

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 11 October 2010

Subject: Report from the Scrutiny Lead Members

Responsible Officer: Alex Dewsnap, Divisional Director Partnership Development and Performance

Scrutiny Lead Member area: All Leads

Exempt: No

Enclosures: Reports from the lead members

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report provides information on the issues discussed in and recommendations from the scrutiny lead member briefings for:

- Adult Health and Social Care
- Children
- Corporate Effectiveness
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Sustainable Development and Enterprise

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny committee members are asked to:

- I. Note the discussions held by the lead members
- II. Agree relevant action proposed therein

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

This report summarises discussions which have taken place between the scrutiny policy and performance lead members and relevant officers. These discussions are reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny committee in order that the committee is fully appraised of issues of interest to scrutiny across the authority and amongst partners and also to ensure that any action proposed by the lead members can be authorised by the committee.

This report includes reports from:

- Adult Health and Social Care
- Children
- Corporate Effectiveness
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Sustainable Development and Enterprise

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Performance Issues

There are no performance issues associated with this report. However, a decision to escalate any issue raised during a briefing with the lead members to the Overview and Scrutiny committee for further investigation, will be accompanied by an analysis of the relevant performance issues.

Environmental Impact

There is no environmental impact associated with this report.

Risk Management Implications

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

Equalities implications

Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? Yes () No ()

If no, state why an EqIA was not carried out below:

No equalities impact has been undertaken as a consequence of this report as no specific action or service development is proposed.

Corporate Priorities

Please identify which corporate priority the report incorporates and how:

- **Build stronger communities** by ensuring that the scrutiny lead councilors are fully briefed on the issues impacting on the Council and are thus able to champion the needs of local people

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Not required for this report.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Lynne Margetts, Service Manager Scrutiny 020 8420 9387

Background Papers: None

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SCRUTINY LEAD MEMBERS' REPORT: ADULT HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Chairman and Lead Members: Councillors Jerry Miles, Vina Mithani and Anne Gate.

The lead members met on 9 September 2010.

Attendees

Councillor Jerry Miles, Chair of Health Sub Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Vina Mithani, Scrutiny Lead Member for Adult Health and Social Care

Councillor Anne Gate, Scrutiny Lead Member for Adult Health and Social Care

Bernie Flaherty, Divisional Director, Community Care

Paul Najsarek, Corporate Director, Adults & Housing

Fola Irikefe, Scrutiny Officer

The Corporate Director and the Divisional Director for Community Care provided an update on the key issues for the directorate.

Personalisation

The Director of Community Care informed members that having operated the personalisation agenda since 2008, evidence has been collated about the benefits and usefulness of personal budgets to users. The personalisation agenda has been reported to have made a real difference to people's lives. There are currently approximately 650 people in the borough with personalised budgets.

The personalised budget process was explained as follows:

- Clients first carry out their own self assessment with the assistance of a carer or a neighbour rather than with a social worker
- this is then approved by a social worker
- a support plan is then developed from
- direct payments are then made for the services procured

Discussions took place relating to issues of possible abuse. It was explained that people who are at risk are flagged up and have more monitoring and financial controls and governance than other clients. If services are not procured within a certain time frame then the money is taken back by the council.

Members also raised concerns regarding how accurate people were in assessing their needs. The members learned that in general (nationally and in Harrow) it was found that older clients tended to underestimate their needs whilst some of the others tended to over-estimate their needs. Five of the older people over the age of 85 with personalised budgets became mentors soon after taking on their own personal budget to support others in filling out their personalised budget forms.

The service works in close partnership with the housing service for example in assisting disabled people to get their own home where they are supported as

and when required for example in the morning or the evening rather than having a constant carer. Personal budgets enable choice.

The way in which the service is procured was also discussed. Services can be purchased through a scheme called 'shop4support', a web-bound catalogue where there are 150 providers and services that clients can access either from home or via any computer online. The items clients purchase are then flagged up on the councils system where they are monitored in terms of both financial control and safeguarding. The 'shop4support' site offers a variety of services such as personal assistant services provided by voluntary organisations etc.

The personalisation agenda has been a success for Harrow especially as it was initially viewed with caution and a little cynicism by some. It is now believed that this is a good way of working and Harrow is quite advanced in this area. As a mark of the progress, last year the service was graded as 'performing well' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The next CQC report will be published in November.

For Action:

The Chair of the Health Sub Committee and the Lead Members requested to have the CQC report presented at the next Health Sub Committee meeting on 7 December 2010.

Challenges within the service

The members were briefed on the current challenges within the service which includes equipment based aid and adaptations and community equipment service and smaller aids. The problems with the service stem from initially not being managed as effectively and overspending.

