



Full Council
18 November 2013

**Report from the Assistant Chief
Executive**

For Action

Wards Affected:
ALL

Report from the Chairs of Overview & Scrutiny

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report provides a summary of the work of the council's overview & scrutiny committees in accordance with Standing Order 14. It covers the period since overview and scrutiny last reported to Full Council in September 2013.

2.0 Detail

One Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee

2.1 In October the committee received the Quarterly Performance and Finance Report for quarter 1. Members were particularly interested in the support provided to schools judged as in need of improvement by Ofsted, actions to improve recycling rates and actions to reduce the incidences of flytipping.

2.2 An update on the Parking Review was provided which included information on: the award of the contract, the savings projected and achieved, performance of the new contractor, the withdrawal of scratch cards, and the introduction of virtual visitor parking passes. Member's questions focussed on the capacity of the new system, the customer experience and mechanisms for identifying and dealing with potential abuse of the system.

- 2.3 The committee also received an update on the progress of the One Council Programme. This included changes in the governance arrangements, some detail on new projects being undertaken, and on those that are closing. Members raised concerns about ensuring that the Project Management Office was adequately resourced in order to deliver the savings needed in the next few years and the sustainability of the programme.

Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- 2.4 The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee met in October, and considered an annual report on the council's Corporate Parenting Strategy, and the provision of careers advice for young people.
- 2.5 In addition to the detail of the Corporate Parenting Strategy report itself, this item prompted committee members to discuss the status of the council's Corporate Parenting Board, which is currently under review in order to make it more robust and challenging. The discussion drew attention to the fact that Board was operating with less than full membership, with none of the three political groups taking all of the places allocated to them. The committee expressed the view that all groups should nominate to these places to enhance the work of the Board.
- 2.6 The careers advice item was requested by the Brent Youth Parliament members, who attend each committee and who took a prominent role in this discussion. This included questioning how careers advice was quality-assured, highlighting a perceived lack of awareness of some services amongst young people, and noting the importance of giving appropriate emphasis to vocational options as well as academic pathways like university. BYP members secured a meeting with the 14-19 School Improvement lead to discuss this further.
- 2.7 The committee also discussed its regular item on school places, raising residents' concerns and passing on valuable information to the Director of Children and Families about a proposed new free school.

Partnership & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- 2.8 The committee last met on 3rd October 2013 and members considered reports on the following:
- 2.9 The Community Engagement Manager and Cllr Denselow (Lead member) presented a report on the work of the Ward Working Team in 2012/13. The report reviewed the actions taken over the last year by Ward Working, which included some of the challenges the team has dealt with as well as positive

achievements. The committee asked for more analysis and feedback on completed projects and the impact they had had. The committee has also requested further information regarding the project to help people in the Borough affected by the welfare reforms.

- 2.10 The Assistant Director Policy presented an overview of Brent's approach to the Asset of the Community Value process and Community Right to Challenge both of which were introduced by the Localism Act 2011. The committee also heard a deputation on this subject with a representative addressing the committee on behalf of the Save the Queensbury Pub Campaign and the NW2 residents group. The committee noted the reasons why this bid had failed.
- 2.11 The Assistant Director Policy also presented a report on progress made by Partners for Brent in delivering its work programme. The committee heard that financial considerations would mean that in the future partnership working would be more far-reaching and challenging. Member's questions focussed on how the different partnership committees worked with one another, shared intelligence and avoided duplication.

Health Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- 2.12 The committee considered reports on primary care access and the results of the latest GP patient survey. Members were concerned by the wide difference in survey results across different GPs in Brent. They wanted to know how poor performance was identified, benchmarked with other local authority areas and what actions were being taken to address overarching issues and those affecting individual practices. Members pressed NHS England and the CCG on the support they provided for improving care and ensuring practices were fully compliant with their improvement plans.
- 2.13 The committee raised concerns over the lack of additional enhanced services being provided by many GPs, including services for diabetes, cardiology and psychological therapies and sought further clarification on the services currently offered.
- 2.14 The CCG then outlined its plans for wave 2 commissioning of musculoskeletal, trauma and orthopaedics, rheumatology and gynaecology services in Brent. The committee noted the concerns that have been raised by a number of groups on the CCG's consultation arrangements for commissioning and requested that a comprehensive list of all consultees be provided. They were also worried by the lack of clarity on the future of the Equality Diversity and Engagement (EDEn) Committee. Members of the committee raised concerns that the re-commissioning of services would

produce a lack of continuity of care and that the change of provider for cardiology services to the Royal Free Hospital would impact on existing outpatient services. Members also questioned the decision to re-commission the service and asked the CCG what options had been considered to keep the existing provider; North West London Hospitals.

- 2.15 The committee also received short updates on the pathology service serious incident action plan and on the serious incident at Central Middlesex Hospital Urgent Care Centre.

Budget & Finance Overview & Scrutiny Committee

- 2.16 The Budget & Finance OSC has met twice since the last Chair's report to Council. In September the committee received a presentation from the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Growth on the main budgetary issues facing the department, including the impact of welfare reform, employment issues, Council Tax Support, New Homes Bonus and the capital programme. During a wide ranging discussion Member's questions focussed on the disposal of council properties following the move to the Civic Centre, maximising Council Tax receipts, the use of Section 106 receipts, the Community Infrastructure Levy and support for people affected by welfare reform. The Operational Director of Finance provided the committee with an update on the projected budget gap for 2014/15 and consultations the government had issued that will impact on future funding. Members focussed on actions being taken to identify opportunities for savings in the future.
- 2.17 In October the Operational Director of Finance provided the committee with the latest information in relation to the projected budget gap for 2014/15 and the additional level of savings that the council would need to make. The Strategic Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods provided a presentation which set out the department's budget, focussing on the key risk areas of parking and recycling, and providing an overview of the department's capital programme. Members spent some time discussing ways of reducing landfill costs and the work being undertaken to encourage and educate residents in relation to recycling. The committee also received an update on the financial benefits and costs of the One Council Programme and how it fits with the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

3.0 Financial Implications

- 3.1 None

4.0 Legal Implications

- 4.1 None

5.0 Diversity Implications

5.1 None

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