



**Full Council**  
21 January 2013

**Report from the Director of Strategy  
Partnerships and Improvement**

For Action

Wards Affected:  
All

**Report from the Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny**

**1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the work of the overview and scrutiny committees in accordance with Standing Order 14 and covers the period since the last Full Council Meeting in November 2012.

**2.0 Detail**

One Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 2.1 The committee last met on 5 December 2012 and members considered the following:

an update on the Waste & Recycling Transformation Project, which focussed on the performance of the waste collection and street cleansing services. While accepting that the council's target of 60% of waste to be recycled is ambitious and long term, the main focus of member's discussion was on the actions being undertaken to reach this target,

an update on the Future Customer Services project and the creation of the Brent Customer Service Unit in January 2012. The report set out some of the main areas of work and also provided members with performance information relating to customer service activity. Performance in relation to telephone call handling, particularly the difficulty in comparing performance between services with differing levels of complexity was discussed. Members also raised questions about the councils approach to channel migration and the benefits that could be

derived from increasing the council's online activity. The committee will continue to take an active interest in this area,

an update on the One Council Programme and it was reported that there are currently 36 projects within the programme. Members raised issues relating to risks, project evaluation, and the financial and non financial benefits and disbenefits of individual projects within the programme.

#### Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny committee

- 2.2 The committee which last met on 11 December 2012, received an update from Brent Youth Parliament on their recent visit to Parliament and the work they are undertaking to promote the new Roundwood Youth Centre and inform the choice of activities available.
- 2.3 The committee discussed the Plan for Children and Families in Brent which aims to bring together Brent's vision and key priorities for improving outcomes for children and families. One of the main concerns raised by members was the impact of the cost of childcare for parents returning to work. Other issues raised by the committee included: ensuring a strategic approach across the borough particularly the potential for working with voluntary and private sector partners, aligning and making the most of available resources and monitoring outcomes.
- 2.4 The committee received a presentation on The Working with Families Initiative. Members were concerned that the project may evolve into dealing with families in crisis rather than early intervention so questioned how the project would be rolled out to ensure a holistic approach. Further questions focussed on how success would be measured in order to achieve the payment by results, how saving had been identified and whether or not the savings were sustainable. Members also wanted clarification on how this project differed from previous initiatives.
- 2.5 The committee also received a report on Corporate Parenting which summarised the key issues relevant to Looked after Children in Brent and set out the core principles that ensured the Corporate Parenting Group adopt a locally robust approach to ensuring that Looked After Children receive at least the same standard of care as would be given by a reasonable and responsible parent. Members raised concerns about the make-up of the Corporate Parenting Group, the support offered to care leavers in settling into their new homes, Member involvement in monitoring the progress of children and actions taken to improve educational achievement within this group.

#### Budget and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 2.6 The Committee has met twice since the last report to Full Council. On 15

November 2012 the committee received a presentation from the Director of Adult Social Care which set out the budget pressures and issues facing the department. Members focussed on the departmental savings relating to better procurement and commissioning, unit cost trends, the impact of a growing population on service delivery and the scope for early intervention and prevention activities through partnership working. The committee also received an update on the current budget position and issues affecting the development of the 2013/14 budget. Members were particularly interested in any departmental overspends and actions being taken to address them.

- 2.7 The Director of Children and Families attended the meeting in December to discuss budget pressures and issues facing the department. Member's questions centred on overspends in the children's social care budget, the transformation of services, particularly in relation to savings targets, issues that impact on demand and measures being taken to mitigate against them.
- 2.8 A report on the financial benefits of the One Council Programme and its role in the Medium Term Financial Strategy was also discussed. Members asked questions about how savings targets were set, the associated risks, how achievable the targets were and project delivery costs. They also discussed how income could be maximised and the implementation of the corporate debt recovery policy. The committee will be finalising its First Interim Report at the next meeting in January.

#### Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 2.9 The committee last met on 6 December 2012 and members considered reports on the following:

Brent's Employment Programme. This provided an update on the current labour market position and set out the challenges faced by the council in relation to rising unemployment, deprivation and the impact of the introduction of welfare reforms. The report also highlighted the opportunities available to tackle the growing problem through the establishment of a new "Employment and Enterprise" team within the Regeneration and Major Projects Department. Member's questions focussed on funding, the numbers of Brent residents that could be helped via the employment programme particularly the Navigator scheme, small businesses enterprise and Park Royal Partnership. Members also questioned the number and skill set of local residents employed during the building of the new Civic Centre.

Domestic Violence which provided an update on the latest trend data and the outcomes and findings of recent Domestic Violence Homicide Reviews. The report also detailed the new legislation that underpins the

Domestic Violence Homicide Review process. Members discussed the financial burden imposed by the additional statutory duty and queried the resources available to deliver and maintain service levels. Members also noted the efforts displayed in balancing this difficult and sensitive piece of work.

A presentation from the Borough Commander of London Fire Brigade, Brent. The presentation provided an overview of the services in Brent, the performance of Brent LFB and the impact of the current economic conditions. Members focussed their questions on the 2013/15 budget and the impact of final budget announcement in January 2013; members were also keen to know what options would be considered for Brent. The committee was assured that a full public consultation would take place and no changes will be made until June 2013.

### Health Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 2.10 The committee met on 27 November 2012 and considered a report on the status of the merger of Ealing Hospital NHS Trust and North West London Hospitals NHS Trust and on progress towards their £72m savings target. The merger has been deferred by NHS London until it has seen further financial assurances and will not now take place on 1 April 2013. Savings to date are £9.8m compared to an £11m target. Members were concerned about the financial issues, the impact they may have on the merger and the risk of the trust going into administration. Members questioned whether rising visitor numbers at Northwick Park A&E would impact on standards and asked what actions were being taken to promote other services for non-urgent cases. The committee will be receiving a further update in January 2013.
- 2.11 The committee discussed a report which set out how the council will implement the requirements of The Health and Social Care Act 2012 in relation to the creation of a local Healthwatch and Complaints Advocacy Service. Members sought clarification on the role and structure of Healthwatch, the results of the recent consultation and the procurement timetable. The committee also discussed the procurement of a Complaints Advocacy Service.
- 2.12 The committee received an update from Ealing Hospital Trust on the recruitment of Health Visitors in Brent and the need to recruit additional Health Visitors by 2015 to meet government targets. There has been a poor uptake of 'return to practice' students across London and NHS London is now refocusing on student recruitment. Member's asked questions about recruitment issues specific to Brent including: monitoring reasons for leaving, recruitment arrangements when NHS London ceases to exist in 2013, pay differences between boroughs and the transfer of Health Visitors to the council.

**3.0 Financial Implications**

None

**4.0 Legal Implications**

None

**5.0 Diversity Implications**

None

**6.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)**

None

**Contact Officers**

Phil Newby  
Director of Strategy, Partnerships & Improvement  
[Phil.newby@brent.gov.uk](mailto:Phil.newby@brent.gov.uk)

Jacqueline Casson  
Acting Corporate Policy Manager  
[Jacqueline.casson@brent.gov.uk](mailto:Jacqueline.casson@brent.gov.uk)