

Scrutiny Annual Report 2017-2018



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Foreword

This report marks the end of another four year cycle of scrutinising the Administration of Harrow Council. During this time, the work of the Overview and Scrutiny committee, its two sub-committees (performance and finance and health), call-in committees, scrutiny reviews and scrutiny leads have investigated and reviewed some of the biggest issues facing the Council and residents, from the challenge of the Council's budget, the impact of welfare reforms, increasing homelessness, issues accessing primary care, school expansions, community safety and dementia friendly housing for a growing elderly population. During the course of our investigations, we have been privileged to be able to meet, visit and hear from people impacted by these issues in order to hear first-hand what it is like from a resident's perspective, reflect the real life experiences back to policy makers and to shine a light on the impact that policy decisions, service reductions and budget cuts are having on our residents. We have also served to hold the Cabinet to account for the decisions they make and the performance and financial management of the Council especially regarding the regeneration and commercialisation agendas of the council and children's services.

This year, in response to the Council's Peer review of June 2016, we have taken the opportunity to work with the Centre for Public Sector Scrutiny (CFPS) to review how we and the Executive, along with senior officers, could make our work valued across the Council and make further improvements to the way in which we conduct scrutiny in Harrow 'to enable the council to benefit more from constructive challenge and policy development from non-executive councillors.' As a result of the review we have been working on six areas which will form the basis for how scrutiny will operate going forwards:

- 1) Agreeing a more targeted and focused role for scrutiny with a more outward focus
- 2) Setting a new work programme to reflect the new role
- 3) Making changes to how we conduct business in scrutiny committee
- 4) Reviewing the Scrutiny Leads role to ensure greater clarity and consistency
- 5) Agree the behaviours expected of scrutiny Councillors
- 6) Explore other opportunities for cross-party engagement outside of scrutiny

As in previous years, the Scrutiny Leadership Group, comprising the chairs and vice-chairs of the committees and scrutiny leads, continued to provide strategic direction to the scrutiny function and helped to ensure we maintain an effective focus for our work. We are extremely grateful to all of the Councillors who have contributed to the leadership group this year.

We would also like to thank all the Members, officers, partners and members of the public who have contributed to our scrutiny work this year. We appreciate the time and effort you have given. If you have any suggestions for issues that you think scrutiny should look into, please do let us know.



Cllr Phillip O'Dell

Chair Overview and Scrutiny



Cllr Barry MacCleod-Cullinane

Vice-Chair Overview and Scrutiny

Report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Our Committee: The committee has met 8 times this year. The papers and details of the outcomes from all of these meetings can be found [here](#). Our remit continues to be the consideration of the Council's and our partners' strategic direction, and major projects and policy decisions and we are grateful for the support we have received in doing this from portfolio holders, council officers and representatives from partner agencies. A full list of the portfolio holders who have supported our Committee's discussions is given at the end of this section of the annual report.

Our Meetings: In 2017/18, we met twice with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive for a question and answer session to consider the budget proposals and strategic direction of the Council (in January and July). We are grateful for the information which they shared with us.

The specific items which have been considered at ordinary meetings of our Committee include:

- Corporate plan
- Draft budget 2018/19
- Community Safety, Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy
- Street Trading Policy and Charges
- Youth Justice Partnership Plan 2017-2018
- Ofsted Inspection – Action Plan
- Financing of the Regeneration Programme – Scrutiny Review Financial Modelling Information and Interim Report
- Children and Families Service Complaints Annual Report 2016/17
- Adult Services (Social Care) Complaints Annual Report 2016/17
- Peer Review Action Plan – Second Update report
- Health visiting scrutiny review
- Community Safety Strategic Assessment

Review Programme

We have conducted a programme of more detailed scrutiny investigations, undertaken mainly via in-depth reviews or challenge panels. The content of the review programme is identified through the performance and Finance Sub-Committee's deliberations or via our scrutiny leads and is discussed at the Scrutiny Leadership Group and then agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny committee.

