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| Meeting: | Overview and Scrutiny Committee |
| Date: | 11 th June 2009 |
| Subject: | Sustainability review scope and interim report |
| Responsible Officer: | Alex Dewsnap, Divisional Director - Partnership Development & Performance |
| Exempt: | No |
| Enclosures: | Appendix 1: Revised scope of the Sustainability Review Appendix 2: Interim report on the Change Challenge Panel |

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report introduces the revised scope for the Sustainability review as well as the findings and recommendations of the Climate Change Challenge Panel which forms part of the Sustainability Review.

Recommendations:

Councillors are asked to:

- i. endorse and adopt the revisions of the scope.
- ii. endorse and agree the Review Group's findings and recommendations as contained within the response attached in Appendix 2.

Reason: (For recommendation)

To enable the work of the Sustainability Review Group to continue.

Section 2 – Report

Background

A review into sustainability, which was commissioned as part of the 2008-2009 work programme commenced in March 2009. The first meeting of the review group was held on the 26th March 2009 where the initial scope for the review was decided upon by the members of the group. Following the second meeting of the group which was held 15th April 2009, the first draft of the scope was revised and agreed by the review group scope as well as the decision to hold a challenge panel on the council's draft climate change strategy. This was then submitted to Overview and Scrutiny for adoption on 21st April 2009.

A further third meeting of the group was briefly convened after the challenge panel on the council's draft climate change strategy drew to a close on the 6th May 2009. Following on from the discussions of the third review group meeting, additions and revisions were made to the scope. The review group also discussed their findings and recommendations of the challenge panel and agreed that it should be submitted at the next meeting of the committee. The Review Group's response to the draft climate change strategy contains observations, findings and a number of recommendations. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to endorse these recommendations and to agree the revised scope.

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:

Considerations

Resources, costs and risks

Any costs associated with the delivery of the work programme will be met from within the existing resources/budget.

Staffing/workforce

There are no staffing/workforce considerations specific to this report.

Equalities impact

There are no equalities considerations specific to this report.

Community safety (s17 Crime & Disorder Act 1998)

There are no community safety considerations specific to this report.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Performance Issues

There are no performance issues arising directly from this report.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

This is no longer required for reports to scrutiny.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Ofordi Nabokei, Scrutiny Officer.

Email: Ofordi.Nabokei@harrow.gov.uk

Tel: 020 8420 9205

If appropriate, does the report include the following considerations?

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

APPENDIX 1

HARROW COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE 8th May 2009

REVIEW OF SUSTAINABILITY- SCOPE

| | | |
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| 1 | SUBJECT | Review of Sustainability |
| 2 | COMMITTEE | Overview & Scrutiny |
| 3 | REVIEW GROUP | Cllr Seymour (Co-Chair) Cllr Miles (Co-Chair) Cllr Solanki Cllr O'Dell Cllr Idaikkadar Cllr Kinnear Cllr Teli |
| 4 | AIMS/ OBJECTIVES/ OUTCOMES | To investigate how far the council has progressed with incorporating sustainability into its objectives and priorities and whether, where possible, there is jointed up cross-cutting work regarding this. |
| 5 | MEASURES OF SUCCESS OF REVIEW | A number of recommendations to support the operation and implementation and embedding of sustainability and for the use of the executive's arrangements. |
| 6 | SCOPE | To examine: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Climate Change Strategy;• Economic Sustainability;• Community Sustainability; and To make recommendations, where appropriate, for a more robust system to be put in place. |
| 7 | SERVICE PRIORITIES (Corporate/Dept) | Building Stronger Communities (09/10) |
| 8 | REVIEW SPONSOR | |
| 9 | ACCOUNTABLE MANAGER | Lynne Margetts, Service Manager Scrutiny |
| 10 | SUPPORT OFFICER | Ofordi Nabokei, Scrutiny Officer |
| 11 | ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT | None |
| 12 | EXTERNAL INPUT | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environmental Climate Change Professionals• Community Leaders• Residents• Neighbouring Local Authorities (where appropriate)• Police (where appropriate)• Partner organisations |
| 13 | METHODOLOGY | In-Depth Review looking at the following areas: 1) Climate Change Strategy |

