



Full Council
7 September 2015

Report from the Chair of Scrutiny

For Action

Wards Affected:
ALL

Report to Full Council from the Chair of Scrutiny Councillor Dan Filson

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the work carried out by the Council's Scrutiny Committee in accordance with Standing Order 14. The report covers the period for July and August 2015 detailing planned training, process improvements, the Scrutiny Forward Plan and items discussed during the two Committee meetings in July and August 2015.

2.0 Detail

Scrutiny Committee

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Committee has met on two occasions since the last report to Full Council on 22 June 2015. Since the last report the committee has been focusing on agreeing the Scrutiny work programme for the coming year and establishing the first two task groups. In addition the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee attended the July round of Brent Connects forums to explain to residents the key role of the Scrutiny Committee in the governance of the Council and to gain feedback on local priorities for scrutiny activity. The Scrutiny Committee met formally on 14 July and 12 August 2015.
- 2.2 Scrutiny members have introduced a number of changes to enhance the ability of the Committee to monitor the impact of scrutiny activity. Firstly it has introduced a rolling log of decisions and recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee, which will be published and circulated with the Scrutiny papers. The document will be reviewed at each meeting of the committee to ensure that actions are being followed up and to assess the impact of proposals made.
- 2.3 It was also suggested that a method for allowing public access to information requested by the Scrutiny Committee, but subsequently provided outside of the meeting should be made available. The method and process for enabling this to happen is currently being developed by Democratic Services and the

Scrutiny team, who are working to have to this in place by November's Scrutiny Committee.

- 2.4 An initial training session was provided for new members of the Scrutiny Committee in June 2015. As part of the Member Development programme a second development session is planned for October 2015 focusing on evaluation and evidence gathering for task group activity. In addition the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee is a member of the London Scrutiny Network and has attended two network meetings focused on sharing of best practice scrutiny methods.
- 2.5 *Visit*
Members of the committee expressed an interest to visit the Centre for Mental Health Care at Park Royal. Central and North West London NHS Trust (CNWL) will be bringing the CQC report and the action plan for mental health services to the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 9 September; and as such asked if Members would like to attend a site visit to the Centre for Mental Health at Park Royal. Members accepted this invitation and visited the unit on the 6 August.
- 2.6 *Programme Planning – The Scrutiny Forward Plan 2015 - 2016*
The Scrutiny Forward Plan has been developed, with the first quarter of scrutiny items agreed and confirmed. Members have identified items that they would like to come to scrutiny. The programme also includes those items which the Scrutiny Committee has a statutory requirement to consider. While the programme includes the items that members have requested, it is also necessary to provide sufficient capacity and flexibility to accommodate items that may occur during the course of the year, particularly with regard to emerging issues from health partners. Discussion will continue with Members to ensure that the Scrutiny Forward Plan remains relevant to the priorities of the council and adds value in supporting the delivery of the Brent Borough Plan and Corporate Plan.
- 2.7 The Committee has also agreed the following two task group subjects. Work on these task groups has already started and it is intended that they will report to the November 2015 meeting of the Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Stopp is chair of the task group looking at fly-tipping and Councillor Kelcher is the chair of the group considering CCTV. Membership of the task groups is being finalised.
1. Close Circuit Television (CCTV)
 2. Fly tipping

A copy of the current Scrutiny Forward plan is attached (Appendix 1)

- 2.8 *Committee meetings*
Since the last scrutiny report to Full Council the Committee has held two meetings. These meetings were under the chairmanship of Councillor Dan Filson and a summary of all the meetings is as follows:
- 2.9 In June 2015, the Committee received a joint report from Brent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and London North West Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWHT), which provided insight into the paediatric services and current provision provided to Brent residents. The report highlighted the potential

impact on Northwick Park Hospital with regards to the impending changes to paediatric services at Ealing Hospital. The committee requested that they receive a further update from the CCG on the information used to reach assurance on the safe and smooth transfer of services at their meeting in February 2016. The CCG and NWLHT agreed to this request.

- 2.10 The committee received interim feedback on the work of the Scrutiny Task Group focused on Access to Extended GP Services and Primary Care in Brent. Members requested that a number of pieces of additional information are included within the final report of the task group on GP services which will be considered at the September 2015 meeting of the committee.
- 2.11 The committee also heard from the Director of Public Health who highlighted the new local authority Public Health responsibilities and how the Council is discharging its responsibility as a result of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Members commented that the report, while outlining the expenditure and priorities for improving public health, did not provide a picture of the impact made in tackling health inequalities. Members requested further information on the actual change in prevalence of preventable health conditions.
- 2.12 There was also a focused look at the challenge of providing access to affordable and quality childcare provision within the borough.
- 2.13 In July 2015, the committee received an overview report from Brent Housing Partnership on its 2014/15 performance. The report provided information on BHP's improvement priorities and their performance standards. Members asked questions regarding the cost of BHP modernising its computer systems, income from leaseholder charges and details of where the charges had been defended against legal action. Members also questioned the lengthy delays in repairs being completed, cases of anti social behaviour, the delays in void properties being re-let and prevalence of illegal sub-letting. Members asked about and were informed of the adverse potential impact on the Housing Revenue Account of a nationally proposed 1% rent increase restriction and of enforced property disposals to fund right to buy sales by housing associations. In response to the committee's questions and comments, the chair of the BHP Board responded with formal acknowledgement and answers to queries raised (Appendix 2). The Chair also welcomed the committee's comments on the key improvement priorities for BHP.
- 2.14 Members also discussed the arrangements for the future operation of the Scrutiny Committee and the process for developing a robust work programme.
- 2.15 In August 2015, the Scrutiny Committee welcomed the opportunity to review and comment on the council's draft Long Term Transport Strategy (LTTS) before it was submitted to Cabinet. The LTTS has been developed to provide strategic direction to transport investment throughout the borough over the next 20 years (2015-2035). Members drafted a formal response to Cabinet, which is attached (Appendix 3).
- 2.16 Members received a report on the July 2014 Food Standards Authority audit of the Council's discharge of its Food Safety Act 1990 duties. The report further highlighted the audit reports findings and detailed the Council's responses including the action plan the Council is using to monitor progress.

2.17 Members of the committee questioned officers and the Lead Member on structure and staffing. Members also inquired about the numbers and the profile of Brent businesses, with emphases on the risk categories. Members were keen to know what penalties the council could face if improvements are not achieved.

2.18 The next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for 9 September 2015 and will consider:

- Report from the Access to GP services task group
- Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust-CQC Report and Action Plan
- Scopes for task groups on Fly-tipping and CCTV.

Councillor Dan Filson
Chair of the Scrutiny Committee

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