MEETING STATISTICS (O&S)	8
Committee meetings	
Attendance by Portfolio Holders	<p>Councillor Sachin Shah- Leader of the Council and Strategy, Partnerships & Devolution Portfolio Holder</p> <p>Councillor Adam Swersky- Finance and Commercialisation Portfolio Holder</p> <p>Councillor Kiran Ramchandani- Performance, Corporate Resources & Customer Service Portfolio Holder</p> <p>Councillor Christine Robson</p>

	Children, Young People and Schools Portfolio Holder Councillor Simon Brown Adults & Older People Portfolio Holder
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This year we will have completed four reviews:

- a) Financing of the Regeneration programme in Harrow
- b) Centre for Public Scrutiny – Review of Scrutiny in Harrow
- c) Health Visiting
- d) Dementia friendly housing

a) Financing of the Regeneration programme in Harrow

The purpose of the review was to:

- Review the planned capital and revenue financing for the regeneration programme and to assess whether the Council’s proposals for the financing of its regeneration programme are realistic, affordable, robust and deliverable. This includes aspects of the commercialisation strategy (e.g. the proposal to build private homes for rent) that directly impact upon the Regeneration and Development Programme;
- Review selected financial assessments for individual regeneration projects, including investigating the regeneration programme finance model, in particular the underlying assumptions, cash flow projections and projected costs and benefits over the near and longer term;
- Ensure that financial risks are properly considered and that proposed mitigations are appropriate and balanced;
- Appraise the projected financial benefits of the Council’s regeneration programme, and ensure a balanced risk management process and proposed mitigation measures are in place;
- Gain greater understanding and clarity of the financing of the Regeneration and Development Programme by members;
- Carry out a review of projected benefits of the regeneration programme, including direct and indirect benefits to the Council, business and to the local community.

Scrutiny recommendations:

- The Programme’s Risk Register to include the capitalisation of wages in the Regeneration Programme, and the revenue risk involved if this cannot happen in certain cases;
- Officers to produce one report that includes all risks and mitigations in relation to the Regeneration Programme;
- A comprehensive lobbying strategy to be developed to promote improved transport links, including the drafting of a letter from the Leader of the Council and relevant Government Ministers calling for improvements;
- The Council to produce a Harrow specific, all-encompassing infrastructure plan;
- The Council to reference the Regeneration Programme when producing any relevant strategies;

- The Programme to learn from the 2008 financial crash and specifically what happened to rental prices in Harrow;
- The break-even point for all planned regeneration projects to be constantly reviewed;
- The implications of the 2020 business rates recalculation on the Civic Centre and Kodak sites to be understood;
- The governance arrangements for cross-party engagement on the regeneration programme post-election to be formalised;
- The Corporate Risk Register to reflect an overall risk and level of risk of the regeneration programme;
- The Health and Well-being Board, CCG, Safer Harrow, Harrow Youth Parliament and all relevant and significant partners to have an integrated approach to the Council's regeneration strategy;
- Cross-party understanding of the critical pathways of the regeneration programme to be developed;
- The risks in relation to the likelihood of further interest rates rises to be monitored and assessed;
- To not delay borrowing by pursuing unrealistic borrowing opportunities;
- To ensure a proactive transport lobbying strategy is in place in order to ensure issues around reliability, capacity, and frequency are addressed in relation to Harrow and Wealdstone station;
- Modelling of the new Civic Centre to reflect the efficiency of the new Civic Centre for staff and maintenance costs, so that we get the true opportunity costs of any delay, including a reduction in business rates.

Response to the Scrutiny Review Panel Report on Financing of the Regeneration programme

Cabinet responded to the Interim Scrutiny Review Panel Report on Financing of the Regeneration programme in January this year. The leader indicated that Cabinet would allow the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Review Group to present the final part of their recommendations at March 2018 Cabinet before responding fully to the report at May Cabinet.

b) Centre for Public Scrutiny – Review of Scrutiny in Harrow

General context

The Centre for Public Scrutiny was invited to consider what improvements Harrow could make to its scrutiny arrangements, following on from the corporate peer challenge exercise facilitated by the Local Government Association in Summer 2016. This exercise concluded that the council was good, but it also noted that: "There is an opportunity to review the role of overview and scrutiny to enable the council to benefit from constructive challenge and policy development from non-executive councillors".

