



SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

2007/2008

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The aim of scrutiny is to improve decision-making and service delivery. It does this in a variety of ways but key to effective scrutiny is gathering evidence and involving local people. Evidence is obtained from reports, visits and expert witnesses enabling the panels to reach a conclusion on the issues and make recommendations to cabinet. Visits this year have included:

- Ealing Hospital
- Traffic and Emergency control centres
- Schools
- Bus Depot
- Street site visits
- Ealing Jazz Festival
- Kier and Mears (two building contractors for Ealing Homes)
- Tenants - in their own homes
- Ealing Homes (workshops)
- Max Glatt Detox Unit

Each visit allows members to speak to service users and providers and to see conditions 'on the ground'. This enables members to take a balanced view and to reach considered judgements. Users and interested local people have also attended meetings to hear or be involved in specific issues, for example:

- Nuffield speech and language unit
- Bus lanes
- Accessible transport
- Allotments
- Mobile meals
- Public conveniences
- Parking Services
- Street Trading Policy
- Wheelchair Services
- Safety at stations in borough
- Grants to voluntary organisations
- Establishment of Local Improvement Network (LINK)
- Estate Agents Boards
- Pest Control

Most of the panels also co-opted representatives from local organisations and businesses including:

- Chambers of Commerce
- PPI Forums (health)
- Ealing Passengers and Transport Users Group
- Transport for London
- Ealing Civic Society
- Ealing Community Network
- Youth Representatives
- Ealing Connexions
- Southall Community Alliance
- CoE and RC nominations (education matters)
- Ealing Cycling Campaign
- Association of British Drivers
- Residents Associations
- Parent Governors

Overall, over 300 individuals have contributed to scrutiny's work in 2007/08, from actively participating as a co-opted member of a panel, to attending specific panel meetings and/or suggesting topics for scrutiny. This level of involvement is crucial to

scrutiny's ongoing commitment to involve local people in decision making and to contribute to democratic renewal.

The scrutiny conference 2008 was held on 13th May and prioritised topics for the forthcoming year as well as carrying out an initial exercise on scoping the specialist panels.

This annual report presents a summary and key outcomes for scrutiny during the year. The detail of the work of all of the panels can be found at www.ealing/services/council/committees

SCRUTINY PANELS

Overview and Scrutiny Committee has an overall management role for the scrutiny function and commissions the specialist panels (see below).

There are four other standing panels - **Council, Business and Community Partnerships, Education Leisure and Children's Social Services, Health, Housing and Adult Social Services and Transport and Environment**. These five panels examine the performance of the council and health providers, hold the executive and others to account for their performance and make recommendations for improvement. During 2007/08 the standing panels made over 20 recommendations covering a wide range of issues, for example:

- ensuring "green energy" considerations were integral in gas and electricity procurement
- improvements to waste services
- allocation of resources for highway maintenance
- constructive working between partners to improve safety and security for rail passengers at local stations
- improvements in consultation, liaison and provision of health services
- putting forward a proposal for an Ealing Disabled Parking Permits scheme
- developing a new street trading policy

The annual statements of the standing panels can be found on the following pages with full details of the reports and discussions being available on the website.

Specialist Panels examine and develop policy proposals and make recommendations to cabinet on completion of their work. This year there were four specialist panels:

The Bus Lanes Panel was set up to examine the operation of Bus Lanes in the borough. It made a number of recommendations to Cabinet proposing:

- Abolishing all 24 hour bus lanes
- Creating a Framework for review and installation of current and new bus lanes
- Rationalising the bus lane operating hours in the borough
- Creating a consistent system of signs and traffic markings

The Ealing Homes Repair Works Panel was created to look at the repairs service, how effectively it was working and how it could be improved. It made a large number of recommendations, some to Cabinet and some directly to the Board of Ealing Homes including:

- Improving the ways in which ward members can engage with Ealing Homes
- Developing better ways of working between the council and Ealing Homes
- Enhancing ways in which Ealing Homes engages with their tenants including improved telephone systems and better communications materials
- Developing mechanisms for effective scrutiny of the service

The Parking Services Panel was set up to examine how the council could provide a better standard of customer service to its residents and other motorists.