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| | | <p>Critical analysis by the review group of the draft Climate Change Strategy followed by a Challenge Panel with the report authors and input from external professionals. The group will make a number of recommendations in light of this and produce an interim report.</p> <p><i>(If possible and if time permits, critically assess the response to the consultation of the strategy).</i></p> <p>2) Economic Sustainability</p> <p><i>Impact of Recession on Economic Sustainability:</i> Investigation of successful economic sustainability policies and initiatives (or lack of) in Harrow through desktop review, evidence gathering and discussions with council officers and partners. Assessment of these against either similar boroughs & / or governmental guidance. The review will make a number of recommendations to back up its findings.</p> <p><i>Budget / Financial Strategy Review:</i> Analysis through desktop review of good / best practice, discussions and a question and answer session with officers about the Council budget including procurement and financial strategy and how sustainability is incorporated into this. The review will make a number of recommendations to back up its findings.</p> <p>3) Community Sustainability</p> <p><i>Community Cohesion and what Harrow has done to increase integration:</i> Evidence-gathering obtained through information provided by officers, partnership officers, policies and initiatives in Harrow, through canvassing the views of residents and the police (where appropriate). In addition, this information will be discussed with these groups. The information is to be reviewed and assessed in light of the fact that Harrow has missed the LAA target measuring the 'number of people who think people from different backgrounds get on well together'. Following on from that, the review group will put forward a number of recommendations from its findings.</p> <p>4) Roundtable Discussion</p> <p>Following on from looking at Environmental, Economic and Community sustainability the review group will hold a round table with the PCT, the Police and possibly TLF to see how the council's partners are tackling sustainability and how well their policies and strategies join up with the council's.</p> |
| 14 | EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS | <p>Equality considerations will be of paramount importance to this review. The review will consider during the course of its work, how equality implications have been taken into account in current policy and practice, for example in promoting cohesion, equalities and opportunities, and consider the possible implications of any changes it recommends.</p> |

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| | | In carrying out this review, the review group will also need to consider its own practices and how it can facilitate all relevant stakeholders in the borough to have their voices heard. Equalities should also be developed further in the outcomes of the review. |
| 15 | ASSUMPTIONS/ CONSTRAINTS | Involvement of officers and partnership officers in the relevant services will be dependent upon resources (staff time in particular). The scope takes account of this constraint and evidence gathering will be designed to minimise undue workload on officers and partnership officers. |
| 16 | SECTION 17 IMPLICATIONS | None |
| 17 | TIMESCALE | Review to commence from March 2009 Report to be submitted to 24 September O&S |
| 18 | RESOURCE COMMITMENTS | Ofordi Nabokei, Scrutiny Officer |
| 19 | REPORT AUTHOR | Scrutiny Officer directed by the Review Group |
| 20 | REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS | Outline of formal reporting process: To Service Director [] TBC.....N/A..... To Portfolio Holder [] TBC.....N/A..... To CMT [] When.....N/A..... To Cabinet [] When.....N/A..... |
| 21 | FOLLOW UP ARRANGEMENTS (proposals) | To go to Performance and Finance for 6 monthly updates. |

APPENDIX 2 –Sustainability Review Group Challenge Panel of the Draft Climate Change Strategy.

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Overview and Scrutiny committee commissioned a review of Sustainability in their 2008-2009 Work Programme. The review was picked up in late March 2009. The review group are delighted to have been able to conduct this Challenge Panel as one part of the wider sustainability review which will look at economic and community sustainability.

Harrow Council signed up to the Nottingham Declaration on climate change in 2007. The Declaration requires local authorities who sign up to it to systematically address the causes of climate change and to prepare their community for its impacts. In light of this, the review group felt that as the council had sent out a draft Climate Change Strategy for consultation, a scrutiny input would add some value to the strategy by viewing it from a wider perspective that takes more into account than solely environmental issues as well as looking at how this strategy would tie in with other sustainability strategies.

The Challenge Panel met on 6th May 2009 and we are grateful to those who have assisted the panel in providing the information upon which we based our challenge and for their frank and open responses:

- Gemma Moore, Senior Climate Change and Environmental Officer
- John Edwards, Divisional Director of Environmental Services.
- Peter Barron, Planner, Economic Develop & Enterprise & Research
- Sally Crew, Group Manager Transport and Policy Programme, London Borough of Southwark
- LGiU and their event on Sustainability and Climate Change
- Ollie Swan, Energy Manager, London Borough of Bexley

We have looked at evidence ranging from documents and presentations to other local authorities draft and adopted Climate Change Strategies as well as meetings with officers.

