

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 27 APRIL 2011

REFERENCE FROM CABINET – 7 APRIL 2011

Council's Use of Performance Information - Review Report

Cabinet received a report of the Divisional Director Partnership Development and Performance setting out a response on the findings and recommendations of the Phase 1 of the Scrutiny Review Group's report on the Council's Use of Performance Information.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the Chairman and a Member of the Scrutiny Review Group to Cabinet.

In his presentation, the Chairman of the Review Group stated that in this first phase of the review, the Review Group had focused on getting an overview of the performance information that was being captured and reported, identifying quick wins and looking at how the recently abolished Place Survey could be replaced. He identified the key recommendation from the Review Group's report and those would be particularly helpful in the Children's and Adult Services areas. The Review Group had noted that there were no measures in place for the Council's licensing functions when compared to the Planning function which was measured on various aspects. Therefore, it would be useful to have an overview of the Licensing area, amongst other things the number of appeals made and those that were successful.

The Chairman of the Review Group stated that the indicator relating to sickness absence was labour-intensive to calculate quarterly and that the Review Group had recommended that it be reported annually and in-year monitoring carried out more frequently using the SAP computer system. He urged Cabinet to reconsider the officer recommendation in this regard, but welcomed the proposal to use a Tracker to replace the Place Survey.

A Member of the Scrutiny Review Group commended the report of the Review Group, which would benefit many services, including those provided to residents.

Cabinet noted that phase 2 of the review would look further to how the Council could improve its performance management, performance at operational level and how residents' perception of performance matched that of the Council, for example in the street cleaning area.

The Portfolio Holder for Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services welcomed the Scrutiny Review Group's report. In parallel and since the abolition of many performance indicators, officers had also been looking at how performance measurements could be improved, including the Council's direction of travel in this area. The Council's Improvement Boards would monitor progress.

The Portfolio Holder indicated that the sickness absence ought to be retained for the time being and the proposal from the Scrutiny Review Group would be considered at a later date. He stated that if sickness absence was managed effectively, a downward trend would be seen. He looked forward to receiving the Phase 2 of this review.

The Assistant Chief Executive stated that it was critical how performance was measured at a time when the Council would be delivering the greatest changes.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Chairman and the Member of the Scrutiny Review Group for their presentation. The Leader added that the abolition of some national indicators provided the opportunity for local authorities to shape their local indicators. He welcomed a further interchange with scrutiny in this regard, and the need for Cabinet and Scrutiny to continue the excellent dialogue with scrutiny acting as a 'critical friend'.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report and the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Group on the Council's Use of Performance Information be received;
- (2) the responses recommended by officers to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Group be endorsed;
- (3) progress on all recommendations being approved be monitored through the Council's Improvement Boards.

Reason for Decision: To provide an appropriate response to the Scrutiny recommendations and a more effective local performance framework.

FOR INFORMATION

Background Documents:

Report submitted to Cabinet meeting held on 7 April

Minutes of Cabinet meeting held on 7 April

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