Recommendations included:

- Increasing customer services' capacity for parking issues including more staff and opening later one evening a week
- Improvements to the way that permits are processed including greater online capability
- Clarifying and improving the process relating to PCNs
- Producing a communications strategy to ensure clear understanding amongst the public of how the system works

The Pest Control Panel considered the key pests in the borough and examined the role of Ealing's Pest Control Service in dealing with these issues. It made several recommendations including:

- Reviewing fee charging policy
- Investigating the feasibility of extending the service to schools, hospitals and the local business community
- Developing protocols and working relationships with all relevant partners in the borough
- Working up a business case to operate an in-house commercial pest control service

JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR LONDON

Ealing participated fully in the pan London OSC to respond to the London PCTs' consultation on "Healthcare for London: consulting the capital" and successfully hosted one of the meetings.

SCRUTINY IMPACT

The specialist panels from 2006/2007 have had a great impact on the executive in 2007/2008.

- **The Borough Apprenticeship Scheme** is now going into its second year with 23 apprentices working for the council and at least 17 apprenticeships brokered with local employers

- **Care in the home** for our vulnerable residents has improved with nearly all the panel's recommendations implemented other than for accessible transport which scrutiny will examine further in 2008/ 2009
- **Neighbourhood governance** arrangements are radically changing in 2008 /2009 as a result of the panel's work and should lead to enhanced members' work in their wards
- In **Southall Traffic congestion and parking**, while a constant issue has been alleviated and improved by the implementation of some of the recommendations of the panel with more promised in the coming year.

SCRUTINY IN 2008/09

During 2008/09 scrutiny is looking forward to the publication in the summer of the statutory guidance fleshing out the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. OSC is geared up to deal with the "Councillor Call for Action" and is looking forward to ensuring that this is embedded in the new neighbourhood governance structures being put in place. The new powers to scrutinise local partners is an opportunity for increased engagement with the LSP and developing a more effective working relationship. There is also a new relationship to build with the LINK with the end of the PPI Forums in March 2008.

Scrutiny Panels for 2008/09

Standing Panels	Specialist Panels
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Council, Business and Community Partnerships	Worklessness and skills
Education, Leisure and Children's Social Services	Youth Provision
Health, Housing and Adult Social Services	Services for older Black and ethnic minority people
Transport and Environment	Traffic Calming and 20 Mph zones

OSC have also established the LDF Specialist Scrutiny Panel to have a time limited examinations of key aspects of the LDF.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2007/08



Cllr Anthony Young
*Chairman Overview and
Scrutiny Committee*

The year has seen the committee covering a wide range of topics as well as handling a large number of Call-ins. We have also been engaged in creating a model for dealing with Councillor Calls for Action once they become a statutory requirement and are looking forward to the other opportunities which will be available under this legislation.

OSC has overall management responsibility for the scrutiny function, ensuring that each panel has relevance to the corporate priorities. OSC itself concentrated on the corporate priority of **organisational improvement**: to be a consistently top performing organisation focused on the needs of its communities and the community strategy theme of **success through partnerships** – to develop an effective and high performing Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). To these ends, OSC:

- reviewed performance management information
- scrutinised decisions made by cabinet
- scrutinised the budget
- considered high level strategies and proposals
- reviewed the LSP improvement plan
- interrogated the chairman of the LSP on accountability, communication and performance
- took the lead in considering how to implement the Councillor Call for Action

Full details of these discussions can be found in the reports and minutes of the meetings at

http://www.ealing.gov.uk/services/council/committees/agendas_minutes_reports/scrutiny/overview_and_scrutiny/15may2007-19may2008.html

Key outcomes for OSC demonstrating how scrutiny makes a difference include

- holding debate in public on (10) executive decisions and referring three items back for reconsideration;
- enabling the public to be involved in the democratic process by speaking at Call-ins
- recommending that the LSP becomes more accountable to, and communication is improved with, local communities through ward councillors and that all LSP minutes are always emailed to all members of the council
- improved the action plan for the council's strategy for working with the Community and Voluntary Sector
- ensuring that "green" energy was an integral part of the process for procuring corporate gas and electric contracts
- enhancing community engagement through taking forward the recommendations of the Neighbourhood Governance specialist panel and

responding to Cabinets response with a clear recommendation that area committees should be abolished

