

REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date:	30 th May 2012
Subject:	Scrutiny Lead Member Report
Responsible Officer:	Alex Dewsnap, Divisional Director, Partnership Development and Performance
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Children and Young People Policy and Performance Lead Members Safer and Stronger Communities Policy and Performance Lead Members
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.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

This report outlines details of the work of the Scrutiny Lead Members for Children and Young People and Safer and Stronger Communities

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: SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES

NOTE OF THE SCRUTINY LEAD MEMBER BRIEFING 17th APRIL

Lead Members: Councillors Nana Asante and Chris Mote

Attendees

- Councillor Chris Mote, Safer and Stronger Communities Policy Lead
- Councillor Nana Asante, Safer and Stronger Communities Performance Lead
- Chief Superintendent Dal Babu
- Finlay Flett, Head of Community Safety Services
- Mike Howes, Service Manager Policy and Partnerships
- Lynne Margetts, Service Manager Scrutiny

1. Olympic Policing

The borough commander outlined the proposals for policing during the Olympics. All officers will be working a 15-week shift to increase police coverage and, as this is a national policing arrangement involving all 43 police forces, if any difficulties are experienced in the borough we have access to a team comprising Inspector, 3 sergeants and 21 constables. The borough commander is confident therefore that the requirement to police the Olympics will not compromise community safety in the borough.

He did however, identify a number of challenges:

- *Transport*
Wembley arena and stadium will be emptied and filled up to four times per day on event days which will put considerable strain on transport particularly given the Jubilee line is one of the key lines for Olympic travel. Advice re travel times and working from home will be given to try to reduce congestion.

Given the transport difficulties and in the context of the increased use of Harrow's mosque and also given that the Olympics are taking place during Ramadan, the police are consulting with the Muslim community to minimise the impact on them. Similarly the impact of transport difficulties on the Jewish community is also being assessed.

Parking is also a potential issue. Whereas in the past the Civic Centre has offered car parking space, this is unlikely to happen for the Olympics. Cllr Mote suggested that the Kodak site might be opened up for parking. It was agreed this might be worth exploring. There is a regular parking issue in Stanmore during events at Wembley. The borough commander suggested that the forthcoming FA cup semi final may offer a test scenario to help resolve issues – there are reduced trains coming from Liverpool for the event. The police are also working with licencees re restricting their opening times during events. The borough commander also raised the possible need to manage celebrations if parts of our diverse communities are particularly successful during the games.

- *Torch Relay*
This is also presenting some policing challenges as it is such a public event – the borough commander pointed to the previous attack on Konnie Huq and the recent Oxford/Cambridge boat race disruption

Members of the public who have any concerns are being advised to speak to Safer Neighbourhood Teams or use 101 number to contact the police. 999 should be used if they have immediate concerns.

For Action

- No further action required

2. Mayors Office for Policing and Crime

This had been put on the agenda as a result of the changes following the abolition of the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA), which mean that there is no automatic borough representation on the Police and Crime Committee which scrutinises the activities of the Mayors Office for Policing and Crime (MOPC). The borough commander confirmed that borough representation is still being worked out and he will update the members as more information becomes available.

The meeting discussed the difficulties being experienced with regard the dissolution of Harrow Police and Crime Consultative Group (Harrow PCCG) and the shadow board which is currently being set up by the MOPC. Although the decision to stop funding Harrow PCCG is not the council's, the council is being seen as culpable in the decision. The borough commander advised that the Mayor's office has been told that this is a very active PCCG and that any identified issues have been resolved. As this is an extremely active group, dissolution may result in more problems, creating a replacement group will also probably simply engage the same people.

Finlay commented that the key issue going forward is clarity: whatever emerges there needs to be clarity of purpose and clarity on the use of funding. One of the key problems experience in Harrow PCCG was a change in the funding allocated. Whilst originally this funding had been designed to cover administrative costs, the MPA had complicated arrangements by channelling project funding through the PCCG network, local groups had never been set up to do this, their primary role was to scrutinise the police by building community engagement, not delivering projects. Cllr Asante suggested that if in future, there is project money to be distributed this should be channelled through Safer Harrow, on which the PCCG is represented.

For Action

- The leads will await further information on borough representation on the GLA Police and Crime Committee
- The leads will monitor further developments re Harrow PCCG

3. SmartWater

Mike Howes presented an initial evaluation of the effectiveness of the SmartWater initiative. He proposed that it is too soon to assess precisely how effective SmartWater has been for a number of reasons:

- We don't experience burglary often enough
- Those household more prone to burglary have been offered SmartWater kits

It is proposed to undertake a more sophisticated analysis of the impact with SmartWater

Finlay commented that 30k packs had been distributed by police officers. In 2010 confidence in the police was expressed by 26% of the borough population, since this time this level of confidence had risen to 83%. Whilst the impact of SmartWater on this improvement can't be proved, it also can't be disputed. The borough commander agreed that SmartWater had not just been about burglary but about improving the confidence of local people and enabling the police to make direct contact with residents. Thus whilst it might not appear at this point in time to be delivering improvements in terms of burglary, it certainly seems to be improving residents confidence in policing and this is something which should be celebrated.