Harrow is a politically contestable authority – that is to say, it tends to switch political control on a fairly regular basis. Part of this study aimed to explore whether this was a significant factor in influencing members' and officers' behaviour and engagement in relation to the scrutiny function. Part of this study also aimed to explore whether other authorities experiencing the same level of contestability had been able to put measures in place to manage this issue.

Purpose of review

- Develop a common understanding and member buy-in for the role of scrutiny;

- Develop a common understanding about members' role within the authority, particularly on policy development and scrutiny;
- Identify possible scrutiny activity that would be especially productive;
- Develop a series of actions that will lead to a scrutiny function that is:
 - Sustainable;
 - Forward and outward looking;
 - Solution-focused.

These actions to focus in particular on behaviours, values and culture.

As a result of the review, the Scrutiny Leadership Group decided to focus on implementing six key actions ready for a new administration and scrutiny cycle starting in May 2018. These were:

- 1) Agree a common understanding of Scrutiny's role
- 2) Set out a framework for new work programme 2018-2022
- 3) Business in Committee
- 4) Information Sharing and Scrutiny Leads role
- 5) Behaviours
- 6) Other Policy Development Opportunities outside of Scrutiny

c) Health Visiting Review

General context

Every child is entitled to the best possible start in life and health visitors play an essential role in achieving this. By working with, and supporting families during the crucial early years of a child's life, health visitors have a profound impact on the lifelong health and wellbeing of young children and their families.

In October 2015, NHS England transferred the commissioning of services for children between the ages of 0-5 to Local Authorities, including the health visitor service. The idea was that Local authorities know their communities and understand local need so can commission the most vital services to improve local children's health and wellbeing. One of the benefits of councils commissioning health visitor services is that it offers opportunities to link with wider systems, such as housing, early year's education providers. This in turn will provide a more joined-up, cost effective service built around the individual needs, paving the way to deliver across a wider range of public health issues.

Purpose of review

- To understand the current service performance and how it compares to other London Boroughs.

Scrutiny recommendations:

- The vacancy rate to be filled across all the grades and not just the Health Visitors;
- The level of skill-mix within the Health Visiting teams to be improved;
- Health Visitors to be trained to ensure information and advice provided to parents is consistent;
- Health Visitors to undergo diversity training;
- A publicity campaign to be created to raise awareness on the importance of the clinics;
- Adequate information to be displayed at all clinics;

- Targets to be agreed (comparative to neighbouring boroughs) and to be monitored on a regular basis;
- Patients' ethnicity records to be simplified;
- A fully comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment to be undertaken to highlight potential barriers and identify ways to improve the service.

Cabinet response to the review:

- It will continue to collate the quarterly vacancy data and ask for assurances around the staffing vacancies in order to ensure the vacancy rate is filled across all the grades;
- It will look to incorporate a requirement in relation to clinical support and training into the new service spec;
- It will ask the prospective providers during the procurement process how they will meet the requirement of diversity training for Health Visitors;
- It will aim for the most ambitious targets possible for attendance of the clinics;
- It will work with the current provider and the successful bidder of the new contract to ensure adequate information is displayed at all clinics;
- The EqIA that was completed for this tender reflects the most comprehensive EqIA that was possible.