- contributing to the development of the Local Area Agreement and Sustainable Community Strategy
- inviting an external partnership – Heathrow City Partnership to give a presentation on their work and answer questions from members
- monitoring the over spends in the “Around Ealing” budget and ensuring it was back on track
- scrutiny of the budget to ensure those proposed savings would not impact adversely on service provision.
- scrutiny of the budget of a new directorate (Community safety-check name) and proposing scrutiny of aspects of performance in various panels
- scrutiny of the HR directorate budget and will monitor the performance of the HR the ‘Fit for Business’ growth item
- identifying issues with the Day Centre Transport contract and monitoring the action plan
- hosting the first ever public presentation of the results of the Residents Survey
- instigated the start of member involvement in the internal Value for Money (VFM) reviews.

COUNCIL, BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY PANEL – 2007/2008 ANNUAL REPORT



Cllr Anthony Young
(Chairman)

Introduction

The Council, Business and Community Partnerships Scrutiny Panel consists of ten councillors and three non-voting advisory members from the local business and voluntary sectors. It had five scheduled meetings in the year and the Panel's terms of reference, work programme, agendas, minutes and reports considered at these meetings are available at www.ealing.gov.uk/services/council/scrutiny.

The Panel's work relates primarily to the following Community Strategy themes and goals:

- *Organisational Improvement* (to be a consistently top performing organisation focused on the needs of its communities);
- *Economy* (to ensure that there are opportunities for all people and businesses to prosper);
- *Safety* (to make Ealing one of the safest places in London); and
- *Success Through Partnerships* (to work with the Council's non-Health external partners particularly on safety and regeneration issues).

The Panel also invited to its meetings:

Representatives from the Greater London Assembly, Metropolitan Police Authority Crime and Disorder Manager for Transport for London, Metropolitan Police, British Transport Police, local transport user groups and members of the public.

Key Outcomes

The key outcomes for the Panel include:

Community Participation

- Co-optees providing community based and informed advice to the Panel.
- Examined passenger safety at Ealing Broadway and Other Stations.
- Expressed concern with the reduction of 50% in halls income over the past 3 years.
- Satisfied that the application forms for licenses were user friendly.

Recommended:

- Officers formulate a publicity strategy to promote travel safety.
- Partners work constructively to improve safety and security for passengers.
- Support proposal to open a second entrance/exit to Ealing Broadway Station.
- A Halls Operations business plan with strategic direction be provided.

Influencing the Executive

Recommended:

- Six-monthly reports on major contracts are provided to the Panel to identify those contracts to examine in advance of tendering or monitor performance.
- Cabinet and Council suspend the current Home Working policy and future policy direction be set before formulating a new policy.
- The need for a “Licensing” portal on Ealing’s website to enable easier access for the public.

Organisational Improvement

- Acknowledged the achievement of significant improvement in Housing Benefit performance now on target to have fewer than 10% of new claims outstanding over 50 days.
- Satisfied that the ICT governance arrangements are robust.
- Recognised the increases in business rate collection for all years by 12.5%.
- Expressed concern that the Agresso system for Social Services income collection had not progressed to achieve the operational target of February 2007.
- Voiced concern that Ealing had three times as many invoices paid outside the target time as the best performing neighbouring boroughs.
- Acknowledged that the Council’s income from land charges would reduce significantly with the proposed new legislation.
- Supported the proposal to enhance the current lighting system in Perceval House if the planned pilot proves to be successful.

Recommended:

- Monitoring future Housing Benefit performance.
- A review of levels of out of hours lighting across Council buildings.
- Development of measures to reduce lighting and energy use in Council buildings other than Perceval House.
- Implementation of the ‘Nightwatchman’ software to support environmental initiatives.
- Commission energy audits including an assessment of the benefit of solar panels.
- A review of measures to address the fall in the collection of Business rates.
- Direct debit be the preferred method of payment for Social Services income collection.
- Consider externalising all bailiff services and negotiate with external bailiffs for a proportion of the costs recovered to be returned to the Council.

- Proposed that officers visit the better performing neighbouring authorities on the payment of invoices within 30 days in order to learn from them.
- Receive a report at 2007/2008 year-end on individuals delaying invoice approval.
- Letters regarding Council supplier payments be tailored to suit the client and that automated responses be set up.
- Consideration be given to moving Land Charges from Customer Services to Built Environment.