The aids and adaptations service was previously delivered through property services that have a contract with Kier; part of the issue with the service is that there is a substantial gap between assessment and delivery. The service has now been moved back into Adults and Housing in order to bridge this gap. At present some improvements have been made and the service is performing better and saving money. Consultations are currently taking place with staff with regards to procuring the services of MEDEQUIP for aids and adaptations.

The Councillors were informed when enquiring whether there was a knock on effect on discharge costs that there wasn't. The council's domiciliary care is very good so this has helped to manage the problems in the process and the related indicator is good.

The Budget

There is currently a £655, 00 in year overspend in the Adult Health and Social Care revenue budget which is mainly in adult health. In real terms this figure is at £200, 00 net the corporate allocating. In month four this is now down to a £350, 00. The reduction has been as a result of a reduction in agency staff. It is anticipated that the service will be in budget by the end of the year.

The reduction in agency staff has meant that the remaining staff have found new ways to work more effectively and efficiently. There is a weekly

monitoring on whether the loss of staff is having an impact on the services provided.

For the year to come 2011/2012 (as a result of which the council will now have to find an additional £4 million savings for this year on top of the estimated £50 million over the next three years starting April 2011) the department will approach the need to deliver the savings by driving hard on prices. The North London Alliance has come together for the provision of homecare. The service is also looking at different forms of procurement and closer working with the voluntary sector. Housing & Adults amounts to 35-40% of the councils spend.

Re-ablement

The re-ablement programme which is currently in place focuses on supporting people through specified intensive support for 6 weeks or so. Because of the intensiveness of the service provided it is hoped that from this people will no longer require support or need less support for over an extended period of time.

Support will be increasingly delivered through the neighbourhood resource centres, such as Byron Park Neighbourhood Resource Centre where 20-30 staff across social care and health will be stationed and it have a walk-in facility with a telecare suite. The team will work with clients for 6 weeks and their progress will be tracked on a weekly basis. The re-ablement programme is expected to see a 2 million saving over 3 years. It is expected that 30% of service users will not come back into the service having been through the re-ablement programme.

The programme aims to avert service users from becoming reliant on the services for the long term. The pilot will be launched on 25 September 2010 and the pilot will be monitored after the first 3 months, this will then be followed by an evaluation and then it will be fully implemented. There will not be any savings realised this year due to reduced HSP funding but it is expected in subsequent years that savings will follow.

Consultation

The department plans to hold pre-consultation with service users in October which will include options for savings, official consultation will then take place in December and in the early part of 2011. The results of the consultation will then be considered. The department will be consulting on:

- Levels of contribution to care from users
- Meals on wheels
- Ethnically diverse meals
- Special needs transport service
- Travel Training

It is hoped that users, carers and the voluntary sector will be running the consultation and presenting it to Cabinet.

For Action:

Members have requested for an update on what the results of the pre-consultation at the next Health Sub Committee meeting on 7 December 2010.

Harrow PCT Finances

The members were briefed on the situation with PCT finances. There have been discussions between the council and the PCT regarding continuing care and whether they sit with health or social care in terms of resourcing these services. There are also some issues that need to be resolved in relation to intermediate care. The matters that need to be resolved relates to client cases.

For Action:

Members and Health Sub Committee to consider the outcomes of the discussions at the Performance and Finance Sub Committee meeting on 20 September 2010.

NHS Health White Paper

The Health White Paper was discussed in brief in relation to the PCT's future; the new proposed commissioning role for GP's and that some dialogue with some GPs in the borough has already begun. The make up of the Health and Wellbeing board that is to be established was also discussed along with resources in relation to Public Health services coming to the council. The proposed new responsibility to take on Healthwatch and its expanded remit.

Housing

Changes in the housing service were considered by the members in brief. The housing service is being brought back into the council and there is currently a debate on the idea of lifetime homes. The issue of capping housing benefit was also considered. The housing repairs service is also being brought back into the council.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SCRUTINY LEAD MEMBERS' REPORT: **CHILDREN SERVICES**

Lead Members: Councillors Christine Bednell and Krishna James

The lead members met on 7th September 2010.

Attendees

- Cllr Christine Bednell
- Cllr Krishna James
- Paul Morrison, Senior Professional Scrutiny

It was noted that an announcement on the Comprehensive Spending Review was expected on 20th October.

The leads examined the latest edition of the Cabinet, Forward Plan it was noted that there were no specific children's services items at the moment, other than the two items on the agenda for the 14th September meeting. These were:-

- Amalgamation of Elmgrove Junior and Infant Schools
- Teenage Placement Strategy including change of use of Honey Pot Lane Residential Unit

and these were discussed. It was noted that the second report was not yet available; copies would be provided to the leads when available.

The leads also considered an update on Government announcements since their last meeting on 12th July. Information was requested on

- The differences between academies and free schools
- Details of the call for initiatives to reduce barriers for foster carers

These were provided subsequent to the meeting.

