



**Full Council
23rd January 2012**

**Report from the Director of Strategy
Partnership and 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 and covers the period since the last Full Council Meeting in November 2011.

2.0 Detail

One Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 2.1 Arrangements for the future of Brent Housing Partnership were discussed at the committee's meeting on 22nd November. Members were particularly keen to hear more about the future relationship between the optimised ALMO and the council. Questions focussed on governance arrangements, staff efficiencies, management arrangements and issues relating to the Housing Revenue Account. Members also raised issues relating to the impact of changes on customer satisfaction and complaints.
- 2.2 The Annual Complaints Report provided an overview of the complaints received and investigated under the Corporate Complaints procedure, by the Local Government Ombudsman and social care complaints dealt with under specific legislation. The committee heard about proposals to reduce the complaint procedure from three to two stages. Questions were raised about the impact of further savings on the number of complaints the council receives and how the proposed two stage procedure would operate.

- 2.3 The committee also received a report on the One Council Programme which included information on the status of the Programme, programme and project management and risks, issues and dependencies. More detailed information was provided about each of the projects within the programme including projects that are currently in development.
- 2.4 The committee is due to meet again on 25th January 2012 when the Future Customer Services project and Project Athena will be discussed.

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 2.5 The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on the 8th December 2011. Members considered reports on the following issues:
- 2.6 Results of Safeguarding Inspection – The committee considered the results of the Council’s Safeguarding and Looked After Children Teams Ofsted inspection. Members have asked for a further report on the action plan arising from this in March 2012 and have recommended the report is presented to the Executive for them to “own” the council’s response to the inspection and to ensure they are fully informed of the follow up work that is taking place.
- 2.7 Adoption Services in Brent – A report was presented to members following the publication of adoption performance information by Government which raised concerns about the timeliness of adoption in Brent. It was noted that performance has improved in 2011, from the figures reported in the Government’s information.
- 2.8 Review of policy for the provision of early years full time places – Members still have concerns relating to the admissions procedure for full time early years places in schools, and how to ensure that places will be offered to those most in need. As a result, the issue has been referred to the Executive for its consideration.
- 2.9 The committee is meeting next on the 2nd February 2012. Reports will be considered on the Youth Offending Team Inspection results and Special Educational Needs – Additional Resourced Schools.

Partnership and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 2.10 This committee used its meeting on 13th December meeting to focus on tackling employment issues in Brent. Representatives from two of the three Department of Work and Pensions Work Programme providers, JobCentre Plus and the College of North West London attended the meeting. Members explored issues relating to how the Work Programme providers would operate focusing on:
- Engagement and collaboration with the college, BACES, the council and the voluntary sector
 - Referrals from areas with the highest levels of unemployment and how they will work with clients that are difficult to place.

- Ongoing information relating to the performance / success of the Work Programme initiative in Brent as compared with other London boroughs

- 2.11 This committee will continue to focus on this issue and invite the Work Programme providers to a meeting early in the next municipal year.
- 2.12 The next meeting of this committee on 9th February will be looking at policing priorities in Brent and the draft Crime Strategy.

Health Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2. 13 The Health Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on the 29th November. Items considered by members included:
- 2.14 Plans for the future of North West London NHS Hospitals Trust and Ealing Hospital Trust – Members considered the Outline Business Case for the merger and the timetable for this process up to July 2012. Members still have some concerns about this and will be meeting with representatives of the Hospital Trusts on the 24th January.
- 2.15 Mental Health Rehabilitation Provision in Brent – CNWL NHS Foundation Trust and NHS Brent intends to close Fairfield House in 2012. Members will visit Fairfield and Rosedale House to get a better understanding of the services provided there and to see what the implications of this decision will be for patients.
- 2.16 AandE at Central Middlesex Hospital – The committee heard from NWL Hospitals NHS Trust on their decision to close AandE services overnight at Central Middlesex Hospital. The chair of the committee has written to the trust expressing the committee’s disappointment at the way this issue was handled, particularly communication with stakeholders and patients.
- 2.16 The Khat task group is currently finalising its report and this will be considered by the committee at its next meeting on 7th February 2012.

Budget and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 2.17 The Budget and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee has met on two occasions since the last chairs’ report. On November 8th the committee received a presentation which provided an overview of budget issues relating to the Environment and Neighbourhoods Department. This included budget pressures, levels of income and the department’s One Council projects. The committee also received a presentation on the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2112/13 to 2015/16. Members’ discussions focussed on key risks to setting a balanced budget and the impact of the proposed business rate reform.
- 2.18 On December 6th the committee focussed on the One Council Programme and the way it fits in with the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

2.19 The committee will be meeting on the 11th January 2012 to hear from the Director of Regeneration and Major Projects and will finalise its first interim report.

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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