Working with Partners

- Reviewed indicators identified as high risk within the Local Area Agreements.

Recommended:

- Further examination of fly-tipping;
- underachievement of black afro Caribbean boys;
- bullying as a reason for non school attendance;
- placements and education of looked after children;
- tonnage of household waste;
- older people's income;
- accidental fires in the home;
- domestic violence.
- Consideration needs to be given to whether small and medium sized businesses should provide accounts to the Council when tendering for contracts.
- Review the current requirement for minimum levels of insurance for smaller value contracts.

EDUCATION, LEISURE AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL – 2007/2008

ANNUAL REPORT



Cllr Julian Bell(Chairman)

Introduction

The Education, Leisure and Children's Social Services Scrutiny Panel consists of nine councillors, five statutory and three non-statutory (including two young people) co-opted members. It had five scheduled meetings in the year and the Panel's terms of reference, work programme, agendas, minutes and reports considered at these meetings are available at www.ealing.gov.uk/services/council/scrutiny.

The Panel also conducted the following additional visits:

- John Perryn School in Acton
- Ealing Jazz Festival in Walpole Park, Ealing

The Panel's work relates primarily to the following Community Strategy themes and goals:

- *Children and Young People* (creating a great place for every child and young person to grow up);
- *Environment, Housing and Culture* (making Ealing a better place to live); and
- *Organisational Improvement* (to be a consistently top performing organisation focused on the needs of its communities).

The Panel also invited to its meetings representatives from the Learning and Skills Council, Ealing Youth Action, Greenwich Leisure Limited, Ealing Parent Partnership, Ealing Arts and Leisure Committee, apprentices of the Ealing Apprenticeship Scheme and members of the public.

Key Outcomes

The key outcomes for the Panel include:

Community Participation

- Co-optees providing community based and informed advice to the Panel.
- Identified that the closure for refurbishment of Northfields, Greenford and Ealing Central libraries had resulted in active library borrower registrations being insufficient to meet the target.

- Greenwich Leisure Limited, managing the Gurnell Leisure Centre, recognised the service issues (including cleaning and staffing), which will be incorporated in the planned developments.
- Panel Members to revisit Gurnell Leisure Centre once the second phase of the refurbishment is completed.
- Requested officers investigate charging options at Gurnell Leisure Centre car park.
- Recognised the Jazz Festival in Walpole Park successfully offered value for money with something for everyone through a range of acts, food and souvenirs in a family-friendly environment.
- Acknowledged the tender specification for the Ealing Parent Partnership and suggested that the effectiveness of the service be maximised through publicity, particularly within the early years sector.
- To attend the Ealing and the Olympics 2012 road show at Haven Green and to observe the Tai Kwon-do, boxing and canoeing sports activities in the new municipal year.

Influencing the Executive

- Congratulated the service for the positive outcome of the Joint Area Review of Children's Services.
- Commended the comprehensive Children and Young Peoples Plan and proposed that it be reviewed on an exceptions basis.
- Praised staff on producing the Cultural Strategy but expressed concern at the low response rate to public consultation.
- Acknowledged the input of young people in the development of the Youth Participation Strategy and identified good progress in its implementation.

Organisational Improvement

- Articulated concern that sufficient funding remains in place for the three years that the Ealing Apprenticeship Scheme needs to become established.
- Identified that participants recommend apprenticeships to other young people.

Recommended:

- A three week cooling off/probation period be introduced in the Ealing Apprenticeship Scheme at the start of apprenticeships to allow both the Council and new apprentices a 'get out' clause without having to give the current four week notice.
- Recognised the consistent improvement over the past 4 years in the 2006/2007 Year End Performance Indicators for Children's Social Services.
- Acknowledged that actions were in place to provide a wider pool of fostering placements and a recruitment drive had been undertaken recently.
- Reviewed the Annual Report on Social Care Services (Children's Services) highlighting the recent problems in meeting the compliance timescales.

Recommended:

- A review of communication processes in Child Protection cases.