It was noted that a meeting of Harrow head teachers was taking place that week.

For Action:

To meet again on 9th November to consider the implications of the Spending Review

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SCRUTINY LEAD MEMBERS' REPORT: CORPORATE EFFECTIVENESS

Lead Members: Councillors Jerry Miles and Tony Ferrari

The lead members met on 6th September 2010.

Attendees

- Councillor Jerry Miles, Scrutiny Lead Member
 - Myfanwy Barrett Corporate Director, Finance
 - Tom Whiting, Assistant Chief Executive
 - Lynne Margetts, Service Manager Scrutiny
- Cllr Ferrari was unable to attend the briefing and sent his apologies.

Frequency and content of briefings

It was agreed that the corporate effectiveness leads will receive quarterly briefings on the general performance of the corporate functions of the council. If specific concerns are identified via these general briefings then these will be considered in more detail.

Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)

Following the abolition of Comprehensive Area Assessment, Lead Members were advised that the Council is not clear what the proposals are for the future of the Place Survey and the National Indicator Set. Officers advised that the council will still be subject to the Value For Money (VFM) opinion – likely to be delivered by external auditor rather than the Audit Commission in future, which presents an opportunity for savings in the audit fee. It is likely that a London-wide tender for this function will be agreed. Retention of the VFM opinion will mean that the range of information required under the Use of Resources component of CAA will still be required. Lead members were also advised that Ofsted opinion on the performance of children's services and Care Quality Commission opinion for adults' services will remain.

In the absence of CAA the council is reviewing the indicators which it will monitor, though it is unlikely that the Council will stop monitoring many. A concern for the council is the loss of benchmarking information in the future if the National Indicator Set is abolished, Capital Ambition is developing a London indicator set but as this will require subscription, interest has so far been limited.

The absence of comparative information means that the organisation's focus will be on what matters to local people.

Workforce Issues

The lead members were provided with a range of information with regard to the council's work force management performance. Specific points:

There has been a significant reduction in staff sickness levels

There is likely to be an increase in the use of agency staff in the context of the budget reductions likely to be experienced

IPAD performance has improved

The lead members were also advised of the issues facing the council regarding redundancies. The council is looking to reduce costs by 25% over the next three years. As staffing constitutes a high proportion of the council's costs then this is likely to result in a large reduction in the number of staff. The council has introduced a number of measures to try to mitigate the impact of the budget cuts on staff:

- voluntary severance scheme
- vacancy management scheme
- use of agency staff to fill vacant posts in the short-term in order to accommodate redeployed staff in the longer-term

It is anticipated that the amount of casework held by HR will increase as industrial relations become increasingly problematic.

Customer Care

Lead members were provided with information regarding a range of customer care indicators

- Avoidable contact
- Call volumes
- Service standards
- Complaints

Budget

The Corporate Director of Finance briefed the lead members on the council's finances.

In 2009/10 the council had delivered a net underspend of £1.7m. £1m of this had been passed to Children's Services and £0.5m to the transformation programme £0.2m to other specific projects e.g. highway repair after the winter snowfall damage.

For 2010/11 there are a number of pressures on the budget – continuing pressure in children's services, NHS Harrow budget impact, shortfall in the parking budget. The council had also faced in-year reduction of £5.8m, £1.38m of which Directorates had had to find in year. An additional £3m pressures is also anticipated. The Performance and Finance sub committee will be receiving a report covering children's services, the parking account and the impact of NHS Harrow's financial performance at its meeting on 20th September.

In the medium term, the Council has anticipated the need to identify £50m savings over the next three years, that is 30% of controllable spend of which £16m needs to be found in 2011/12.

For Action:

The Corporate Effectiveness Leads will continue to monitor performance in these areas.

The leads will meet again on 3rd November

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SCRUTINY LEAD MEMBERS' REPORT: SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Lead Members: Councillors Nana Asante and Chris Mote

The lead members met on 21st September 2010.

Attendees

- Councillor Nana Asante, Scrutiny Lead Member
- Councillor Chris Mote, Scrutiny Lead Member
- Kashmir Takhar, Head of Services - Community Development
- Lynne Margetts, Service Manager Scrutiny

Support to community groups around festivals

Kashmir Takhar briefed the lead members on the support that is currently available to community groups in relation to the different community festivals celebrated during the year. She advised that at the beginning of each year the council produces the calendar of events from which it is able to support up to ten festivals with £1000 each. This funding is used however the festival organisers wish e.g. venue hire, leaflet production, road closures. The money derives from the Local Area Agreement reward grant and will not be available in future which means financial support will no longer be available to support the festivals. Councillors urged that this information is communicated to local groups as clearly and as soon as possible – there is a sense within the community that information provided by the council is not accurate and that decisions are made regarding funding based on ‘who shouts loudest’ or those who have previously been funded. It is critical that groups are fully aware of the reality of the funding position.

