

Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	24 November 2009
Subject:	Report from the Chairman of Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee to Overview & Scrutiny
Responsible Officer:	Alex Dewsnap - Divisional Director, Partnership Development and Performance
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 - Letter to the Corporate Director of Finance Appendix 2- Minutes of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee Meeting held on 16 November 2009

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the items that have been considered by Performance and Finance Sub-Committee at the 16 November 2009 meeting.

Recommendation:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to:

- Note the report;
- Note the minutes of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee Meeting held on 16 November 2009 (Appendix 2);
- Approve the Chairman's decision to defer work on the LEAN Kier housing repairs challenge panel until 2010.

Section 2 – Report

Background

Under the protocols established for the agenda planning process of the Performance and Finance Committee, the Chairman receives detailed performance information from a wide variety of sources – both internal and external – on a monthly basis. At the monthly meeting, assisted by officers, the chairman considers the scorecards on a “by exception” basis, identifying those where questions exist about current performance. Individual performance indicators are then selected, and cross-cutting trends are identified. The background to the performance is considered in more detail. The agenda is then built around these issues.

Current situation

Issues identified at the meeting held on 16 November were:

- Revenue and capital monitoring – the Chairman undertook to write to the Corporate Director of Finance to highlight the committee’s concerns about the level of budget monitoring being undertaken through the SAP system and to support further action by the directorate in strengthening uptake. See Appendix 1.
- Use of resource improvement plan – the Comprehensive Performance Assessment judgement is due on 10 December 2010. The committee agreed to receive a report on the judgement at the January meeting.
- Scrutiny review of the voluntary sector – written responses on progress against a number of indicators were requested. The committee agreed to request a further update on progress against the recommendations in six months time.

As a result of staffing pressures within the scrutiny team, the chairman’s briefing has not taken place since before the summer. The next briefing is planned for early January 2010.

At the last meeting members were requested to nominate the Chairman to provide a summary of Harrow-wide performance issues, as a component of the scrutiny leads’ report, to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A report on Harrow-wide issues is planned for the 28 January meeting.

LEAN Kier housing repairs challenge panel

Following discussions with officers and members, the Chairman has decided to defer undertaking a challenge panel. This decision will ensure that a wider range of performance information arising from the recent Lean review will be available for consideration by the panel.

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- Note the report.
- Approve the Chairman’s decision to defer work on the LEAN Kier housing repairs challenge panel until 2010.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

This is no longer required.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Heather Smith, Scrutiny Officer, 020 8420 9203 or heather.smith@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

APPENDIX 1

Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Chairman Councillor Stanley Sheinwald

Myfanwy Barrett
Corporate Director of Finance

18 November 2009

Dear Myfanwy

Revenue and Capital Monitoring 2009/10

As you will be aware, Jennifer Hydari, Divisional Director of Finance and Procurement gave a report on revenue and capital monitoring at the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub Committee on 16 November 2009.

Members discussed the report in some depth and agree with Jennifer that the ability of the council to manage the budget prudently is dependent on accurate budget forecasting by individual managers. The committee was concerned that usage of SAP across the council for budget forecasting is still patchy. The committee commends the efforts made by Corporate Finance to improve compliance so far and recognises that there is still some way to go in changing the culture of the authority to one where all managers are committed to the principle of regular budget monitoring. The committee considered that it would be reasonable to expect 100% compliance by managers by 31 March 2010.

The committee would like to assure you of their support in improving budget monitoring across the authority and looks forward to hearing about progress in this area.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Mark Versallion
Chairman
Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub
Committee

Scrutiny is an independent, councillor-led function, working with local people to improve services

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