

2014-15 Scrutiny Committee Meetings – Key Comments, Recommendations and Actions

Meeting Date	Item	Comments and Recommendation	Action
6th August 2014	Central Middlesex Hospital Closure Assurance Transforming Healthcare in Brent	That an update be provided on the Central Middlesex Hospital A&E closure assurance at a future meeting of the committee. That a further report updating the committee on the progress made in relation to transforming healthcare in Brent be submitted to a future meeting of the committee.	Clearer understanding of the action plan proposed. Further transparency of plans between the CCG and Brent Council.
	Call In - Changes to Recycling and Green Waste Collections	An outline of the suggested course of action of the Scrutiny Committee is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek a report responding to the concerns outlined. • Question lead member and senior officers and the leader. • If necessary, set up a very brief task finish group to examine these issues in more depth. (i) that the decisions made by the Cabinet on 21 July 2014 regarding changes to recycling and green waste collections be noted; (ii) that a review be held following a period of 9 months; (iii) that efforts should be made to ensure the removal of the green waste bins be as close as possible to 1 March 2015 to minimise inconvenience to residents.	More consideration given to the impact of residents. Ensure that longer consultation is considered for such matter in the future.
	Scope for Promoting Electoral Engagement Task Group	The scope and timeline for the task group on Promoting Electoral Engagement as set out in Appendix A to the report was agreed.	
	Budget Scrutiny Panel - Terms of Reference	The terms of reference for the Budget Scrutiny Panel as set out in Appendix A to the report was agreed.	
9th September 2014	Closure of A&E at Central Middlesex Hospital	That an update on performance at Northwick Park Hospital Accident and Emergency Department to be provided to the committee in six months time.	Further information on the progress and performance of NPH and A&E services. Holding these services to account on improved performance for residents.
	Parking Services Update	That Cabinet be requested to reappraise the existing arrangements for visitor parking permits, taking into account the serious concerns expressed by the Scrutiny Committee	Equality impact assessments to be reconsidered

		and members of the public.	
	Proposed Scope for Scrutiny Task Group on the Pupil Premium	<p>It was proposed that the task group also examine qualitative data regarding the activities undertaken by schools. He advised that holistic activities which aimed to meet emotional as well as academic needs were also very important for a child's development and attainment. It was emphasised that some enrichment activities did not deliver immediately observable results and that this should be considered when looking at the period of study. It was further suggested that the task group engage with parents and children to discuss their experiences.</p> <p>The scope and time scale for the task group on the use of the Pupil Premium, attached as Appendix A to the report was approved with the condition that the recommendations be incorporated.</p>	Recommendations made were incorporated in the tasks group's scope of work.
1st October 2014	North West London Hospitals Trust Care Quality Commission inspection compliance action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members asked for further information on plans in respect of major emergencies and emphasised the importance of ensuring key roads were open as is this had been an issue, for example, during the 7 July 2005 London bombing incidents. • Members also asked whether the planned additional beds at NPH had happened and if so how many. The committee sort views with regard to the progress made since the CQC inspection and how confident was the Trust that the action plan would achieve the objectives and within the timescales set. <p>The Chair requested that a report be presented to the committee in about two months' time updating them on progress with the action plan, including whether the measures listed were on target to be achieved within deadlines set. In addition, any members who had questions requiring specific details were to submit these to Cathy Tyson (Head of Policy and Scrutiny, Assistant Chief</p>	

		Executive Service) who coordinate responses from NWLHT.	
	Local Safeguarding Children Board annual report	The Chair stated that a briefing note updating the work of the task group on the Pupil Premium would be provided to members. He emphasised the importance of safeguarding children and welcomed the report.	Gaps in the report which the committee raised have been considered and will be included in the next annual report
	Draft school places strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst members appreciated the opportunity the presentation gave for pre-scrutiny prior to a report going to Cabinet, enquired whether officers were confident that primary schools could maintain educational standards as they got larger. • Members also asked whether placing Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils was relatively trouble free. A question was raised as to whether schools in the north of the borough were taking more pupils than those in the south and where could details be found of pupil numbers throughout the borough. Another member asked whether school expansion posed risks in terms of whether there was sufficient infrastructure in place. <p>The Chair concluded discussion by acknowledging the large interest from members and other councillors on this item and in noting the improvement in placing pupils in the last two years. However, he emphasised the need to sustain progress and requested that school places be considered at a Scrutiny Committee meeting in around two months' time.</p>	
	Children's centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member suggested that the children centres were concentrated in a particular area and neglected the north of the borough. Members sought advice on what members should be focusing on in view of the fact that the report had already been approved by Cabinet. • A member sought clarity that the children's centres provided for those children up to and including four years of age. In noting that children were entitled to nursery places between two to three years of age, she sought further reasons for how children's centres were being 	

