consideration in the scrutiny process, specific implications of these projects will be considered during the scoping process

**Staffing/workforce**

There are no staffing or workforce considerations specific to this report. Where specific projects are escalated for more detailed consideration in the scrutiny process, specific staffing implications of these projects will be considered during the scoping process.

**Equalities impact**

There are no specific equalities implications in this report. Where specific projects are escalated for more detailed consideration in the scrutiny process, specific equalities implications of these projects will be considered during the scoping process.

**Legal Implications**

None

**Financial Implications**

Any costs arising from the recommendations will be contained from existing budgets.

**Performance Issues**

There are no performance considerations specific to this report. Where specific projects are escalated for more detailed consideration in the scrutiny process, specific performance implications of these projects will be considered during the scoping process.

**Risk Management Implications**

There are none specific to this report.

### **Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance**

N/A

### **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

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[ofordi.nabokei@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:ofordi.nabokei@harrow.gov.uk)

Background Papers: None

If appropriate, does the report include the following considerations?

1.	Consultation	YES / NO
2.	Corporate Priorities	YES / NO

## APPENDIX ONE

### REPORTS FROM THE SCRUTINY POLICY AND PERFORMANCE LEAD COUNCILLORS

#### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE

The Scrutiny Lead Members for Sustainable Development and Enterprise Councillor Jerry Miles and Councillor Dinesh Solanki, met on 09 March 2009.

#### Issues discussed and key points arising

##### Housing

The lead members discussed the council's performance in respect of Decent Homes and the Sustainable Building Design Supplemental Planning Document due to be considered in May 2009. It was decided that as Performance and Finance sub-committee were already looking into the issue of Decent Homes they would not investigate it further and that they would wait until the supplemental planning document was issued in May before considering if any issues arise from it.

***Recommended Action:*** Lead members to monitor progress on Decent Homes issue and the Sustainable Building Design Supplemental Planning Document.

##### Sustainability

The leads looked at and discussed the Sustainable Communities Act (SCA) 2007. The SCA is seen as being a tool to re-engage people / communities with a focus is on what Central Government can do to assist Local Government and their communities. The leads had a discussion about the ways in which this could potentially be incorporated into the sustainability review.

***Recommended Action:*** Leads and other members involved in the review group to consider the Sustainable Communities Act during the sustainability review.

##### Economic Development / Enterprise

The lead members received a briefing on national policy and issues as well as what steps the council has taken with regards to the current economic climate.

##### Harrow:

- The briefing focused on the Council's approach to understanding the current and likely impact of the recession and how to respond to it. It looked at several projects that are undertaken in conjunction with the council's partners to help small to medium enterprises (SMEs) deal with the current economic climate as well as an internal working group that will provide advice and support to protect local residents, businesses and the voluntary and community sector; ensure that the impact on council services is carefully managed to minimise impact on delivery offer help during the downturn and plan for the eventual economic upturn.

## Nationally

- The leads looked at the new programme put forward by the Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform (BERR) which aims to make it easier for companies and entrepreneurs to understand and access government funded grants, subsidies and advice with which to start and grow their businesses.
- In addition at work being done by the London Development Agency and the Learning Skills Council (LSC) to integrate skills and business support brokerage in London.
- The leads also briefly discussed the news that the Chief Secretary to the Treasury has safeguarded a number of public investments in procurement which is said assure the future of a broad range of public infrastructure projects such as transport, environmental projects and schools projects. This is also meant to create jobs and support the economy.

***Recommended Action:*** *Lead members to monitor what is being done by and within the council, as well as nationally, to provide assistance to enterprises and regarding economic development.*

## Comprehensive Area Assessment

The members were briefed on certain aspects of the CAA that related to Sustainable Development and Enterprise. Namely, that the CAA will look at prospects for sustainable improvement and at the Council and their partner's response to the economic downturn.

***Recommended Action:*** *Lead members to take the issues raised at the briefing regarding the council and their partners' response to the economic down turn and sustainable improvement into account during the sustainability review.*

## Update on a Complaint which was sent to Scrutiny in February.

A complaint was passed to the Lead members after scrutiny received notification of the matter on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2009. As this was a singular complaint outside of scrutiny's gift, the matter was passed on to the Corporate Complaints Officer with a request by the Leads to be updated on the matter. A briefing was passed on to the leads by the Complaints Officer which informed them that as the matter was currently going through a formal appeals process the matter had not been take up by the corporate complaints section.

***Recommended Action:*** *Lead members to contact the Corporate Complaints Officer if there are any further queries or if they require further information regarding the complaint or the complaints process.*