The Health Visiting scrutiny work has been of great value to Public Health. Members provided clear evidence of shortcomings in how health visiting was being delivered on the ground. It is clear that it has had an impact as the provider did not challenge the findings and appreciated the feedback. Health visitors appreciated that members took the time to see and understand what they do. The health visitors felt the importance of their work was valued by councillors – people who are leaders in their communities.

d) Dementia Friendly Housing

General context

- In September 2017, the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-committee carried out a review into dementia friendly housing in the borough. The review topic was chosen due to projections in the number of older people in Harrow with dementia and existing national and local focus on the issue.
- Harrow has one of the highest older people populations in London. There are over 38,000 people aged 65 plus living in Harrow and this is set to rise in the next twelve years. During this period, the number of older people with dementia in Harrow is expected to increase by an estimated 37 per cent, from 2500 to just under 4000.
- In addition, Harrow has an ethnically diverse older population. As Harrow's population ages, the proportion of people in older age groups who are from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups will increase.

Purpose of review

- develop a greater understanding of what constitutes 'dementia friendly' housing;

- develop a greater understanding of and clarity around whether current housing provision within the borough meets the needs of residents aged 65 and over diagnosed with dementia, or those that could develop the condition in the future;
- identify measures that the Council could implement to help meet future housing needs. In doing so, identify what overall steps the Council can take towards becoming more dementia friendly.

The aim of the work is to provide strategic support to the Council's Housing and Adult Social Care departments and Harrow CCG, to help plan for the long-term housing and care needs of those with diagnosed with dementia.

Summary of scrutiny recommendations

1. The Council undertakes a detailed and comprehensive needs analysis of demand for accommodation and support for older people in the borough and those diagnosed with dementia and other complex conditions.
2. The outcomes of the intermediate care and wellbeing scheme on an existing site in Pinner Road, Headstone South Ward (if successful) be considered as a business case for developing a cost neutral solution for Extra Care housing within regeneration plans for Poets Corner.
3. The Council produces an Older People's Housing Strategy, which is incorporated within the revised Housing Strategy.
4. The borough's joint Dementia Strategy is refreshed.
5. Council departments are encouraged to explore opportunities for increased partnership working.
6. The Chair of the Harrow Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee invites the Chief Executive of Harrow CCG to a future meeting of the Health Sub-Committee, to respond to the findings of this report.

Cabinet will respond to the scrutiny recommendations at its meeting in June 2018.

Report from Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Our Sub-Committee the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee looks in detail at how the Council's services are performing in-year. We monitor service and financial performance by analysing data and then requesting briefings or details of action plans where necessary. The Sub-Committee can make recommendations for improvement and make referrals to the Overview and Scrutiny committee if further work is needed. This work includes, for example, regular review of the Cabinet's Revenue and Capital Monitoring report. In addition, we can decide to review and monitor the performance of the Council's partners. The papers and details of the outcomes from all our committee meetings can be found here.

Our meetings: Our regular Chair and Vice-Chair's briefings on corporate performance are the main drivers for the work programme of the Sub-Committee. Our main areas of interest in 2017-18 have been:

- Revenue and Capital Monitoring
- Community Grants Scheme 2015/16
- Report of the Scrutiny Review into Social and Community Infrastructure
- 12 month update on Scrutiny's Review of the Impacts of Welfare Reform in Harrow
- 12 month update on Scrutiny's Review into Social and Community Infrastructure
- Commercialisation Strategy
- Annual Equalities Report 2016/17
- 12 month update on Scrutiny's Review into of Community Involvement in Parks Recommendations
- 12 month update on Scrutiny's review of Homelessness

MEETING STATISTICS Committee meetings	3
Attendance by Portfolio Holders	Portfolio Holder for Planning, Business and Enterprise



Cllr Jerry Miles

Chair Performance and Finance sub-committee



Cllr Richard Almond

Vice-Chair Performance and Finance sub-committee

Report from the health scrutiny lead members and health and social care scrutiny sub-committee

Our Sub-Committee:

The Health and Social Care Sub-Committee considers health, social care and wellbeing issues key to Harrow residents on a local, London-wide and national level. The aim of our work is to provide strategic support and a residents' perspective to the local CCG and NHS who strategically plan local services around access to primary care, as well as identifying what we councillors as community leaders can do to encourage residents to make best and most appropriate use of the healthcare resources available to them in Harrow.