The aim of this Challenge Panel has been (i) to provide a critical assessment and impartial view on Harrow's draft climate change strategy; and (ii) to make recommendations, where appropriate, for more robust processes and additions to the strategy which we think would be beneficial to the council if adopted.

With this in mind we intend to make a number of recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These are included in the report below.

CLlr Anthony Seymour Chair Climate Change Challenge Panel.

BACKGROUND

A review into sustainability was commissioned as part of the 2008-2009 work programme and commenced in March 2009. The first meeting of the review group was held on the 26th March 2009 where the initial scope for the review was decided upon by the members of the group. Following the second meeting of the group which was held 15th April 2009 the initial scope for the review was submitted to Overview and Scrutiny for adoption. The sustainability review was divided into three separate streams of work which looked at environmental, economic and community sustainability. The scope set out the format for the each strand and with regards to the environmental sustainability strand it was decided that this would be a short piece of work in the format of a challenge panel for the council's draft climate change strategy so that the review could look at both economic and community sustainability in more depth.

On the 21st April 2009 the Overview and Scrutiny committee agreed the scope and the format of the challenge panel. Following on from the meeting with the divisional director of Environmental Services, further clarification and information was sought provided. The notes of the meeting and background meetings are held within the Scrutiny Unit.

To ensure that the review groups response to the strategy was included in the consultation on this strategy and interim response was provided to environmental services by the consultation closing date of the 15th May 2009. The response was given with the proviso that this was an interim response subject to amendment and adoption of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Moreover, once there was an adopted version of the report, this would be provided to Environmental Services.

The panel comprised of:

- Cllr Anthony Seymour (Chair)
- Cllr Jerry Miles
- Cllr Dinesh Solanki
- Cllr Eileen Kinnear
- Cllr Yogesh Teli
- Cllr O'Dell

A detailed breakdown of the recommendations is contained within the Recommendation Matrix which is attached as Appendix A

The panel's findings and recommendations are included in the pages that follow.

OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

The review group's observations and findings are summarised in the paragraphs below:

COMMUNICATION OF THE STRATEGY

- From reading the Draft Climate Change Strategy, the review group found that the language contained within it was not accessible: it did not clearly explain all of the concepts and issues contained within it. The group felt that at times some of the language was overly technical and could have been expressed better.
- Following on from the above, the strategy is divided into areas or 'themes' but the group found it hard to clearly identify what the overall and theme-specific goals are that the strategy is striving to achieve. This should have been set out and explained more clearly in the draft strategy. By doing so, it would go some way to allowing people to understand not only what the issues are but how they affect them and what the council is trying to achieve. The online consultation goes some way to making the issues relevant and clear to residents however this was not included in the strategy itself and should have been.
- From discussions prior to and at the challenge panel, the review group found that it was not clear whom the Council sent the draft document to for consultation.
- The group are of the view that it would have been useful for anyone reading the document to see how the council is currently tackling the issue. This would show the council is leading by example and takes the matter very seriously not only in words but also in action. It may also have the effect of focussing the council response to climate change. The review group found that the strategy only talks about the issues in broad terms. The strategy does not clearly communicate what the council has already done to mitigate and adapt to climate change, this may give the reader the impression that nothing has been implemented or is currently being done which is far from the case.
- Following on from the point above, the review group looked at a number of strategies from other local authorities (London Borough of Bexley's draft and finalised versions and Worthing Borough Council's strategy) and found that Harrow's draft strategy in comparison lacks a draft plan which would have shown or given a more detailed indication as to how Harrow proposes to tackle climate change rather than speaking about it in broad terms. It would have also given consultees the opportunity to provide further feedback, for example, on specific items they think the council should or should not be looking at in the final strategy and action plan as well as items that should be looked at in more depth. The review group is of the opinion that an action plan would enable Harrow to focus its approach further and should be included in the strategy.

