



Full Council
24 June 2013

**Report from the Assistant Director of
Policy**

For Action

Wards Affected:
ALL

Report from the Chairs of Overview & Scrutiny

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees in accordance with Standing Order 14 and covers the period since last reported to Full Council in January 2013.

2.0 Detail

One Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- 2.1 The One Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee has met on three occasions since last reported to Full Council. On 21 March Members received a detailed update on the Procurement Project. They were provided with information about how the category managers were working actively with the service directorates to ensure the council benefitted from procurement activities. Members commented on the previous lack of resource and requested further information in relation to the role of project managers and training provided for staff. Members also requested clarification on how the savings target had been identified and the balance between improving the service and making savings.
- 2.2 The Committee received a presentation on the Managing the Public Realm Project, which included an overview of the vision, objectives and scope of the new contract. Members of the Committee spent some time focusing on the importance of communication with residents about waste and recycling. Questions were raised about the impact that welfare reform, and particularly beds in sheds, would have on the amount of waste generated; it was

suggested that this could be addressed through appropriate licensing. Members' discussions also centred on the implications of this project on staffing levels and the amount of savings the project would generate.

- 2.3 A report on the Parking Enforcement review was also received in March. Members raised concerns about the availability of alternatives to buying visitor permits online. The Committee has requested an update on this project in the 2013/14 municipal year.
- 2.4 The One Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee held a special meeting on 2 May to discuss concerns about the performance of Adult Social Care, particularly in relation to social care clients receiving self-directed support and the timeliness of social care assessments (mental health only). Members focussed on data collection and interpretation and the actions being taken to improve the service provided to clients.
- 2.5 The committee also met on the 29 May when it received a presentation on the Libraries Transformation Project. Members were pleased to hear that there has been a significant increase in new visits and membership, and that the Summer Reading Challenge for children exceeded last year's performance. Members requested information on how Brent visitor numbers compared to other London boroughs. They also suggested that this presentation should be given to all of the Brent Connects forums.
- 2.6 Members also received an update on the One Council Programme. Concerns were raised about the financial impact that the 'go live' date for Project Athena changing to November 2013 would have. There was a discussion about the cost implications of the number of interims in senior positions at the council and members requested further information about when these roles will be advertised. The Committee agreed to invite the Leader of the Council and relevant senior officers to the next meeting to discuss issues relating to the senior management restructure.
- 2.7 The Committee is due to meet again on 10 July 2013.

Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- 2.8 The Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee last met on the 20 March 2013. Members considered reports on the following issues:
- 2.9 Following a request from the Chair of the Brent Youth Parliament (BYP), the Committee received a presentation on Bullying in Schools. The presentation highlighted the good practice in Brent schools and the local and national picture, including the views of young people from the BYP and Secondary Student Anti-Bullying Council. Members were impressed by the work being done to address this issue by young people and commended the young students on their presentation and hard work.
- 2.10 The committee received a report that provided an annual update on Schools Finance. Members were particularly interested in the rolling audit plan and would like to see a continued focus on the assistance provided to Brent

schools. Members suggested that more support should be provided in helping to address skills gaps in schools' boards of governors.

- 2.11 A report updating the committee on the changes in types of schools in the Borough was presented in March 2013. Members were informed that if the Council wished to establish new schools in the Borough, these would have to be delivered via the free schools route, with the Council advertising via the Department for Education (DfE) for a free school provider. Members raised a number of questions about admission arrangements and how the establishment of new free schools would impact the Council's projections of demand for school places. Concerns were also raised about resources, identifying potential free school partners and meeting equality objectives, particularly in relation to achievement. The Committee agreed to write a letter to the Secretary of State regarding the difficulty faced by the Local Authority in ensuring adequate health and safety standards for Brent Children in schools over which the council had no official influence.
- 2.12 The Committee will meet next on 18 June 2013.

