

Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	3 September 2009
Subject:	Report from Lead Members
Responsible Officer:	Alex Dewsnap, Divisional Director of Partnership Development and Performance
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Paul Osborn, Portfolio Holder for Performance, Communication and Corporate Services
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Appendix 1: Reports from the Lead Members

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 briefings in July, 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
- agree recommendations as included therein.

Section 2 – Report

Background

This report records the outcomes of quarterly briefings of scrutiny lead policy and performance councillors and seeks the endorsement of committee of the action proposed. Individual reports have been included in this report for:

- Children and Young People
- Corporate Effectiveness
- Safer and Stronger Communities

No meetings have taken place since the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny committee for:

- Sustainable Development and Enterprise
- Children and Young People

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.

Community safety (s17 Crime & Disorder Act 1998)

There are no specific community safety implications in this report. Where specific projects are escalated for more detailed consideration in the scrutiny process, specific community safety 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

Not appropriate for this report.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

Lynne Margetts, Service Manager Scrutiny 020 8420 9387

Background Papers:

None

1.	Consultation	No
2.	Corporate Priorities	No

APPENDIX ONE

REPORTS FROM THE SCRUTINY POLICY AND PERFORMANCE LEAD COUNCILLORS

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Scrutiny Lead Members for Children and Young People, Cllr Margaret Davine and Cllr Janet Mote, met on 31 July 2009 with Paul Clark, Corporate Director for Children's Services.

Issues discussed and key points arising:

Transitions Review

The issue of transition from children's services to adults was discussed. The Corporate Director for Children's Services expressed that the transitions services provided in Harrow was generally sufficient but could be improved. The disjoint between the funded management of the child and the independent, individual management of adults is essentially what causes the gap in provision. It was felt by Lead Members and the Executive Director that (if it is feasible) it is important to get things underway and do some work in this municipal year as the issue is relevant to all the 'narrowing the gap' actions in the Children and Young People's plan.

Discussions took place around how the categorisation of adults and children had some part to play in respect of the issues. In health terms, from the age of 16 onward people are considered as adult with personalised budgets where as in terms of education, children are categorised as 0-19 years old.

Another issue that was discussed was that there is no tailored economic development plan for children with disabilities. In considering this area, some consultation could take place with the skills centre as employment is a key issue.

The issue of how well officers are linked was also discussed; perhaps there is a need for a link officer? Is their sufficient funding across the board? When the review is carried out it was decided that it would be important to get the view of adults that have been through the system. It was also felt that the review should explore the positives and the negatives of the service.

Recommended Action: A scoping workshop involving key officers from children's services, adult's services, the PCT, employment and education should be organised. The scoping meeting will involve discussion to highlight the key issues in relation to transitions. It is envisaged that the workshop could be held around late September. The plan is for the workshop to set the scope for further work looking into transitions in the 2010/2011 municipal year.

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

3 November was highlighted as a special Overview and Scrutiny Children and Young people's meeting which would feature:

- Educational Attainment results
- Transitions workshop feedback.

Other relevant business will also be included on the work programme.

AOB

The issues of the Dorothy. com programme and the development of Stag Lane Nursery was also discussed in brief.

CORPORATE EFFECTIVENESS LEAD MEMBERS

Meeting attendees:

The scrutiny lead members for Corporate Effectiveness, Cllr Stanley Sheinwald and Cllr Mark Versallion met on 28th July with Carol Cutler, Director of Business Transformation and Customer Service and Alex Dewsnap, Divisional Director Partnership Development and Performance. Cllr Mitzi Green Vice Chairman Overview and Scrutiny committee observed the meeting.

Issues discussed and key points arising

Transformation Programme

Carol Cutler briefed the Lead councillors on the council's Transformation Programme. This has been developed in order for the council to be able to respond to the need to deliver real improvement in the context of an extremely challenging financial situation in terms of the credit crunch and poor public sector funding settlements. It is no longer the case that incremental change can deliver the necessary improvements and that real step change is now required. The programme is also engaging partners in consideration of different ways of working for the benefit of local people. It is also about having a different relationship with residents and working with them to understand their own responsibilities in the wider community. There are no preformed outcomes and nothing is out of scope.

There are 5 streams in the programme each sponsored and led by a corporate director but not aligned to individuals' existing service responsibilities

The **Cross Council Efficiency Review**, led by Hugh Peart and undertaken in partnership with PriceWaterhouse Cooper is gathering data to clarify the functional costs of teams and from this across the organisation. For example, by examining cross council administrative costs, the council may identify potentially significant savings for the organisation as a whole which might not be achieved on a service by service basis. This project will report at the beginning of October. Outcomes anticipated include business cases for function remodelling in a number of areas which can deliver significant levels of savings

The **Better Together** stream is being led by Paul Najsarek and is seeking an honest discussion with residents regarding what they want and what they're willing to pay for it. It is also seeking a changed relationship with residents and anticipates discussions around responsibilities.

The **Future Operating Model** stream is being led by Brendon Hills and Paul Clark. This stream is considering what the future shape of the council should be and is undertaking some Total Place modelling to determine the total public sector spend in Harrow and how this might be more efficiently used.

The **Place Shaping and Property** stream is being led by Andrew Trehern. It is identifying all of the public sector assets in the borough with the aim of identifying more effective use of these assets by the council and partners.