		<p>used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In respect of the Barham Park building, it was noted that there were proposals for a nursery to be included; however sought clarity on this matter as Barham Park Trust had stipulated that the building was for community use only and the lack of consultation on this proposal had also angered residents. <p>The Chair commented that the long term future of the children's centres would be clearer in around four months time and he requested that an update be provided to the committee at around that time.</p>	
3rd November 2014	Employment, Skills and Enterprise Strategy consultation	<p>The Chair acknowledged the substantial work that had been undertaken in developing the strategy and the progress made so far. He requested that a progress report on the strategy be presented to the committee in two to three months' time.</p>	
	Overall impact of the Benefit Cap in Brent after one year of implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member asked if any lessons had been learnt since the OBC had been introduced and had there been any surprising developments. • Members also asked if there were any strategic issues that needed consideration in the future. In respect of resource issues, comments were sought about how significant these were and what were the expectations in the medium term. A question was raised as to where customers who moved out of the borough were moving to. • A member asked if the council was able to assist Brent CAB in dealing with the increased demand that they were struggling to cope with and was there any help for single under 35 year olds on Benefits. <p>The Chair explained that this item had been requested shortly before the meeting and this is why a presentation had been given. The importance of continuing to engage with residents about welfare reforms was emphasised and it</p>	

		was requested that the committee receive regular updates on this issue.	
26th November 2014	Care Quality Commission Quality Compliance and Quality Improvement Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members sought an update was sought on Delayed Transfers of Care, responding to the committee's queries <p>NWLHT advised that the CQC had commented on the open and frank culture amongst staff.</p> <p>That an update on the progress made in addressing the recommendations of the CQC be presented to a future meeting of the committee.</p>	
	Local Impact resulting from Changes to maternity, neonatal, paediatric and gynaecology services at Ealing Hospital	<p>The committee questioned what contingency plans were in place if it was found that the proposals were not feasible or appropriate. It was questioned whether similar modelling had been undertaken regarding the anticipated dispersal of service pressures for A&E units following the closure of the unit at Central Middlesex Hospital (CMH).</p> <p>That the committee be provided with an update on the implementation of the proposed changes to maternity, neonatal, paediatric and gynaecology services at Ealing Hospital at a future meeting.</p>	
	Developing Central Middlesex Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The committee sought further information regarding the provision of in-patient mental health service at the Park Royal site. Queries were raised regarding the consultation activities undertaken, including the number held and how they were advertised. Further details were sought regarding the services available in the North of the borough and the procedures in place to deal with large scale health emergencies. A view was put that consultation on changes to primary care had been poor. Councillor Daly requested that details of the number of beds to be removed across North West London under SaHF be provided to her in writing. <p>(i) That the update report be noted</p>	

		(ii) That further information regarding the proposals for Central Middlesex Hospital be provided to the committee in writing and include a breakdown of the financial implications of the proposals.	
	Promoting Electoral Engagement - Scrutiny Task Group report	That the recommendations of the 'Promoting Electoral Registration' task group as detailed in the report be endorsed.	Since the report was agreed by service areas, the Programme Management Office has been tasked with developing a project to support the implementation of the recommendations. The Project started in January 2015 with an advertising campaign. The team have completed promotional activities and are now focusing on outreach and community engagement activities. Since the beginning of the project voter registration has increased by 2768.
6th January 2015	Safer Brent Partnership Annual Report 2013 - 2014	The Chair welcomed the SBP report and stressed the need to continue dialogue between the partners in the SBP and the community. He requested that the committee receive an update on the work of the SBP in around six months' time.	Refocus on VAWAG stats, number may be going up, but this is due to more confidence in reporting and better recording of incidents.
	Interim feedback from the Budget Scrutiny Task group	Members suggested that the Investments and Pensions Manager be invited to the next Budget Scrutiny Task Group meeting. The Chair concluded by stating that there was still much work to do before the final task group report and the recommendations it would make.	The Cabinet responded positively to the concerns raised and the debates held by the Budget Panel Task Group of the Scrutiny Committee. . The Budget Panel's report and recommendations were included as part of the Final Budget Report which was agreed by the meeting of Full Council in March 2015.
10th February 2015	Current Status of Systems Resilience Group and Winter Pressure Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee commented that they had been told at previous meetings that transferring staff from the closed A&E at CMH to NPH would lead to improvements in staffing levels and clarification was sought as to whether this had been demonstrated. • An explanation of the difference between bank and agency staff was requested and members asked what the 	