Partnership & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- 2.13 The committee has met twice since the last report to Full Council. On 21 March, Members received a presentation from the Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) Performance Manager, who provided an overview of BHP's performance. BHP provided an analysis of benchmarking results compared with London Boroughs and Arm's Length Management Organisations (ALMO). BHP also provided an analysis of BHP benchmarking results compared with London Traditional Housing Associations and Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT). Members were concerned with the repairs performance and the amount of outstanding rent arrears; as such, Members focused their questions on improving performance in these areas. Brent's Head of Housing Policy & Performance also provided a presentation of the performance of the other Brent Residential Social Landlords (RSLs). Members queried why there is not a basket of standard performance indicators across all RSLs and why the satisfaction figures were so low.
- 2.14 The Geographic Information System (GIS) Manager also updated the Committee on the latest statistical figures from the census and then took the Committee through the Intelligence Hub on the Brent website. Finally the Chair of the Committee introduced the task group report on gangs. The Committee agreed to forward this to the Executive.
- 2.15 The Committee last met on 30 May 2013 and Members considered reports on the following:
- 2.16 The Committee received a presentation from the Borough Commander of London Fire Brigade (LFB), Brent. The presentation provided an overview of the refresh of fire services in Brent, the performance of Brent LFB and the impact of the 2014/15 budget cuts on fire response times. The Borough Commander also discussed community initiatives that the LFB has been

working on within Brent, which included; Adult Safeguarding (High Risk Panel), Rough Sleeping, visual audits- derelict buildings, sprinkler initiative and youth engagement. Committee members asked questions regarding staff numbers and the progress of community initiatives. Committee Members also asked the Borough Commander to provide comparable performance data with other similar boroughs to Brent.

- 2.17 The Committee received an update report on Brent's Employment & Enterprise Programme, which was presented by the Head of Employment & Enterprise. The report provided an update on the teams achievements to date; this included progress on the Navigator's work, key work streams and recruitment of team members. Members were concerned with the progress of the Navigator pilot scheme and whether it was achieving value for money. The Head of Employment & Enterprise was asked to provide a detailed update in the next quarterly newsletter and to come back to the Committee and provide a further update in October.
- 2.18 The next meeting of this Committee is on 22 July 2013.

Health Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- 2.19 The Health Partnership Overview & Scrutiny Committee met on the 19 March and 11 June. Items considered by members at the March meeting included:
- 2.20 The Committee received an update on the "Shaping a Healthier Future" reconfiguration of hospital services in North West London. Discussions focussed on travelling times, ambulance services and provision of Out of Hospital care. The Committee agreed that it was right that the Secretary of State for Health should fully examine these proposals now that it has been referred by Ealing Council.
- 2.21 The scope and membership for the task group Tackling Violence Against Women was agreed and a report on provision of Palliative Care in Brent was discussed.
- 2.22 Items covered at the June meeting included a report on serious incidents that had occurred around pathology testing services and an action plan to address the issues raised by the investigation.
- 2.23 The Committee was informed of a risk summit that had taken place to address concerns over A&E services at Northwick Park Hospital, particularly in relation to the service not meeting the waiting time targets, and looked at the High Impact Action Plan agreed with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and key stakeholders to address these. Questions were raised about the proposals to accept out-of-hours ambulance admissions at Central Middlesex Hospital and whether this meant there was a possibility of reopening night time A&E services at CMH. The Committee was informed that this is currently not an option due to recruitment issues, particularly in relation to doctors and consultants; however, this would be subject to review every six months. The Committee will be monitoring progress against these action plans at future meetings.

- 2.24 The Committee also considered a report on both local and national issues with the roll-out of the NHS 111 telephone service and an update on the temporary closure of the colposcopy service at Central Middlesex Hospital.

Budget & Finance Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- 22.25 The Budget & Finance Overview & Scrutiny Committee's Final Report for 2012/13 was reported to Full Council in February. The Committee has not met since but is due to hold its first meeting of this municipal year on 23 July 2013.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 None

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 None

6.0 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 None

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

- 7.1 None

Background Papers

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