EDUCATION AND PROMOTION:

- From reading the strategy and a discussion with the Divisional Director of Environmental Services, the review group felt that whilst the strategy speaks of promoting and educating residents about climate change it does not go into any specific details about how this will be done. The review group is aware that there already is promotion and education regarding this issue but is of the view that the amount that is currently being done by the council needs to be stepped up considerably irrespective of national campaigns about climate change. Worcestershire County Council is a beacon local authority for climate change who have sought to educate and promote climate change not only as an issue in itself but also by appealing to peoples' drivers/ motivations and using those motivators to tackle climate change. This may be another useful tool by which Harrow can further educate its residents.
- The review group noted that whilst there are a plethora of initiatives, they are not contained in one accessible easy to read guide for residents. Therefore, in conjunction with a clearer explanation of how climate change will affect local residents a comprehensive book or leaflet which draws together all the basic things that can be done to tackle climate change, how they should be done, where they can be done as well as any potential funding that can be obtained should be published and sent to each household.
- Following the discussions had during the challenge panel, the review group observed that there is no joined up council-wide response on how the council's actions have an effect on climate change. In addition, officer education is not as high as it should be. If Harrow's residents do not see their own council officers championing this issue what motivation or trust will residents have in their council to effectively stem climate change? The council and its officers should not only be providing education and advice on climate change but equally as important, they should be leading the way as an example to the residents of Harrow. This may require the council to take a stricter stance not only on issues such as procurement but also in terms of the levels of permits and parking spaces that are afforded to council officers.

THE STRATEGY NOT IN ISOLATION:

- From reading the strategy and from the discussion during the challenge panel, the review group found that the draft strategy made mention of other documents and strategies, such as the *Sustainable Communities Plan*, the *Local Development Framework* and the *Sustainable Design Supplementary Planning document*. Having said that, the review group gained a sense that whilst references were made to the other documents that was as far as it went: each strategy dealt with its own sphere and did not seem to be joined up or integrated fully with the other documents or show what it could bring to the other strategies or how it could add to them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

These findings have led the Sustainability Review Group to recommend the following:

1. Whilst taking into account that there is a need for a certain level of technical language, the language used in the strategy should be clear, concise and accessible to all ranges of reader. Therefore the strategy should be re-written to achieve this.
2. A summary should be attached to the strategy which shows exactly what the strategy's goals are.
3. The strategy should contain and clearly communicate what the council has already done to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
4. An action plan, subject to amendment as and when required, should be included into the strategy which not only specifies how it will tackle climate change in terms of the proposed actions but also has targets it has set for itself, states how it will progress, how it will measure its progress, a timescale to achieve these actions, the expected impact of undertaking said actions as well as a named lead responsible officer for each action. As items and actions are completed the action plan should be reviewed and amended.
5. The council should take a more proactive lead in educating and promoting climate change to residents and its own officers. It should not rely on the momentum which is being built up or on national campaigns.
6. A comprehensive book/ leaflet which draws together all the basic things that can be done, how they should be done, where they can be done as well as any potential funding that can be obtained to help residents stem climate change should be published and sent to each household.
7. The council and its officers should not only be educating and promoting issues related to climate change but should take a tougher line internally about their own actions and policies so as to lead the way / be exemplars to Harrow residents.
8. The Climate Change Strategy should be more joined up and integrated with other plans and strategies to be more effective in reducing climate change. It should fully state what it can bring to the other strategies and how it can, where applicable, ameliorate them.

CONCLUSION

The comments of the panel in this report are designed to assist and help support the ongoing development of the Climate Change Strategy and generate a more inclusive, clear and specific approach to tackling the issue of Climate Change and educating the residents of Harrow about it. In this challenge panel, scrutiny intention has been to act as a 'critical friend' to help the strategy to develop and suggest ways in which this could be achieved.

The methodology of a Challenge Panel is that in terms of time and resources it is a short piece of work which aimed, in this instance, to critically assess the draft climate change strategy and provide a scrutiny input to the consultation. Moreover, this report is part of a wider review on sustainability which aims to focus more on economic and community sustainability. The conclusion of the Challenge Panel on the draft Climate Change strategy brings to a close the review group's look at environmental sustainability. In light of the above, the Challenge Panel cannot go into as much depth as other forms of review.

Where we have made suggestions for more robust processes or additions to the strategy to be adopted, we hope they are helpful

Climate Change Challenge Panel May 2009

APPENDIX A

RECOMMENDATION ACTION SHEET

Key: CD = Corporate Director(s)

PH = Portfolio Holder

Prioritisation

Requiring action immediately: ST.