		<p>ring fenced grant in respect of delayed transfers of care was specifically for and what was the size of the grant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members added that he had a positive personal experience when he had needed to visit the A and E at NPH around Christmas time and the service he received was efficient. <p>The Chair added that in some reports, the information was provided was not always as clear as it could be and was difficult to explain to residents and he asked that this be taken into account in future reports. He asked that an update on the SRG be provided at a future meeting.</p>	
	Brent Education Commission - six month update on the implementation of the Action Plan	<p>(i) that the contents of the report be noted and that a further update be received in the autumn of 2015;</p> <p>(ii) that the introduction of a proportionate approach to school improvement and the more robust challenge offered to schools at risk of underperforming be welcomed; and</p> <p>(iii) that the local authority's role in progressing a shared approach to supporting schools with its key educational partners, including Brent Schools Partnership and the two Teaching School Alliances be welcomed.</p>	
	Annual report academic year 2013-14: Standards and achievement in Brent schools	<p>The Chair requested that an update on this item be presented to the committee at a meeting in the autumn of 2015.</p> <p>(i) that the priorities proposed for 2014-15 intended to accelerate improvement be noted; and</p> <p>(ii) that the progress made in the overall performance of Brent's primary schools in 2013-14 be welcomed.</p>	
11th March 2015	Update on Customer Access Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members asked whether the testing would be undertaken borough wide and it was commented that the triage system had worked well to date and asked whether there was training for staff in dealing with particularly complex issues. • Members also asked what would be ideal way in which residents would describe the service they had 	

		<p>experienced as far as the council was concerned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members sought further information on what service areas had been underperforming and how was misdirecting of calls by the switchboard being monitored or picked up. In terms of calls reported as misdirected, it was asked if this was formally recorded. • Comments were made regarding a danger of making the council too remote from the community by shifting access via IT and telephony channels and removing opportunities for direct contact with residents <p>The Chair requested an update on this item for the December 2015 Scrutiny Committee meeting. That the progress being made in implementing the aims of the new Community Access Strategy be noted</p>	
	Housing pressures in Brent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member stated that issue of extensions in rear gardens needed to be investigated more. • Another member queried whether information held on landlords was confidential and • Member commented that it was regretful that the large housing stock the council had in the 1980s had been eroded by selling a significant proportion to housing associations at lower cost over the past few decades. It was added that he felt that the council's Pension Fund should invest more in housing. <p>The Chair requested an update on this item in six months' time, including details of the number of people who were leaving the borough. That the report on housing pressures in Brent be noted.</p>	
	Unemployment and Work Programme providers	<p>The Chair emphasised the importance of the non disclosure agreement being reached between the Work Programme providers and the council. He added that it would be useful</p>	<p>The issue of cooperation with work programme providers has been highlighted and a greater urgency to</p>

		<p>if there could be more information on how the council could assist Work Programme providers and their clients and that there needed to be a more joined up approach. He requested that the committee receive updates on unemployment levels and Work Programme providers on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>That the report on unemployment levels in Brent and the Work Programme be noted.</p>	<p>resolve some of the minor partnership issue is now at the forefront to the committee's agenda. Non disclosure agreements are being completed.</p>
30th April 2015	Environmental Sustainability Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the subsequent discussion, the committee queried the ways in which the council could effect behavioural change regarding waste and recycling amongst residents and businesses. • The committee also questioned how retailers could be encouraged to reduce packaging and the financial benefit for the council of improved recycling rates. • Members sought further details regarding relationships with partner agencies, such as TFL and Northwest London Hospitals Trust. With regard to the former, it was queried what work had been done to identify pollution hotspots in the borough, whether there was any correlation with bus routes and how active reporting could be encouraged when buses were left running whilst parked. • The committee raised several queries regarding air pollutants and the use of diesel fuel, seeking information on when TFL would be introducing non-diesel buses, how the council would encourage the use of non-diesel private and commercial vehicles, how traffic flow could be improved across the borough and the number of charging points provided in Brent for electric vehicles. • Further information was sought regarding the work done with property developers across the borough, in recognition of the challenges for the existing infrastructure of increased road users. • Officers were also asked to comment on whether consideration had been given to seeking an extension of 	<p>Highlight to the committee the work undertaken across key service areas to address the issue of sustainability. Focusing on five key areas: transport and travel; air quality; in-house carbon management; street lighting and parking; public realm and waste; and parks and biodiversity.</p>

