



## Full Council – 14<sup>th</sup> September 2009

### Report from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Since my last report, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has met once and heard from the Deputy Leader of the Council who responded on the following issues and answered questions:

- The impact of the recession on local people and how the Council is responding to this,
- Progress on delivering the improvement programme,
- Progress on providing new social housing, and
- Efforts made to recruit more permanent social care staff.

The committee also heard from residents who were concerned about the Cricklewood Library Children Centre Project and Archive move. Having heard the points made and receiving a briefing on the project, the committee were sympathetic to the proposals but felt that more work needed to be carried out on informing service users as to what children centres do, how they operate and how the centre and library would interact within the refurbished building. It was also felt that service users should be informed as to how the £400,000 investment in the building would be spent, how noise from children's centre would be contained to reduce the impact on library users and how access to the building would be separate for users of the library and children's centre to minimise disruption for library users.

Graham Ellis, the Council's Director of Business Transformation informed the committee about the work of the Business Transformation Department and his main priorities and key areas of work. The committee also received an update on the One Stop Service Redesign Project and approved the overview and scrutiny annual report.

The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee has met since the last meeting of Council and discussed the work of the Youth Strategy Group, which has met several times to discuss how best to improve services for young people in Brent. A service review is to be carried out by the Youth Service, in conjunction with the Brent Excellence Support Team. The committee asked that an information report on the scope of the Youth Service review be presented to its October 2009 meeting.

The committee considered a report on Brent's BSF programme, entitled *Transforming Learning in Brent*. Members asked to be informed of the outcome of the bid as soon as

possible and to receive further updates on the progress of BSF. The project will be a standing agenda item for future meetings of the Committee.

The committee also considered the plans to provide targeted support in localities to children and young people identified as having additional needs. Member have asked that the Committee receive information on the evaluation of locality-based intervention and details of the next stage of development and that a future meeting should be held at a locality centre within 18 months to two years. Following a further update on primary and secondary school places, the Committee has asked to receive information on the geographical distribution of unplaced pupils and school vacancies at its next meeting.

The Budget Panel has begun its work again by hearing from the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources on the budget strategy for 2010/11 to 2013/14 and monitoring the panel's recommendations in relation to the 2009/10 budget

The Forward Plan Select Committee considered a call-in of the Executive decisions taken on new accommodation for John Kelly Boys' Technology College and John Kelly Girls' Technology College proposed to be replaced by The Crest Boys' Academy and The Crest Girls' Academy. Upon considering the report from the Director of Children and Families and the reasons for the call-in, the select committee had no further comments to make and noted the decisions made by the Executive. The select committee has also considered briefings on the Civic Centre and the Addendum to the West London Joint Waste Strategy.