REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date:	3 April 2012
Subject:	Scrutiny Lead Member Report
Responsible Officer:	Alex Dewsnap, Divisional Director, Partnership Development and Performance
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	All
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	Reports from the Scrutiny Lead Members

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

The report accompanies the reports from the Scrutiny Lead Members.

Recommendations:
The Committee is requested to consider the reports from the Scrutiny Lead Members and agree the actions proposed therein.

Harrow**COUNCIL**
LONDON

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph
This report outlines details of the work of the Scrutiny Lead Members for Corporate Effectiveness, Safer and Stronger Communities and 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.

Environmental Impact
There is no environmental impact associated with this report

Risk Management Implications
There are no risks associated with this report.

Equalities implications
Was an Equality Impact Assessment carried out? No

This report outlines the activities of the scrutiny lead councillors; it makes no proposals to change service delivery.

Corporate Priorities
The Scrutiny Lead Members' responsibilities cover all areas of the council's activity.

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, lynne.margetts@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

SCRUTINY LEAD MEMBERS' REPORT:
CORPORATE EFFECTIVENESS

NOTE OF THE SCRUTINY LEAD MEMBER BRIEFING
7TH MARCH 2012

Lead Members: Councillors Jerry Miles and Tony Ferrari

Attendees
- Cllr Jerry Miles, Corporate Effectiveness Policy Lead
- Cllr Tony Ferrari, Corporate Effectiveness Performance Lead
- Lynne Margetts, Service Manager Scrutiny

The Corporate Effectiveness Leads met to prepare for the presentation of the Debt Recovery review, included on the Cabinet agenda for 8th March. Cllr Ferrari enquired as to what progress had been made with regard to the potential centralisation of all debt recovery processes.

They agreed to invite Director of Corporate Resources and the Assistant Chief Executive to their next meeting to discuss the Corporate Resources service plan and thus to identify priorities for their consideration in the next municipal year. They also proposed to consider the following:
Implementation of the Mobile and Flexible Working project
Use of customer information gathered via Access Harrow.

For Action
Lynne to speak to Director of Corporate Resources to ascertain progress thus far on the debt recovery centralisation project

Lynne to invite Director of Corporate Resources and the Assistant Chief Executive to the next meeting of the Corporate Effectiveness Leads.

SCRUTINY LEAD MEMBERS' REPORT:
SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES

NOTE OF THE SCRUTINY LEAD MEMBER BRIEFING
20TH MARCH 2012

Lead Members: Councillors Nana Asante and Chris Mote

Attendees
Cllr Chris Mote, Safer and Stronger Communities Policy Lead
Cllr Nana Asante, Safer and Stronger Communities Performance Lead
Lynne Margetts, Service Manager scrutiny

The Safer and Stronger Communities leads met to consider their priorities for the coming municipal year. Whilst officers from the Council and from the Police Service will be invited to discuss their service plans and priorities, the leads considered some of the specifics which had been identified in the scrutiny annual report.

The following priorities have been identified:
- Maintaining the positive cohesion of our diverse community
- The future relationship between the council and the police, for example in progressing plans for co-location;
- The impact of the Olympics on policing in Harrow – in particular, in the context of increased incidents of domestic burglaries, what will be done to maintain community stability
- Smartwater
- The changes following the abolition of the Metropolitan Police Authority and the introduction of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime;
- The performance information which is produced by the police service and how this might be used by other agencies to support the commissioning function.
- How the changes to housing benefit are impacting on our community.

The leads will invite the Borough Commander and the Head of Community Safety to attend their next meeting to consider policing and the Olympics, Smartwater and the implications of the establishment of the Mayor's Office for Policing.

In identifying the priorities to be considered, further statistical information with regard to hate crimes will be sought.

For Action
Lynne to invite Borough Commander and Head of Community Safety to the next leads meeting on 17th April.

Lynne to identify additional statistical information.

The Leads noted that the Community Safety Plan and the Safer Harrow Strategic Assessment will both be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny committee on 12th June.