Our Work this Year:

Much of the scrutiny activity undertaken in 2017-18 was focused on the performance of the hospitals and health services that serve the residents of Harrow, with a focus on GPs, dementia and pharmacies, and our on-going participation in the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee that scrutinises the implementation of "Shaping A Healthier Future" (SaHF), the NHS Programme which is implementing significant re-configuration of acute healthcare in North West London.

During 2017/18 health scrutiny members conducted visits and pulled together evidence, learning and best practice around meeting the health and housing needs of a growing older population with dementia as projections for the number of people expected to develop the condition increase. This is an issue identified locally as needing attention. It is also especially important given the increasing focus by national and regional government on the provision of supported and specialist housing for older people with dementia as well as other long term care needs. We conducted field visits to award winning housing schemes for older people in Waltham Forest and Southwark, visited a dementia support drop in clinic in Harrow and heard from an expert panel of witnesses.

The purpose of our scrutiny review was to:

- Develop a greater understanding of what constitutes 'dementia friendly' housing;
- Develop a greater understanding and clarity as to whether current housing provision meets the needs of residents aged 65 plus and over, who are either currently diagnosed with, or could develop the condition in the future, and identification of measures that the Council could implement to help meet future housing needs;
- In doing so, identify what overall steps Harrow Council can take towards becoming more dementia-friendly.

The aim of our review is to provide strategic support and a residents' perspective to the Council's Housing and Adult Social Care departments and Harrow CCG to help plan for the long-term housing and care needs of those with diagnosed with dementia.

Our meetings:

Our main areas of interest in 2017-18 have been:

- Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital Quality Accounts 2016/17;
- Healthwatch Annual Report 2016/17 And The Priorities For The 2017/18;
- Healthwatch Report On GP Accessibility;
- Harrow's Safeguarding Adult's Board Annual Report 2016 2017;

- Public Health Annual Report 2018;
- Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment;
- Shaping A Healthier Future – Update From NW London Joint Health Overview And Scrutiny Committee.

MEETING STATISTICS (HEALTH) Committee meetings	2
Attendance by Health Partners	Director of Nursing RNOH Ash Verma – Chair Enterprise Wellness, Healthwatch Harrow Mina Kakaiya - Healthwatch Harrow Manager Carole Furlong – Director Public Health Mike Levington – Chief Executive of the Local Pharmaceutical Committee



Cllr Michael Borio
Policy Lead for Health
Chair of Health and Social Care
Scrutiny Sub-committee



Cllr Vina Mithani
Performance Lead for Health
Vice-Chair of Health and Social
Care Scrutiny Sub-committee

Report from the Children and Families Leads

In 2017/18 we addressed a range of important issues that affect children and young people in Harrow. We have had meetings with the Corporate Director of Children's Services and Officers. The issues we have raised and discussed include:

Housing Needs

We have continued to monitor the housing need. The housing service and Children's and Families Services will continue to work in partnership and actively manage and respond to care leavers' housing needs. We will also continue to monitor the impact of homelessness, temporary accommodation stays on children's education and free school meal take up.

Education, Health and Children Looked After

The Virtual head has been working well with the Children Looked After and progress is being made. Steps are being made to improve outcomes for children, especially the Personal Education Plans and with schools out of borough with regard to timeliness. This has been mentioned at the Virtual school improvement board and therefore will be monitored with various strategies put into place.

Youth Offending Team

We have continued to monitor how the action plan is being implemented and the impact it is having throughout this year. Concern has also been raised on reoffending but in the recent YOT report that went to O&S, there has been a reduction and with first time entrants and Harrow is no longer a priority YOT.

School Expansion Programme

We are continuing to monitor delivery of the programme and the Keepmoat contract performance.

Care Act

We will continue to monitor the effect on young carers next year and the reorganisation of the Early Intervention.

