

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting:	22 September 2011
Subject:	Report of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee Chair
Responsible Officer:	Alex Dewsnap, Divisional Director, Partnership, Development and Performance
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	All areas
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Minutes of the sub-committee meeting held on 26 July 2011

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

Recommendations:

That the report of the Performance and Finance Sub-Committee Chair be noted.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

This report provides a summary of issues to be taken forward by the Performance and Finance scrutiny sub-committee following the meeting held on 26 July 2011. The minutes of the meeting are attached.

Issues identified for further follow-up

1. Chair's report

As detailed below, updates will be sought on the indicators listed at the next chair's briefing.

Updates from Q3	
Indicator	Comments
NI 32 repeat incidents of domestic violence	Monitoring at the Chair's briefing to continue.
NI 40 number of drug users in effective treatment	This is a partnership indicator. The Chair requested that further information be provided in order to better understand the indicator and comparisons with other boroughs.
NI 64 – duration on the child protection register	Monitoring at the Chair's briefing to continue.
NI 157a Processing of Major Planning Applications	Monitoring at the Chair's briefing to continue, on the basis of the replacement indicator for 2011/12.
Payment of invoices	<p>Work through the recession busting working group identified the need to pay small businesses promptly in order to avoid a detrimental impact on cash flow. With regard to payment of large suppliers there is no specific policy as yet, but there is an opportunity to negotiate rebates with larger suppliers in return for paying invoices within an agreed timeframe.</p> <p>As well as representing good practice, purchase orders need to be raised in order to allow the Council to operate meaningful commitment accounting and secure good financial management. It requires compliance by managers.</p> <p>Training in good financial management is available to managers through the Management Development Programme (MDP) on business management.</p> <p>The Director of Finance advised that Internal Audit carried out a review in April in order to identify practical issues impacting on the ability to pay invoices within a 30 day period. This could include contracts, VAT issues, bailiffs' costs (charged after action has been taken) and buying occurring through other systems. Internal Audit plan to review a month as part of this process. These findings could then involve changes to SAP or other procedures.</p> <p>A business case for e-invoicing is also under development. This will require suppliers to have the necessary technical capability, but for larger suppliers this can be written into the contract.</p>

Updates from Q3	
	Monitoring at the Chair's briefing to continue, once the Internal Audit report has been issued.

Q4/annual scorecard	
Indicator	Comments/action to be taken
NI 195c – Improved cleanliness – graffiti (quarterly)	Declining performance appears to be an aberration. To monitor at the next Chair's briefing.
NI 125 – achieving independence for older people through rehab (quarterly)	There are problems with the target for this indicator; no target or guidance has yet been issued by the Department of Health. To monitor at the next Chair's briefing.
Rate of fixed term exclusions (quarterly)	Fixed term exclusions were at their lowest in the Autumn term. Spring 2011 was a long term and may have had an impact. To monitor at the next Chair's briefing.
NI 92 Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the EYFSP (Early Years Foundation Stage Profile) and the rest (annual)	The gap has been reduced but an ambitious target was set. Performance is therefore showing as high red.
NI 101 Looked after children achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (including English and mathematics) (annual)	Continued success with adoptions left an older cohort that was less stable, which had an impact on this indicator. Two out of a cohort of 17 young people obtained 5 A*-C including English & Maths, seven young people obtained 5 GCSE's grade A* - G. The Virtual Head teachers only tracked pupils in Borough for 2009-10 and we had nine children out of Borough. Seven young people did not sit any exams. From 2010 - 11, Virtual Head teachers will continue tracking pupils including those out of Borough. The Chair and Vice-Chair requested further information regarding the lack of inclusion of the out of borough pupils within the cohort tracked.
NI 107 % pupils achieving L4 or above in both English and maths at KS2 for BME groups (annual)	The Chair and Vice-Chair requested further information on the size of each cohort and the percentage of the school population this represented.
% pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and mathematics GCSEs for White British pupils eligible for FSM (free school meals) (annual)	The Chair and the Vice-Chair requested further information on the rationale for the target set as well as the size of the cohort.
Customer satisfaction with the responsive repairs service (quarterly)	The return of 'low red' was based on five surveys. The Chair and Vice-Chair requested further information on the number of cases of ASB. All tenants who had had an ASB case were surveyed to determine satisfaction.

Community cohesion action plan

Members accepted the revised plan and requested further clarification on:

- 1.2 – how is increased participation being measured?
- 5.6 – update on Youth Parliament
- 6.4 – progress on Tamil Forum
- 6.6/8.4 – clarification on comments provided.

2. Information report – Capital Governance and Monitoring

Members requested an update on the two 'red' areas in the action plan. Members also requested a future update on SAP issues. With regard to the capital strategy Members requested a report back on how environmental impact/carbon footprint of programmes will be reflected.

3. Revenue and capital outturn 2010/11

With regard to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Members requested details on adjustments made and at what stage to result in the reported deficit of £1.526m. Members sought clarification on whether external decorations for which carry forwards had been made had commenced.

Issues where no further follow-up required

4. Progress against the Economic Development Strategy Action Plan 2010/11

Members agreed the report

Other matters addressed outside committee

5. Housing Responsive Repairs and Maintenance Procurement

The chair and vice-chair attended a briefing on 5 August 2011 along with Councillor Stephen Wright (Sustainable Development and Enterprise policy lead). A note of the briefing is included in the scrutiny leads report found elsewhere on this agenda.

Agenda planning for the next meeting of the sub committee – 22 November 2011

Scrutiny Members are requested to notify the Scrutiny Officer if there are matters that they would like the chair and vice-chairman to investigate or to consider adding to the agenda.

The chair's briefing for this meeting will be held on Tuesday 11 October.

Financial Implications

There are none specific to this report.

Performance Issues

There are none specific to this report.

Environmental Impact

There are none specific to this report.

Risk Management Implications

There are none specific to this report.

Corporate Priorities

The work of the sub-committee addresses all of the Council's corporate priorities.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Not required for this report.

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

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

Background Papers: None