		<p>the Mayor of London's bike hire scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members requested details of the number of staff responsible for addressing issues of sustainability and whether these were sufficient to support progress in this area. <p>That an update on the Environmental Sustainability Agenda be to the committee in six months time.</p>	
	Future Commissioning intentions of Brent Clinical Commissioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members questioned the quality of engagement with community groups, emphasised the failure to meet national performance standards in the previous year, questioned what was being done differently to address these issues and sought specific timescales for achieving improvements. • Members queried what action was being taken to raise awareness of dementia amongst different communities, including the provision of materials in a variety of languages. • Members sought clarity regarding Brent CCG spending for 2014/15, noting that having accounted for commissioning for acute and community care there remained approximately a further £80m unaccounted for. • Members further queried the 2014/15 spending on enhanced GP services and the work undertaken to evaluate their success. <p>That an update be provided to a future meeting of the committee</p>	
	Use of Pupil Premium Grant Scrutiny Task group	<p>(i) that the recommendations of the task group be endorsed (ii) that subject to Cabinet agreement of the recs, an update on the implementation of the task group's recommendations be provided to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>The recommendations of the Pupil Premium Task Group be endorsed, subject to Cabinet approval. The committee</p>	<p>To date, the work done by the task group has raised the profile of the Pupil Premium. It has also encouraged further partnership working by the council, schools, Children Centres, parents, children and all educational providers. The task group has opened up the</p>

		receive an update on the implementation of the Task Group's recommendations at a future meeting of the committee.	discussions for innovative use of the PPG in Brent.
	Scrutiny Annual Report 2014/15	<p>Committee members were invited to submit feedback on the draft report which would be finalised for the end of May 2015.</p> <p>The draft Annual Scrutiny Report 2014/15 was noted.</p>	The Annual report highlights the work that the scrutiny committee has undertaken this year. Focussing on the part that the committee has played in key council decisions which have lead to improved outcomes and services for residents.
	Equalities and HR Policies and Practices Review and draft Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns were raised regarding the number of staff failing to receive supervisory appraisals, the implications this had for staff progression and whether managers were using the appraisals as an effective tool to support staff. • Clarity was sought on the policy for medical appointments and assurance was requested that this was not considered a reasonable adjustment for disabled employees. • The issue of unconscious bias was raised and it was strongly suggested that this form a core element of any training provided around recruitment. • Further details were requested regarding the training and support provided to members appointed to the Senior Staff Appointments Sub Committee. • With regard to BME representation at senior management, members queried how the council compared to other boroughs and whether there was an opportunity to learn from the practices of other local authorities. <p>The Chair highlighted the importance of ensuring that there was robust monitoring of the action plan and the committee agreed that an update should be provided on the progress achieved in six month's time.</p>	
16th June 2015	Paediatric Services - CCG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members requested a copy of the data modelling which was used by Shaping a Healthier Future to assure the CCG of the projections of demand to underpin the case for 	Joint report produced on behalf of Brent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and London North West Healthcare NHS Trust

		<p>transfers of services from Ealing to Northwick Park and the future bed capacity required in the paediatric services at NWP. They also requested the data that will be used to inform reassurance decisions next March.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members request that the Accountable Officer – CCG, provide further details of the financial costs set out in the table at para 2.2 regarding how the same level of paediatric service would be achieved within reduced costs. <p>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. CCG /NWLHT agreed to this request.</p>	<p>(LNWHT). Provide insight into the Paediatric Services and current provision provided to Brent residents. Highlight the potential impact on Northwick Park Hospital with regards to the impending changes to paediatric services at Ealing Hospital taking place on 30 June 2016.</p>
	<p>Access to GP services Interim Task Group Report</p>	<p>The committee requested that the final report on the access to GP services should include further information on:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of the location of GP hubs, public awareness of the GP hub mechanism and any evidence of the public's confidence in their GP. • How the future publicity campaign for GP hubs will be delivered. • Members requested information on how many GP's were sited in single GP practices or in practices with more than one GP. The also requested information on the numbers of GP's who are approaching retirement age. • Information was requested on how many GP practices were experiencing difficulties in recruit trained staff and if this was related to housing costs. Any information on how GP's are addressing recruitment problems. • Information on the numbers of people registered with a GP, number of people not registered and those who may still be registered with a GP in Brent but have moved away. <p>Members requested that the additional information</p>	<p>Interim feedback on the work of the Scrutiny Task Group focused on Access to Extended GP Services and Primary Care in Brent. Provided an outline of the task group scope, methodology and an overview of emerging findings and recommendations.</p>

