



Full Council
21 November 2011

**Report from the Director of
Strategy, Partnership &
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.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 This report provides a summary of the work of the overview & scrutiny committees since the last Full Council meeting in September 2011.

The Budget & Finance Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- 3.2 The Budget & Finance Overview & Scrutiny Committee has met twice since the last chairs' report. In September the committee received a presentation which provided a financial overview of the Children and Families Department. This included information on budget pressures, savings and actions being taken to deal with those pressures. Members' questions focussed on the cost of Special Educational Needs provision and school places.
- 3.3 The October meeting received a presentation on Adult Social Care budget issues. Members discussed the areas that key savings could be found such as commissioning, redesigning services and job roles, providing more community support and managing demand.

- 3.4 The Committee has also received regular updates from the Director and Assistant Director of Finance and Corporate Services on the council's budget the proposals in the Local Government Resources Review.

Health Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- 3.5 This committee met on the 20th September and considered items on maternity services at Northwick Park Hospital, the new Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Brent and the Brent LINK annual report.
- 3.6 The committee also received an update on the proposed merger between North West London NHS Hospitals and Ealing Hospital Trust. This is looking increasingly likely and will be subject to further scrutiny in the coming months, possibly in partnership with councillors from Ealing and Harrow who are also affected by this change. The merger is being explored as neither hospital trust is sustainable in the medium term as separate organisations because of financial and clinical service pressures. The committee also endorsed the proposal from North West London Hospitals to close the Paediatric Assessment Unit at Central Middlesex Hospital because of the lack of patients it is seeing, the impact this is having on staff who are becoming "de-skilled" and because of the financial loss the service is making. The majority of children presenting to Central Middlesex Hospital are successfully treated at the Urgent Care Centre on site.

Partnership & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- 3.8 The main focus of this committees meeting held on 12th October was crime in Brent. Members received a report on Anti Social Behaviour in Brent and how the Local Joint Action Groups (LJAGS) were operating since being set up in May 2011. The committee discussed the latest Metropolitan Police Service performance information and agreed a number of key areas / targets that the committee will monitor. During a discussion on local and national policing issues members requested an early look at the draft Crime Strategy when it is produced.
- 3.9 At its next meeting the committee intends to focus on tackling employment issues in Brent and has invited representatives of the DWP Work Programme providers, Job Centre Plus and the College of North West London to attend.

Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- 3.10 The Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee met on the 6th October and considered the review of the policy for provision of Early Years full time places in schools. The committee was not satisfied with the safeguards to ensure the most vulnerable pupils benefit from a full time place and have asked for a further paper in December 2011 which will hopefully address their concerns. The committee is keen to be kept abreast of the work that is going on to address the shortfall of primary school places in the borough, and had a discussion on the strategy to address the shortage up to

2014/15. Members were also given an overview of the provisional 2011 Education Standards in Brent schools, which showed a largely positive result. A more detailed report will come to the committee in the new-year.

One Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- 3.11 In September the One Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee received a report on the implementation of the Waste and Street Cleansing Review. Member's questions focussed on the practicalities of the roll out and how the changes were being communicated to residents.
- 3.12 The Performance & Finance Review for quarter 4 report was also discussed with Members of the committee paying particular attention to areas deemed to be of high risk and to issues relating to data quality.

One Community Many Voices

- 3.13 As part of Local Democracy Week Overview & Scrutiny hosted a consultation event at the Town Hall. The One Community Many Voices event held on the 10th October aimed to:
- To provide an opportunity for members, partners and community / voluntary groups to network and gain a better understanding of each other's roles
 - To share and discuss ideas and issues in the borough
 - To provide an opportunity for those attending to inform the council's overview & scrutiny work programme
 - To form the main part of the council's contribution to Local Democracy Week.
- 3.14 This is a café style 'speed dating' event allowed participants to move around the tables and displays, express their opinions, and network. Table top discussions were chaired by either a Chair or Vice Chair of an overview & scrutiny committee and focussed on the following subjects:
- Children & Young People
 - Health & Social Care
 - Employment, Skills and Economic Opportunity
 - Environment & Sustainability
- 3.15 Around 70 participants attended what was a very lively session. Feedback from the session will be sent to all participants. Each of the committees will also have the opportunity to discuss the feedback in order to inform their work programmes.

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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