Looking Ahead

Our focus in the forthcoming year will be to monitor the Early intervention reorganisation now it is up and running, review of health visiting and school nurses, the bed and breakfast impact on children's education, free school meals take up, MASH for timeliness of assessments, Young unaccompanied asylum seekers, monitoring the efforts to increase awareness and reporting of child sexual exploitation and mutilation and finally budget implications as demand increases.



Cllr Jerry Miles

Policy lead for Children and Families



Cllr Janet Mote

Performance lead for Children and Families

Report from the Environment and Enterprise Leads

As scrutiny leads we have met with the Corporate Director for Community and Divisional Director of Environment and Culture, to discuss progress and issues in their areas over the year.

The difficult financial position has been challenging but these meetings have addressed difficulties and allowed improvements to be made in areas such as:

- Improving our responsiveness - this includes looking at improvements to the website and the delays residents can face getting through to Harrow Council's call centre.
- Clean Streets, the Council's aim to sweep every road in Harrow at least weekly
- The very long delays and difficulties getting through on the phone have been reduced
- The expansion of the Fly tipping service to a 24 hour service has worked well, but fly tipping is still a problem in Harrow, as it is nationally.
- The computer App for reporting problems has worked well and improved reporting for the public and the Council's responsiveness. This has helped relieve the problems that can occur for residents contacting the call centre.



Cllr Jeff Anderson
Policy Lead Environment
& Enterprise



Cllr Manji Kara
Performance Lead Environment
& Enterprise

Report from the Community, Health and Wellbeing Leads

Hospitals

We continued to monitor the performance of Northwick Park A & E especially with regards to the colder part of the year leading up to very cold period now. The work load was very high especially at the peak of the flu cases. Whilst waiting times went up the quality of care from the staff was excellent.

There is a problem with patients needing home care packages being released without them being fully sorted. This means that the patient ends up being admitted to hospital again. The council has now purchased some units where patients can be accommodated and their packages sorted and them being fully assessed to make sure that they are able to return to their own accommodation safely. This will reduce the bed blocking to a degree.

STARRS Team

The STARRS team moved out of Northwick Park Hospital and moved to Honeypot Lane Health Centre. We need to assess what effect that this has had on the service to the public.

Libraries

With the demise of Carillion the council has taken its libraries back under its control. North Harrow library is progressing and the volunteers can see a light at the end of the tunnel to its being able to open again.

Dementia

Dementia is an ever growing concern and the health sub-committee decided that we should have a better understanding of what is needed in housing to make it friendly to people with dementia. We came up with five recommendations. The council needs to undertake a detailed and comprehensive needs analysis of demand for accommodation and support for older people in the borough and those diagnosed with dementia and other complex disorders. We also need to build in dementia friendly housing to meet the ever expanding need.

Looking forward

We should maintain a focus on: the effects of the STARRS team moving to Honeypot Lane. North Harrow library review after it reopens with volunteers running a part time service. A look at what the voluntary sector is doing for the council.



Cllr Chris Mote

Policy Lead for Community, Health & Wellbeing



Cllr Kareema Marikar

Performance Lead for Community,
Health & Wellbeing

Report from the Resources Leads

The introduction of the monthly budget reports to leads is to be welcomed. The Resources Directorate is on track to deliver a balanced budget.

Customer Service performance has been improving by introducing more on-line forms which has resulted in less people visiting and contacting the Council by phone. The target of answering all calls on average within five minutes is being achieved but some areas such as environmental services suffer delays due to enquiries around waste services. Over 85 % of contacts with the Council are now self-serve.

One area of growing concern is the continuing rise of staff absence within the directorate with 9.33 days lost in Quarter 2 this year compared with 6.77 days in the same period last year.

Access to information has improved but still requires improvement.



Cllr Stephen Wright

Policy Lead for Resources



Cllr Phillip O'Dell

Performance Lead for Resources

Call-in committees

In February this year, there was a call-in of the Cabinet Decision (18 January 2018) - Library Management Contract Extension. It was resolved that all the grounds for the call in should be upheld, and recommended that in future any delegation of authority from Cabinet to officers should be qualified to reflect Cabinet's intentions accurately.