

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Councillor Mark Watkin (Chair)

Councillor Steve Rackett (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Nigel Bell, Sue Greenslade, Kareen Hastrick, Peter Jeffree, Stephen Johnson, Rabi Martins and Kelly McLeod

The Committee's work programme for 2011/2012

Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on seven occasions this year. This included one meeting to consider a call-in of a Cabinet decision. The Scrutiny Committee received reports on the following subjects –

- **Outstanding actions and questions** became a regular report to the Scrutiny Committee after the first meeting. The report included all the actions and questions which had been raised at previous meetings. The actions and questions remained on the report until Overview and Scrutiny Committee was satisfied with response and it was agreed it had been completed.
- **Performance updates** were presented on a quarterly basis. It reviewed the performance of the Key Performance Indicators and other performance measures identified by the Scrutiny Committee for review. At the meetings Members discussed the performance indicators and sought clarification in certain areas. A particular area of concern was the performance of the Benefits Service. The Scrutiny Committee has monitored this service throughout the year and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Shared Services has provided regular updates.
- **Forward Plan** was reviewed in line with the Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference. Members noted the additions and changes to the Forward Plan since the previous meeting.
- **Task Groups** The Scrutiny Committee considered proposed topics for Task Groups and the responses from Heads of Service.

Hospital Parking Charges

The first Task Group was set up to review the parking charges at Watford General Hospital. The membership comprised Councillor Karen Collett (Chair and proposer of the topic), Councillors Ken Brodhurst, Kareen Hastrick, Peter Jeffree and Malcolm Meerabux. The Task Group met on five occasions and received evidence from the Associate Director of Infrastructure and the Associate Director of Strategic Development from the West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust and a representative from the Patient Advice and Liaison Service. The Task Group produced nine recommendations which have been forwarded to the Hospital Trust for its consideration. Overview and Scrutiny Committee have agreed to review any feedback in 2012/2013.

Way ahead for Council Services

The second Task Group to be agreed had been proposed by the Managing Director. The Way Ahead for Council Services' review sought to gain Members' views about the governance and cultural changes required for alternative service delivery models. The membership comprised the full Overview and Scrutiny Committee membership. ***(To be updated further)***

Waste and Recycling

The final Task Group agreed in 2011/2012 was the Waste and Recycling Task Group. This suggestion had been proposed by Councillor Derek Scudder, the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services. The aim of the topic was to review recycling systems used by other local authorities to see if it would aid in increasing the recycling rate in Watford, whilst still maintaining the principle of weekly collections and without substantially increasing costs. The membership comprised Councillor Keith Crout (Chair), Councillors Jeanette Aron, Sue Greenslade and Kareen Hastrick. The Task Group met on four occasions. It was agreed that the Task Group would be adjourned as a Business Case dealing with the provision of waste services was being prepared and Members felt that it would be difficult to make informed recommendations without having sight of the Business Case.

- **Review of Previous reports** Throughout the year the Scrutiny Committee has received responses from Cabinet and checked the progress of recommendations from previous reviews. In some cases Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed to carry out a further review in the future and in other cases Members have agreed the recommendations have been met. The reviews carried out in 2011/2012 are –
 - Voluntary Sector Task Group (Cabinet response)
 - Affordable Housing review (Cabinet response)
 - Public Pride (review update)
 - Services for the Deceased (review update)
 - Future of the Colosseum (review update)
 - Green Spaces review (review update)

Call-in

There has been one Executive decision called in during 2011/12. Three non-Executive Councillors had called-in Cabinet's decision regarding the "Review of three year grant funding programme to achieve savings", which had been discussed at the meeting held on 5 December 2011. Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 22 December 2011 to review the decision. It was chaired by Councillor Steve Rackett. Following the discussion the Scrutiny Committee agreed to uphold Cabinet's decision. It was also agreed that Overview and Scrutiny Committee would examine the long-term impact on the four organisations which would be subject to the largest grant cuts. The Committee would also be involved in the development of the new Commissioning Framework.

Chair's Commentary

(To be inserted)

Councillor Mark Watkin
Chair Overview and Scrutiny Committee