The borough commander agreed, this represented a good use of resources, targeting and focusing on potential victims had delivered results and Harrow now enjoys the lowest rate of repeat burglaries in London. In this context, the group discussed issues around planning permission for side gates. As the majority of points of access are from the rear of properties, it is likely that gating some of the access to the rear of properties would help to further reduce burglary levels. However, there appears to be confusion as to the need for planning permission for gates. The borough commander also commented that when visiting residents, his officers weren't just distributing packs, they were also providing other anti-burglary advice. He pointed out that ½ of the burglars operating in Harrow were not from Harrow and as such he would like the use of SmartWater to be more widely publicised in the borough. The members were concerned that this might create a greater fear of crime, Mike suggested that this should be measured again to assess the ongoing impact of SmartWater.

Overall, it was felt that the expenditure of £400k was a good use of resources. It was suggested that scrutiny might like to consider:

- Whether something different/better could have been done with the £400k or
- Whether more could have been done with £10 per household.

For action

- The leads will continue to monitor the impact of SmartWater

**SCRUTINY LEAD MEMBERS' REPORT:
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

**NOTE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY LEADS BRIEFING WITH
CORPORATE DIRECTOR – TUESDAY 20 MARCH 2012**

Lead Members: Councillors Christine Bednell and Krishna James

Attendees:

- Councillor Christine Bednell - Scrutiny Lead for Children and Young People
- Councillor Krishna James - Scrutiny Lead for Children and Young People
- Catherine Doran – Corporate Director Children's Services
- Nahreen Matlib – Senior Professional Scrutiny
- Palvinder Kudhail – Interim Divisional Director of Quality Assurance, Commissioning and Schools

1. Matters arising from last leads briefing

These would be covered in the briefing.

2. Developments in Children's Services – directorate update

Directorate transformation

All directorate staff have now moved into the Civic Centre, with the exception of the teams at Alexandra Avenue, the children's centres, the youth centre and the Teachers' Centre (which includes the Pupil Referral Unit, tuition services and HSIP). The new directorate was launched two weeks ago and reorganises over 500 staff, following much hard work.

The budget for Children's Services has been utilised with caution and comes in with an underspend for this year.

There will be a second phase of reorganisation, covering SEN/disability services as there is still a lot of work to be done around making our disability services more efficient and effective.

Safeguarding

Councillor Bednell highlighted that historically there had always been a weak link between the council and the NHS where children and young people's safeguarding and children's health was concerned. Addressing this is now even more important given the introduction of the Clinical Commissioning Groups.

Catherine noted that the borough's systems for safeguarding will impact greatly on the forthcoming Ofsted inspection. The local authority leads on safeguarding responsibilities for the borough and the scrutiny review of safeguarding is very much welcomed.

Children's centres

Consultation on a hub and spoke model for children's centre provision is currently ongoing.

Service planning

There will be one service plan for the directorate which is anticipated to be finished next week, following further input from service managers.

Ofsted

Councillor Bednell noted that the focus of Ofsted has changed somewhat and the new Ofsted regime will mean fewer schools will be judged 'outstanding'. Catherine informed councillors that all Ofsted inspections in this cycle must take place by June and that every local authority gets two weeks notice. Harrow's Ofsted inspection is imminent and officers are working hard in preparing for this, in anticipation of the notification from Ofsted.

For action:

- ***Kulvinder to send scrutiny lead members a copy of the service plan when it has been completed. This can then be used to identify any issues that scrutiny should consider for its work programme.***

3. Policy horizon scanning – relevant policy issues/implications at national and local level

SEN green paper

This is still at green paper stage. It contains significant issues especially given the changes happening around health services at the moment.

4. Scrutiny - items coming up at Committee and review work

Scrutiny review on engaging young people

The final report for the review is currently being drafted and the intention is for this to be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in May.

Safeguarding review

Catherine is keen to contribute to this review and requests that the scrutiny officer overseeing the project contacts her with the information gathered for the review so far so that any gaps in evidence to inform the review can be identified at an early stage. The first meeting of the review is likely to take place in April.

Committee items - school place planning

O&S has looked at school place planning for primary schools and members feel that there is a need to look at secondary schools. What is the role of the local authority given the introduction of academies? Catherine said that the local authority runs admissions services for the high schools and currently there are around 300 vacancies so there are no problems with capacity. As the report to O&S highlighted, there are problems around the capacity to provide places at primary school level. There are currently 11 bulge classes in primary schools.

There has not been sufficient investment in primary schools, especially to meet the London baby boom. Harrow has not witnessed massive investment in housing so is not anticipating a large influx of new families. However the boom caused by extra housing is expected and therefore the new school planned for the Kodak site will be needed. Pupil place planning is now leading capital spend with the only capital investment being on new classrooms and play spaces. This will mean a cultural change for schools who have in the past been able to spend more freely.

There will potentially be a free school (high school) opening in the borough in September and it is the local authority's role to provide support to developing such plans.

For action:

- ***Fola to send Catherine details of evidence gathered for the safeguarding review with a view to identifying any gaps in information.***

5. Next leads briefing - date and possible content

To be arranged.

For action:

- ***The next scrutiny leads briefing to be arranged for about 3 to 4 months time (NM).***