The **Service Efficiency** stream led by Myfanwy Barrett will continue to undertake in year investigations of performance in order to address immediate budget deficiencies.

Officers from Human Resources and Corporate Finance are supporting each of the streams and £½ m has been made available to support the programme. Whilst initial reports are expected in the autumn, it is acknowledged that this is a long-term programme of work. Carol clarified that all of the business cases will include details of the costs of implementation and whilst pump priming funds will be available, long term the proposals must be self funding.

Carol hopes to appoint another LEAN officer and is bidding to Capital Ambition for further funding to appoint further officers. She also clarified that partners such as PWC and Capita are engaged in delivering projects in as far as they can clearly identify cash savings.

Cllrs Ashton and Osborn are the political leads on the Transformation Programme

Recommended action: Further information to be provided to the Lead Councillors at their next meeting.

Comprehensive Area Assessment

Alex Dewsnap briefed the Lead Councillors. He provided a brief background on the assessment and clarified that, unlike Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) will provide an overall judgement on the provision of services across the borough and not a score of the performance of the council itself. CAA has two component parts: the organisational assessment, which comprises the use of resources and managing performance and which assesses the performance of the council. This is scored from 1 – 4. Each local partner is also assessed in this way by its respective regulator and individual organisational scores are combined. Deloitte are currently finalising their use of resources work with the council.

The second component is the area assessment. This is being led by the Audit Commission and at this point in time, initial findings are being discussed with the Comprehensive Area Assessment Lead (CAAL). This is not a council judgement, but is an assessment of how well local service providers understand need and how well these needs are met. The council is spending time developing a good relationship with the CAAL in order that she has a good understanding of the council and the borough. Significant effort is also being put into impressing upon her the changed profile and improving reputation of the borough e.g. providing information regarding the MJ awards and shortlisting.

Cllr Versallion expressed concern about the organisational assessment rating. Alex clarified that the Audit Commission expect 80% of council's use of resources ratings to go down, there is a view that the CPA had been too easy and CAA is expected to address this.

Cllr Versallion also enquired if the council has identified those indicators in the National Indicator Set that need to improve and how we are challenging the assumptions about the borough 'affluent and leafy'. Alex commented that there are two components to this:

- Challenging the corporate reputation – in this context the council must challenge its reputation in government/Audit Commission eyes and be seen as a real achiever. Highlighting our shortlisting in the MJ awards is important in this. The council is also putting itself forward on a regular basis as the reputation grows, to undertake pilots on behalf of central government
- Clarifying the demographics of the borough, making it clear that the borough experience a number of challenges

In response to a question as to whether the CAA offers the council an opportunity to challenge the low per capita grant, Alex suggested that this may not be the case. The grant is based on a ward-by-ward analysis of deprivation and CAA does not really 'speak' to this agenda. However, it might be possible to use the narrative more effectively in lobbying activities.

Alex clarified the position regarding local indicators and suggested that where there is an appetite for more information then it is important that we are able to measure those things that are important to us, not just the things that we are required to measure. A robust process of local performance management is key to being able to convince the Audit Commission of our improving processes.

Recommended action: To note the information provided.

SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES LEADS

A meeting of the Scrutiny Lead Members for Safer and Stronger Communities, was held on 28 July 2009.

Councillor Call for Action (CCfA)

Members reviewed the CCfA report that will be going to the Overview Scrutiny meeting on Tuesday 28 July 2009. The report provides information on the proposed CCfA process mechanism. The report also details the community safety referral process and the council's Corporate Complaints Policy.

Recommended action: The lead members will be taking note of the outcomes of the Overview and Scrutiny meeting and the progress for implementing the process on the ground.

The Duty to Involve, Inform and Consult

Lead members received a briefing on the duty to involve, inform and consult which set out the details of the duty which came into force in April 2009. Lead members also considered the implication on the council as a whole and more specifically the implications on scrutiny.

The Network of Empowering Authorities

Linking in with the Duty to Involve, Inform and Consult, lead members were briefed on the details of the Network of Empowering Authorities (NEA). The NEA consists of 18 councils across the country working to share good practice and learning with other councils to aid community development and empowerment.

Community engagement and empowerment in Harrow – Community Involvement Strategy

An update on the progress and work underway in the council in respect of community engagement, consultation and empowerment was also discussed at the meeting.

Recommended action: It was requested that a diagram/ matrix of the relevant people/ organisations relevant to the community engagement work within the borough should be developed in time for the next quarterly briefing. Members were also keen to view the community involvement strategy.

Hear Say Review

The outcomes of the Hear Say Review which was carried out in 2006 was also discussed in brief. Many of the recommendations put forward were also included in the review of the Voluntary Sector as Community resources.

Community Safety

Recommended action: Lead members decided a further update in relation to recent developments in community safety would be helpful at their next quarterly meeting.

Gypsy and Traveller Strategy

Recommended action: Members requested information on the progress of the Gypsy and Traveller Strategy following the outcomes of their meeting in May 2009 where they heard that it was currently in development.

Future Meeting

The lead members decided that they would hold their next quarterly meeting in November 2009, the exact date of the meeting will be set shortly.

Brendon Hills, Corporate Director for Community & Environment will be in attendance at the next quarterly lead brief.