The lead members were pleased to hear that in a number of circumstances, joint work between the community development and economic development teams had resulted in local businesses and the community coming together to deliver projects around particular festivals – e.g. St George’s and St Ann’s Christmas celebrations. Councillors emphasised that care is taken when organising events in this way however, to ensure that the local traders are not inconvenienced.

The lead members expressed their concern about the provision of venues by local schools for community festivals and events. There is no consistent approach to setting charges for facilities and a number of the schools are setting prices which are beyond the resources of the local community. It was acknowledged that the issue of community lettings had not been resolved by the Council, particularly with regard to schools and the discounting/charging schemes which they offer. However there is also no consistency between the schools themselves and the role they feel they can/should play. It was suggested that perhaps a discussion with the Head Teachers Association might lead to some clarity particularly if the council could be persuasive in terms of the role of schools in the community.

Councillors acknowledged the very difficult time the council and community will face in coming years as funding for events is no longer available and suggested that the Council should consider a change in emphasis in terms of

the support offered: the Council should in future focus on enabling local communities to hold events/festivals through the provision of advice and support rather than funding these events. The production of an events management guide was suggested.

For Action:

- to ensure clear communication is given to Community Groups about the funding position with regards to festivals
- to suggest that supporting Community Activity through school lettings is discussed with Head Teachers
- to suggest that an events guide to support Community Activity is developed

Policing in the 21st Century

The lead members had received a briefing on the main components of the Policing in the 21st Century White Paper and the potential implications for the authority. They are particularly concerned to ensure that the very local direction of the Safer Neighbourhoods Teams is not undermined by the implementation of the police commissioner proposals in the White Paper or by the possible reductions in police budgets from the Comprehensive Spending Review. They were also keen to explore linkages with the Neighbourhood Champions scheme.

In order to investigate the implications of the White Paper further, the lead members will invite the borough's representative from the Metropolitan Police Authority, the Borough Commander or his deputy and a representative from the Council's crime reduction team to their next briefing. The lead members would like to understand:

- The linkages between London-wide policing priorities, the borough's priorities and the local priorities and how the White Paper will impact on this
- The impact of the white Paper on accountability – the demise of the MPA and the future monitoring role of the local authority – and links to Neighbourhood Champions scheme
- How local intelligence will be used to develop local priorities.

Following this discussion, the lead members will report back to the Overview and Scrutiny committee on the implications of the White Paper from the scrutiny perspective

For Action:

The Metropolitan Police Authority, the Borough Commander or his deputy and a representative from the Council's crime reduction team be invited to the next Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Lead Members' briefing.

The lead members will meet again on 9th November 9.30

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SCRUTINY LEAD MEMBERS' REPORT: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE

Lead Members: Councillors Sue Anderson and Stanley Sheinwald

BRIEFING – PROPERTY

The lead members met on 22 September 2010.

Attendees

Councillor Sue Anderson, Scrutiny Lead Member
Councillor Stanley Sheinwald, Scrutiny Lead Member
Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar, Portfolio Holder, Property and Major Contracts
Philip Loveland-Cooper, Head of Corporate Estate
Steve Tingle, Finance Business Partner
Heather Smith, Scrutiny Officer

Discussion

The Head of Corporate Estate gave an introduction. The corporate estate covers all property. This includes:

- Day to day management of the Corporate estate
- Rent review and lease renewals
- Acquisitions
- Lettings and grant of licences
- Property strategy and policy
- Advice to all directorates on property issues
- Major projects such as Prince Edward Playing , Hindu school, KCA Cedars Hall project
- Liaison with Legal on property related issues
- Managing the commercial property portfolio both General Fund and HRA
- Right to buy process and valuations
- Managing the third party core investment portfolio
- Statutory valuation work for both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- Estate development
- Disposals capital receipt programme

Attendees discussed the principles informing property strategy, which is driven by the both the needs of the various service delivery areas and partly by estate development, for example holding property to generate revenue as well as other factors such a level of backlog maintenance.

Attendees discussed the property aspect of the transformation programme. The property portfolio is under continual review; there is a total review underway, with partners, as part of the transformation programme. –better Deal for Residents

It was noted that forthcoming changes to the structure of health provision locally will also impact on the ability to consider use of property with health partners.

The council's medium term financial strategy (MTFS) sets out a base requirement of £5m capital receipt per annum but it hoped that greater capital receipts can be achieved in order to support the transformation programme.

For Action:

No further action required at this stage. The lead members note that a further Cabinet report outlining disposals for 2011/12 is likely to be considered in February 2010.