

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT**FULL COUNCIL – 29TH OCTOBER 2007****REPORT FROM THE VICE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The business of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24th July was deferred to allow members of the committee to pay tribute to the late Councillor Dorman Long. At its last meeting the Committee considered a report on licensing of houses in multiple occupation. This item had been raised by the Private Sector Housing Forum, which had asked the Committee to look into why no new licences had been issued and whether it was the intention to introduce discretionary licensing for HMOs. The Committee noted that there had been a number of reasons for the delay in issuing licences but was satisfied that a good quality licensing scheme was now in place. However there was concern expressed that the current level of fees only covered about 50% of the cost of the scheme. The Committee was informed that extension of the scheme to introduce discretionary licensing was dependant on the availability of resources. Members asked for an internal review of the scheme to be carried out, including the fee structure, to be reported back to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the proposed consultation process by NHS London on the findings of the recent *"Healthcare for London: A framework for action"* report. This envisages a London-wide joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

When approving the setting up of a Joint Committee, the Council is required to approve the terms of reference. The terms of reference have not been drafted as yet therefore the recommendation requested at this stage is that Full Council agrees to establish a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the basis that the terms of reference will be the same as those that the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree to adopt. The terms of reference will then be referred back to Full Council for formal ratification.

A task group on climate change has been established to review the Council's Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan 2007-11 and, in particular, consider the achievability of its ambitious reduction targets. The task group on tourism submitted its final report which was, subject to some changes to the recommendations, endorsed for submission to the Executive.

There have been two meetings of the Children & Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee since my last update. A key issue at both has been the effect of PCT cuts on Children & Families services. Officers from Brent PCT have attended on both occasions to discuss and pursue the issues raised by the Committee. The Committee has also kept a watching brief on the issue of

school admissions and has made a commitment to continue doing so for the remainder of the municipal year.

The task group concluded their work on improving outcomes for African Caribbean and Black African pupils and a final report was presented to the Executive in September. The Executive resolved to note the task group's recommendations and requested that officers of the Children and Families Directorate report back to it by May 2008 on what measures have been taken to identify best practice and disseminate it to schools and social care staff. At the last meeting of the Committee, Members considered a report on teenage pregnancy in Brent. In view of the issues raised, the Committee decided to establish a new task group to further explore this area with a particular focus on encouraging healthy relationships.

Since my last update, the recent *"Healthcare for London: A framework for action"* report has produced interesting developments in the area of health scrutiny. One proposal arising from this review and considered by the Health Select Committee has been for the establishment of a London-wide joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee as referred to above. Health Select Committee members have also considered their role in relation to the Healthcare Commission Annual Health Check process. At their July meeting, members agreed that visits to local healthcare facilities would be useful in assisting the Committee's evidence gathering work, and it is envisaged that this work will be progressed over the coming months. More recently, a special meeting of the Health Select Committee was arranged so that members could consider the proposals for the future of the Brent Birthing Centre. Following a presentation by the Chief Executive of the North West London NHS Hospitals Trust, members discussed the range of options for the future of maternity services in Brent. The Committee will now provide a formal response as part of the public consultation process on the future of the centre.

The Budget Panel is now in its second year of running and, having already met twice, the scrutiny process for the Council's 2008 budget is well underway. At their first meeting in July, Panel members were informed about the emerging issues and main areas of risk in terms of the budget setting process. Then, at the more recent meeting on 8th October, members considered and commented on the savings proposals which were subsequently agreed by the Executive later that evening. Over the coming months, a number of directors and senior officers will be called to Budget Panel meetings to respond to questions about the budget pressures within their individual service areas.

Four meetings of the Forward Plan Select Committee have been held since the last update. The Select Committee has been monitoring the future of the Clock Cottage site and the Award of the Contract for the non HRA Housing and Social Care Private Finance Initiative Project. At the last meeting on the 26th September 2007, the Select Committee recommended that the next report in respect of Clock Cottage to the Executive provide equal balance between financial considerations and the social, economic and community well being aspects should the site be sold to St Luke's. At the earlier meeting on 25th July, the Select Committee considered the Wembley Stadium Event Day Protective Parking scheme and sought clarification concerning the

timescale of a future review of the scheme, the financial implications generated by implementation of protective parking measures and issuing of notices and vehicle removals and options available to residents with regard to weddings, funerals and other social events.

Other issues that the Select Committee has been considering include Wembley Security Measures, One Stop Shops and Tricycle Theatre, Review of Free Parking Areas and the Borough-Wide Roll Out of Voucher Parking Trial. At the meeting on the 25th July 2007, Members requested a further update with regard to future options for service delivery of one stop shops, particularly in the south of the borough and this will be considered at the meeting of the Select Committee in October 2007.

In the two meetings of the Performance and Finance Select Committee since the update, Members noted the progress made in Revenue and Benefits performance, in particular that Council Tax collection performance was due to exceed the target for 2007/2008, although arrears targets for 2003 to 2006 were unlikely to be met and it was noted that there would be a potential need to prioritise reaching targets for new applications. At the meeting held on 25th July, Members considered the Local Area Agreement (LAA) Performance Review 2006/2007 where it was suggested that LAA areas involving cleanliness and litter be included in the Waste Management Review report due for consideration by the Select Committee in November 2007.

At the last meeting of the Select Committee held on 9th October, Members considered a report on Progress on Delivering the Procurement Strategy and requested that further consideration be given to encourage smaller organisations and those that supported disabled employment to bid for services. The Select Committee also requested that issues arising from the Waste Management Strategy report, details on street cleaning specifications and bulky waste charges be included in the Waste Management Review report.

The report on *Healthcare for London- Establishment of Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee(London Wide)* considered by the committee is attached and Full Council is **RECOMMENDED:**

1. to establish a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee with such other authorities as are consulted;
2. to appoint the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council's Health Select Committee as the representative and alternate member of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
3. to agree that the terms of reference of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be the same as those that the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree to adopt.