Requiring action in medium term: MT

Requiring action in long term: LT

Incorporated information –

Evidence received from officers O

Evidence received from External Professionals EP

Evidence received from External Sources ES

| Recommendation | Prior | Identified officer/member/group to action | Incorp info | P'ship? (Y/N) | Action taken (for completion at six month period | Measure of success |
|--|--------------|--|--------------------|----------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Whilst taking into account that there is a need for a certain level of technical language, the language used in the strategy should be clear, concise and accessible to all ranges of reader. Therefore the strategy should be re-written to achieve this | ST - ongoing | Officer(s) who drafted the strategy | EP, ES | N | A clearly written well thought out document that is accessible and comprehensible to all who read it. | An accessible, easy to read strategy. |
| 2. A summary should be | ST - | Officer(s) who | O, EP, | N | Visible statements or | Text in the strategy which |

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| attached to the strategy which shows exactly what the strategy's goals are | Ongoing | drafted the strategy | ES | | bullet points of what the strategy aims to achieve. | highlights the main issues and topics the strategy is concerned with as well as what the strategies goals are |
| 3. The strategy should contain and clearly communicate what the council has already done to mitigate and adapt to climate change. | ST - Ongoing | Officer(s) who drafted the strategy | O, EP | N | A table or section of text which shows what the council has already done - clear statements of what has already been achieved | A reader who looks at the strategy knows what the council has already achieved and has a baseline from which to measure subsequent success or failure |
| 4. An action plan, subject to amendment as and when required, should be included into the strategy which not only specifies how it will tackle climate change in terms of the proposed actions but also has targets it has set for itself, states how it will progress, how it will measure its progress, a timescale to achieve these actions, the expected impact of undertaking said actions as well as a named lead responsible officer for | ST, MT - Ongoing | Officer(s) who drafted the strategy and are in charge of ensuring it is adhered to | ES, | | Each proposed area that will be tackled has, subject to amendment and revision the proposed actions, its targets how it intends to progress, how it will measure its progress, timescales, and named lead responsible officer for each action | A document which shows, subject to amendments, exactly what the council will be doing and how it will do it in a more specific and defined terms rather than a broad suggestion that does not show a focussed approach. |

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| each action. As items and actions are completed the action plan should be reviewed and amended. | | | | | | |
| 5. The council should take a more proactive lead in educating and promoting climate change to residents and its own officers. It should not rely on the momentum which is being built up or on national campaigns. | MT, LT | Environmental Services Officers and Climate Change / environmental organisations in conjunction with the council | EP, ES | Y | More visible campaigns, communication and education programmes being devised or set up about this. | Residents and officers alike have a clear understanding of what climate change is, how it will affect Harrow and how their actions / behaviour has an impact on this. |
| 6. A comprehensive book/ leaflet which draws together all the basic things that can be done, how they should be done, where they can be done as well as any potential funding that can be obtained to help residents stem climate change should be published and sent to each household. | ST, MT | Environmental Services Officers and Climate Change / environmental organisations in conjunction with the council | | Y | Gathering all the relevant information and contact details and placing them in an easily accessible booklet for residents | Residents have at their fingertips all the information they require regarding climate change, what they can do, any grants to help them carry it out and all other relevant information they need on the subject in one easy accessible source. |
| 7. The council and its officers should not only | MT, LT | Harrow Council as a | EP | Y | | The responsibility placed on residents by the council is also |

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| <p>be educating and promoting issues related to climate change but should take a tougher line internally about their own actions and policies so as to lead the way / be exemplars to Harrow residents.</p> | | <p>whole.</p> | | | | <p>equally placed on council officers and their actions.</p> |
| <p>8. The Climate Change Strategy should be more joined up and integrated with other plans and strategies to be more effective in reducing climate change. It should fully state what it can bring to the other strategies and how it can, where applicable, ameliorate them.</p> | <p>MT, LT - Ongoing</p> | <p>All council departments and services in conjunction with partner organisations such as the PCT.</p> | <p>O, ES, EP</p> | <p>Y</p> | <p>Ensuring that where applicable the council's other policies and strategies are not only mentioned but the strategy also shows how they will add value / or pick up where it has left off.</p> | <p>More integrated joined up policy and implementation context.</p> |