SCRUTINY LEAD MEMBER REPORT
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE

NOTE OF THE SCRUTINY LEAD MEMBER BRIEFING
22 FEBRUARY 2012

Lead Members: Councillors Anderson and Wright

PLACE SHAPING BRIEFING – MOBILE AND FLEXIBLE WORKING

Attendees
- Councillor Sue Anderson, Scrutiny Performance Lead, SDE
- Councillor Stephen Wright, Scrutiny Policy Lead, SDE
- Councillor Paul Osborn, Vice-Chair, O&S
- Councillor Graham Henson, Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services Portfolio Holder
- Councillor Bill Phillips, Portfolio Holder Assistant, Information Technology
- Andrew Trehern, Corporate Director, Place Shaping
- Carol Cutler, Director of Customer Services and Business Transformation
- Andy Parsons, Head of Service, Business Management
- Heather Smith, Scrutiny Officer

NOTES

The Head of Service began by introducing the objectives of the mobile and flexible working programme. Members were reminded of the video that had been produced to introduce the concept of the project.

The approach has been piloted through the HARP projects, which provided remote access to core applications. The new project has a number of benefits including online presence management, secure remote access and document management capability.

As the business case had been developed some time ago the first task will be to revisit the technical solution. This would include the impact of the ITO (IT externalisation), along with re-assessment of the market place and other developments. The review of the business case will be undertaken before implementation.

The underpinning principle for the project was that the council would adopt tried and tested solutions. As such the experience of other authorities in adopting such an approach was considered as part of the development of the project. Another principle is the need to ensure that risks regarding information security are kept low.

With regard to savings, Members were advised that about 33% of savings to be achieved would be cashable; there were decisions to be made regarding whether savings achieved in particular services were cashed or alternatively invested in service delivery.

The level of efficiencies achieved was also dependent on the starting point of the individual service; services such as HR which already operate a paperless workflow would make lesser gains than those that had not already taken such steps to modernise. Some areas such as Legal Services already have electronic document management; in other areas the cost of adopting such an approach would be need to be weighed against benefits. In Children's Services, for example, case work documents would be excluded from Sharepoint as Framework-I is already accessible remotely through Citrix.

The Trades Unions are keen to modernise business processes, recognising the advantages to staff in better managing work and personal time, as well as motivational gains. A Member commented that Unions tended to view the changes as voluntary, so enquired as to the strategy for implementation. The Corporate Director responded that staff would be expected to embrace the technological and systems changes; the Divisional Director added that in her experience staff wanted to make the change, and eventually working in such a way would be an element of the Council's approach to recruitment and retention.

From the perspective of reducing the Council's (non schools) salary expenditure, it was anticipated that there would be a 1% saving, equating to 30-35 full time equivalents (FTEs). The project would increase staff productivity rather than reducing staff count overall. Other advantages included opportunities for service redesign.

The wider context is that the Council has already closed most of its peripheral offices. The goal is to work towards a ratio of 5 desks to 10 staff. In the context of community budgets, this will offer the Council the opportunity to rent desk space to partners.

A Member asked whether Councillors' requirements had been included and was advised that additional work was required and that other transformation projects would be addressing this. The Member added that areas that needed to be considered included wi-fi for committee rooms; as the providing of tablets was a political issue all Members should be engaged at an early stage. The Corporate Director responded that the mobile and flexible working project will provide a technological platform for future initiatives.

Members discussed the financial summary information provided. The savings did not include savings from property rationalisation. A Member expressed concern about the achievability of the cashable savings. The Corporate Director responded that the Cabinet report addressed this and set out targets for the project within the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS); some service areas were likely to achieve more while others might achieve less.

A Member enquired whether there would be costs associated with staff working from home. The Divisional Director responded that contracts did not specify that staff worked from home and that the cost of equipment was included in the project. Citrix or BeCrypt software would also enable staff to use their own equipment. The Portfolio Holder added that the project enables remote working, not just home working. The Divisional Director commented that, in Access Harrow for example, there is a bulge of calls between 9-10am, and while it would not make sense for staff to come into work for an hour, some staff might consider working if they could do so from home, thereby improving customer experience.

A Member asked why the report had gone to Cabinet if there was a need to review the full business case. The Corporate Director responded that a strategic decision from Cabinet was required in order to progress the project; any materially significant changes would be reported to Cabinet. When agreement is achieved, Capita will review the impact of the ITO on the project as well as technical advances and changing business needs since the FBC was finalised. This should achieve the best balance between tried and tested model and future proofing. A prudent approach had been proposed for the roll-out, so that lessons learned could be applied.

Next steps

The Vice-Chair of O&S requested that scrutiny be provided with the revised full business case along with the implementation plan. He also requested that status updates on the project be provided to Performance and Finance scrutiny sub-committee.