



Full Council – 25 January 2010

Report from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Despite my last report being only a short while ago another full round of overview and scrutiny meetings has taken place.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has again considered the councillor call for action raised by Councillor Powney concerning traffic issues at Tubbs Road following the site visit by members of the committee at the meeting held on 8 December 2009. Committee agreed a number of recommendations for consideration by the Highways Committee when it meets on 19 January 2010.

The committee has been updated on the development of the voluntary and community sector strategy for 2010 to 2015, having earlier in the year considered the scope for producing the strategy. It expressed a view to the Executive that there be further consideration of how to improve communication with voluntary and community sector organisations.

Members have considered the fifth annual report of the Brent Safeguarding Adults Committee covering the period April 2008 to March 2009. This included the outcome of the Commission for Social Care Inspection on Independence, Wellbeing and Choice and the implementation of the Mental Capacity Act Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. Members heard that the Safeguarding Adults Board had replaced the Adult Safeguarding Committee to oversee safeguarding and an Action Plan had been put in place in response to the Inspection.

The final report of the climate change task group was adopted and referred on to be considered by the Executive on 15 February 2010.

Members will recall that at the meeting of Full Council on 12 October 2009, a motion was passed which included the proposal to set up an all party/group scrutiny task group to investigate how local democracy could be improved, with a view to increasing the debate at Full Council meetings, improving the public's access to local democracy and encouraging more young people to take part. Following consideration of this proposal it has been agreed that a task group be formed to consider this matter further in the new municipal year.

Committee also agreed to consider the scope for a task group to review the Council's alleygating schemes, again in new municipal year.

The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been informed about the work of the Youth Offending Service (YOS) and updated on some of the preventative programmes which are being run by the YOS, including the successful Triage Scheme.

Upon receiving an update on the impact of the work carried out to improve outcomes for Black Caribbean and Somali pupils, the committee has noted the progress made to date for particular underachieving groups, namely Black Caribbean and Somali pupils. The committee has also received an overview of the five Every Child Matters outcomes for the White British, White Others and White Irish groups and noted performance and the action being taken to secure further improvement.

The committee has been updated on the transfer of responsibility for 16-19 provision from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to the local authority. The Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act has transferred the LSC responsibilities for funding and commissioning 16-19 education provision to local authorities from 1 April 2010. The committee has noted the implications this will have for the local authority and Brent's young people and the commissioning principles involved.

Upon considering them have asked that that the following information be provided to the next meeting of the committee:

- a comprehensive needs analysis and a projection of need for the future
- a financial breakdown of the resources used for SEN.
- what the strategic input regarding SEN provision would be in the Building Schools for the Future programme.

On hearing from the Lead Member for Children and Families, Councillor Wharton, that Brent's application to be included in the Building Schools for the Future programme had been successful and would formally start before 1 April 2010, the committee has asked that more detail on what would be happening in each school and what the priorities were for each school, be provided when this level of information becomes available.

The Budget Panel has again met to hear from the Director of Environment and Culture on his department's budget position and service transformation. It also heard from the Director of Business Transformation on the implementation of the Structure and Staffing Review and from the Borough Solicitor on the Review of Procurement, both gold projects in the Council's Improvement and Efficiency Strategy action plan.

The Health Select Committee has received information from the Director of Housing and Community Care on the creation of a partnership agreement between the Council and the Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust which is to replace an existing agreement. Members asked to be sent a copy of the report to the Executive on this matter when it is available.

The select committee heard from the Director of Nursing for North West London NHS Hospitals Trust on the trust's patient experience improvement programme, entitled *We Care*. This is a total programme designed to improve the experience of patients in the trust.

The Select Committee welcomed the initiative and will be receiving a further report in the autumn of 2010.

Members of the select committee considered a report on performance against the health-related Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets. These are considered by the committee every six months. One particular aspect of the report concerned a programme called MEND (Mind, Exercise, Nutrition...Do it!) which is a programme of physical activities and health education for children and families, measured by the proportion of overweight children in particular year groups and the number of families attending the programme. A briefing on this programme will be submitted to the next meeting of the committee.

The select committee considered a report on NHS Brent's revised commissioning strategy plan. The plan looks at full implementation of the Healthcare for London pathways and how to deliver the trust's vision, goals and outcomes in the current economic environment. Three financial scenarios are being planned for – a worst case, a most likely scenario and a best case scenario. Copies of the final plan will be sent to Members once it has been approved by NHS London and the Department of Health in January 2010.

The Chief Executive of NHS Brent has reported that it was not possible to provide an update on the Acute Services Review and the results of the pre-consultation campaign on the proposed changes to children's services in Brent and Harrow, mainly because the review by the National Clinical Advisory Team (NCAT) and the Department of Health Gateway Review was not due to be completed until 18 December 2009. A special meeting of the Health Select Committee has therefore been arranged for 7 January 2010 to consider the draft consultation document on changes to acute children's services in Brent and Harrow.

The Performance and Finance Select Committee has considered an in depth review of the Local Area Agreement Priorities concerning Crime Prevention 18-28 Age Group and Violent Crime. The select committee was updated on the most recent crime figures and of initiatives to reduce crime from the Brent Police Borough Commander.

The select committee has been informed of the outcome to an options appraisal for the provision of Revenue and IT services, following the expiry of the existing Capita contract on 30 April 2011. Members were informed of the various advantages and disadvantages of each option, including the preferred option. Information was requested on the differentials between in-house and out-house costs at a future meeting.

Members have considered the Complaints Annual Report for 2008/09 which provides information about complaints against the Council considered by the Local Government Ombudsman; comments on the Council's performance under its own complaints procedure; and reports on developments in the Council's complaint handling. The operation of the statutory social care complaints process was also presented to give members a comprehensive picture of complaints made against the Council. Members heard that there was an overall downward trend in the number of complaints received, however there was a need to improve performance in complaints being escalated beyond the first stage of the complaints process.

Members were also updated on the findings from the 2009 Brent residents' attitude survey.

The Forward Plan Select Committee has reviewed the decisions taken by the Executive on Authority to Award the Residential and Respite Care Contract for People with Learning Difficulties, following a call-in. The select committee heard from some of those concerned about this matter and following extensive discussion decided to forward some alternative views to the Executive.

The select committee has also considered the implications of the Executive's decision in response to receiving a petition on the Council's consultation procedures as it affects consultation carried out by the Transportation Unit.

At the last meeting of the select committee on 6 January 2010, Members considered a call-in regarding decisions taken by the Executive on Future Acquisition Strategy for Brent Transport Fleet and Authority to Tender for Provision of a Leased Maintained Vehicle Fleet.

The select committee also heard from the Lead Member for Environment, Planning and Culture, Councillor Van Colle, updating them on Inspiring Brent: Brent's Action Plan for the London 2012 Games.