		requested is included within the final report of the task group on GP services which will be considered at the July meeting of the Committee.	
Brent Public Health Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members requests that the financial return for Public Health expenditure made to the Department of Health is also circulated to scrutiny. • Members asked for a detailed breakdown of the numbers of people offered and accepting a health check update by GP practice • It was requested that a breakdown of the drugs and alcohol budget with numbers of patients in treatment by type of treatment is provided to the committee. This should include the indicative figures for the range of spend per patient for different types of treatment packages. • The number of people who have been helped to stop smoking by GP practice. • There was also a request for some future work to be undertaken on the school nurse service. This has only recently come under the councils contracting responsibilities and further work is being undertaken on the future contractual priorities. <p>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. Would like further information on the actual change in prevalence of preventable health conditions.</p>	Highlight new local authority Public Health responsibilities and how the Council is discharging this responsibility as a result of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.	
Access to affordable childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members requested further information on the use of discretionary housing payments to support childcare costs for people moving into employment who have been affected by changes in welfare benefit payments. • It was asked if any work has been undertaken to assess the impact of support given to parents to access employment. 	Focused look at the challenge of providing access to affordable and quality Childcare.	

		Members asked to receive an update on the implementation of the overall Child Poverty strategy in 2016.	
14th July 2015	Brent Housing Partnership - Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions were asked on 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 of the committee questioned the delays in job completions. • Members also asked how cases of anti social behaviour and illegal sub-letting were handled. • Members requested further information from BHP on Void times, complaints, communication with residents, seeking possession and illegal sub-letting. 	An overview of BHP 2014/15 performance, providing a demonstration of how it works to deliver objectives set out by the council.
	Developing Scrutiny Work Programme 2015/16	<p>It was confirmed that the Budget scrutiny panel would be reconvened to consider the budget for 2016/17.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee asked that a briefing paper be provided on how the protection of pubs had been incorporated into the Development Management Plan. • That a briefing paper be provided on the admissions policies adopted by different types of schools. • That the chair, education co-opted members and a senior officer from the Children and Young People's department meet to discuss the education related topics. <p>(i) That the arrangements and principles for the effective operation of the Scrutiny Committee, as set out in paragraphs 3.1 – 3.6 of the report submitted, be noted;</p> <p>(ii) That the proposed process for defining the annual work programme for scrutiny detailed at paragraphs 3.10-3.14.</p>	Arrangements of the future operation of the Scrutiny Committee and the process for developing a robust work programme.
12th August 2015	The Councils future Transport Strategy	The Committee expressed concern that the strategy was too brief and lacked ambition. Members felt that it lacked evidence in places whilst making certain assertions and was rooted in the possibilities as they related to Transport for	An opportunity for the Scrutiny Committee to review and comment on the councils draft Long Term Transport Strategy (LTTS) before it is submitted to Cabinet.

		<p>London (TfL) and the availability of funding rather than going beyond this into areas where the Council needed to send out strong messages and councillors needed to lobby to address some of the major transport concerns in the borough.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Committee recommends that Cabinet defer taking a decision on approving the Long Term Transport Strategy for Brent so that fuller consideration can be given to the points raised on it by the Committee; • Scrutiny Committee requests that Cabinet note the comments made by the Committee and agrees to the recommendations below being more fully addressed in the finally agreed strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The strategy needs to be more ambitious and incorporate reference to schemes on which the Council might need to lobby in order to see them progress. ii. The strategy should not be restricted to only those schemes and improvements that might be supported by TfL and included in LIP submissions, especially bearing in mind the forthcoming London Mayoral Election when a new Mayor will be elected who might have different priorities. There is a need for the serious public transport issues and road usage problems to be addressed. iii. Reference should be included of the Dudden Hill rail line and it's potential. iv. The possibility of a conflict of approach with neighbouring boroughs and the need to develop shared visions with other boroughs on those transport issues at the borough boundary should be articulated. v. Greater focus should be given on equality of access from the different geographical areas of the borough (North/South – East/West). 	<p>The LTTS has been developed to provide strategic direction to the transport investment throughout the borough over the next 20 years (2015-2035)</p>
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	<p>Food Standards Audit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the committee questioned Officers and the lead member on structure and staffing of the team. Members made inquire 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 made. • Members wanted to know how the budget for the services was currently being spent and how this related to the improvements required. • One Member questioned how the present situation impacted on the health of local residents. <p>The findings of the Food Standards audit carried out in July 2014, the issues arising, response to date and the planned actions were noted.</p>	<p>A detailed look into the July 2014 Food Standards Authority audit of the Councils discharge of its Food Safety Act 1990 duties. The report further highlighted the audit reports findings and the Councils responses including the action plan the Council is using to monitor progress.</p>