

REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: 22nd September 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 2011/12 work programme.

Recommendations:

Councillors are recommended to:

- I. Consider the content of the update
- II. Approve and comment on action being taken

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

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

Over the last 16 months since the election in 2010, the Overview and Scrutiny committee has 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, the committee did not publish an annual work programme but rather has built flexibility into its programme in order to be a more responsive service.

This report provides members of the Overview and Scrutiny committee with an update on the projects which are currently underway.

Current Projects

Standing Review of the Better Deal for Residents

The first phase of this project focussed on the project management process used across the council in order to ensure that the significant projects which comprise the Better Deal for Residents are properly managed. The report from this phase was completed in June 2011 and was considered by Cabinet in July and all bar one of the recommendations made by the standing review were accepted by Cabinet.

The second phase of the review is about to commence, a meeting of the review group will take place on 26th September to consider the scope for phase two. It is anticipated that this part of the project will consider the impact of the programme on local people and whether or not the programme is achieving its ambitions. The scope for phase two will be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny committee in November.

Standing Review of the Budget

The first meeting of the Standing Review of the Budget will take place on 29th September. This meeting will consider the scope for the project which is expected to consider the impact, delivery and efficacy of financial reductions. The scope will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny committee in November.

Performance Management Review

The report from the first phase of this project was completed in February 2011. The report from the second phase of the project, which has comprised a more detailed consideration of the council's future performance management framework, is currently being drafted. The final report will be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny committee in November.

Snow Clearance Challenge Panel

Set in the context of increasingly harsh winter conditions, this project has considered how the council's snow clearance priorities are established and how the council can work with residents to address winter conditions. The report from the challenge panel will be presented to the September meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny committee.

Engaging Young People Review

The scope from this project is included on the agenda for this evening's meeting. The project will address how best the borough can overcome current challenges and obstacles surrounding youth engagement in order to deliver the best outcomes for children and young people and make best use of existing resources. The review expects to report to the Overview and Scrutiny committee in January

Debt Recovery Challenge Panel

This project will investigate the feasibility of co-ordinating the different debt recovery processes which are in place across the council. It will also investigate whether a more proportionate approach to debt recovery could be introduced. The challenge panel will meet in October and a report to the Overview and Scrutiny committee is expected in November.

Completed projects

The challenge panel which considered the implications of the events at Harrow Association of Voluntary Service has been completed and was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 8th September.

Anticipated projects

Proposals to merge Ealing Hospital and the NW London Hospitals trust are emerging. It is probable that Harrow will be invited to join a Joint Overview and Scrutiny committee with Brent and Ealing councils in the next few months as the consultation process on the proposals starts.

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 if proposals are endorsed.

Corporate Priorities

- Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe
- United and involved communities: a Council that listens and leads
- Supporting and protecting people who are most in need
- Supporting our Town Centre, our local shopping centres and businesses

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