

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
AND SCRUTINY SUB-
COMMITTEES**

Date: 27th January 2011

Subject: Scrutiny Work Programme Update

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

Scrutiny Lead All

Member area:

Exempt: No

Enclosures: None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report updates members of the Overview and Scrutiny committee of progress on the 2010/11 work programme.

Recommendations:

Councillors are recommended to:

- I. Consider the content of the update
- II. Approve and comment on action being taken
- III. Consider whether/when to schedule the standing review of the budget and the health and housing project

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

This report updates members of the Overview and Scrutiny committee on the delivery of the scrutiny work programme.

Following the election in May and the constitution of the scrutiny structures, the Overview and Scrutiny committee commissioned a number of projects. In designing its work programme, the Overview and Scrutiny committee acknowledged the need to build flexibility into the programme in order to respond swiftly to particularly pressing needs and issues, the council and partners are facing significant challenges and if scrutiny is to effectively champion the needs of local people then it is critical that councillors are able to consider issues as they arise. As such, a number of projects initially included in the programme were reprioritised and in some instances dropped and it is anticipated that this will be a regular feature of the programme.

The October Overview and Scrutiny committee received a report outlining progress on projects. This report updates information previously provided.

Closure of Harrow Magistrates' Court challenge panel

This project was completed in September 2010. The Ministry of Justice has since announced that the closure of the magistrates' court will proceed.

IT Contract challenge panel

This project was completed in September 2010.

Closure of Pinner Village Surgery challenge panel

This project was completed in October 2010. Final proposals from NHS Harrow with regard to mitigation of the impact of the closure were presented to NHS Harrow board meeting on 14 December 2010. The chair of the panel and the leads will be considering the response.

Health White Paper 'Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS'

This project was completed in October. The results of the consultation have been announced and significantly, the proposals with regard to the role of scrutiny in respect of health generally and the proposed Health and Well Being Boards have been modified.

Harrow Association of Voluntary Service (HAVS) challenge panel

This project will consider the longer term implications of the investigation into HAVS finance and governance arrangements following events at the organisation. Two panel sessions are proposed in January and February, the first with internal colleagues, the second with external partners. The final report will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny committee in February.

Housing Ambition Plan challenge panel

This challenge panel was originally requested by the Divisional Director Housing Services as a means of assessing how the service had improved resident engagement in service delivery through the Housing Ambition Plan. There have been a number of attempts to arrange this challenge panel but

this has not proved possible. In the light of these difficulties, the chair and vice chairman of Performance and Finance sub committee have scheduled a discussion of the Housing Ambition Plan for the 18th January meeting of the committee and, dependent upon the content of the discussion, may advise the Overview and Scrutiny committee that the challenge panel is no longer required.

Standing Review of the Better Deal for Residents

At its meeting in October, the Overview and Scrutiny committee agreed that this project be run separately to the Standing Review of the Budget (see below). The group has now met twice with a further meeting scheduled for 24th January. The scope for the project is included elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting. The initial phase of the project will consider the efficacy of the council's own project management processes and a number of projects included in the Better Deal for Residents (BDfR) Programme have been selected for more detailed consideration:

- Reablement
- Libraries
- Changing Tenant Behaviour

The project will then move on to consider the efficacy of the BDfR programme and its impact on residents and staff. This is a long-term project which will 'shadow' the delivery of BDfR. Quarterly reports from the project will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny committee and an interim report will be presented to the committee in November 2011.

Performance management review

With the demise of the Comprehensive Area Assessment and the abolition of the National Indicator Set, the Overview and Scrutiny committee has decided to undertake a project which will support the council's response to these changes. There are two phases to this project: assessment of the usefulness of national indicators still collected – what should continue and what can be disposed of – and how the council will respond to the abolition of the Place Survey; and consideration of what a revised performance management framework might comprise in the future, taking advantage of Government proposals to liberate the performance management processes from central control. Interviews with corporate directors and performance management professionals are currently underway and a report from phase one of the project will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny committee in February.

Projects still to be scheduled

Standing Review of the Budget

The Overview and Scrutiny committee agreed that this project would be run separately from the Standing Review of the Better Deal for Residents and would commence as resources permit. It is likely that this will commence as other projects are completed – early spring 2011.

Health Policy

Significant changes to the provision of health services is anticipated in the coming months and therefore resources are currently being allocated to assuring that the Health sub committee is able to respond to these changes at both a national policy level and also in terms of proposals for local service delivery. In particular, the development of effective relationships with the Health and Well Being Board and Health Watch is a priority for this committee. The Health sub committee is currently considering the Public Health White Paper 'Healthy Lives, Health People' and will be sending a response in time for the deadline to the consultation in March 2011.

Health and Housing

It has been proposed that some work should be carried out on the current changes to housing policy and the social impact and effects of the changes to policy for example in respect of overcrowding and general well being. This could be addressed by looking at a specific case study.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report as all projects will be delivered from within the existing scrutiny budget.

Performance Issues

It is anticipated that all of the current projects will contribute to improved performance. In particular, the project to redesign the performance management framework will hopefully help the council to focus on those issues of most importance to residents and thus deliver targeted service improvement

Environmental Impact

There are no environmental impacts 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? No

The projects outlined in this report are investigating various components of service delivery and each project incorporates the consideration of equalities issues. However, where proposals for change are made, it will be the responsibility of the relevant service area to undertake equalities assessment.

Corporate Priorities

To be confirmed

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Not required for this report.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact:

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Background Papers:

None