- Guidance about timescales for direct payment assessments to be included in departmental policies and procedures.
- Staff training plan to be set up for direct payments.
- The complaints monitoring system to be reviewed to generate improved complaint performance.
- The need to consult with parents on all key aspects of children's development which improves relationships between the department and parents, checks with care providers are undertaken in order to ensure that children were being transported safely to and from contact sessions.
- Conduct a review of communications.
- Expressed disappointment that art classes had been reduced.
- Established that the current Adult Learning provision was not fully meeting all user aspirations.
- Adult Learning Provision successfully re-inspected by OFSTED with a satisfactory overall grade.
- Partnership with Thames Valley University was being developed to increase scope of adult learning provision enhancing opportunities to progress with learning.
- Increased partnership working would offer more opportunities for Adult Learning.
- Acknowledged the improvements that have been made by the Children's Social Services in the recruitment and retention of suitably qualified staff.
- Welcomed the year on year improvements over the last decade of the Annual Truancy Statistics particularly compared to the levels which reflects the support and commitment Ealing schools give to this issue.

Recommended:

- Further examination of Implementation of the Swimming Pools Strategy to include the charging policy for Gurnell Leisure Centre.
- Further review of the Building Schools for the Future strategy including the Primary Capital Programme.
- Further review of allotments concessions policy including the rent levels looking at self-financing income through the management of the service and concessions.
- Antisocial behaviour on allotments e.g. bonfires, etc. should be reported to the appropriate authority for any necessary action.
- Further review of the community toilet scheme as currently operated in Camden and Richmond.

Performance Management

- Overarching Children's Workforce Development Strategy be reviewed annually.
- Commended the outstanding OFSTED report for Twyford CE High School.
- Praised the progress made at John Perryn Primary School since its July 2006 OFSTED inspection when it had been placed in special measures and would review progress after the re-inspection in November 2007.

- Acclaimed the extended school partnerships and the outcome of the recent consultations.

HEALTH, HOUSING AND ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL

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*Councillor Mark Reen
Chairman*

Introduction

The Health, Housing and Adult Social Services Standing Scrutiny Panel consists of nine councillors and a total of five non-voting advisory members from Ealing Community Network and the local Patient and Public Involvement Forums. The Panel held eight scheduled meetings in the year, two of which were held on NHS premises at Ealing Hospital and at West London Mental Health Trust's HQ in St Bernard's Hospital. The Panel's terms of reference, work programme, agendas, minutes and reports are available at www.ealing.gov.uk/services/council/scrutiny.

During the year, Panel members also:

- visited the Max Glatt Detox Unit run by Central and North West London Trust at Bernard's Hospital
- attended a briefing on drug and alcohol services in Ealing
- undertook a tour of selected parts of Ealing Hospital

The Panel's work relates primarily to the following Community Strategy themes:

- Making Ealing a better place to live
- Reduce health inequalities and promote well being and independence for adult and older people

Outcomes

Key outcomes for the panel, which demonstrate how scrutiny can make a difference, included the following:

- implementation of the Panel's recommendations on ways of reducing the high level of coronary heart Disease in Ealing was monitored
- Ealing PCT was required to give public account for continued delay in the start of public consultation on the future of the Nuffield Speech and Language Unit
- Ealing Hospital was held to account by an elected body for its Foundation Trust application, its consultation procedures and proposed the membership arrangements
- Ealing PCT produced better performance management information on the wheelchair services and was challenged to demonstrate how it informs and involves users in services developments

- Ealing representation on the pan-London Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 'Healthcare for London' principles was secured
- the Older People's Housing Strategy was further developed to include clear timelines and targets
- officers were asked to consider the implications of the under-reporting of Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) when using ASB as an indicator of estates' (un) popularity
- some difficulties in the relationship between the council and Ealing Homes were openly explored and the council increased its level of checks on Decent Homes improvements
- concerns about the arrangements for billing leaseholders' and the current level of arrears were also explored
- more substantive data on the implementation of, and overall impact of, Ealing Homes' Anti Social Behaviour strategy was produced
- officers were asked to follow up an initial report on mobile meals with additional detail regarding: the big drop in the number of people receiving the service; the factors affecting usage of the service; and the demographic factors affecting take up, including concerns over meal usage
- West London Mental Health Trust's (WLMHT) efforts to ensure that the Central North West London Mental Health Trust (CNWL) 'on call duty system' includes Ealing Hospital were supported
- closer working between the council and Ealing PCT on the development of primary health care buildings and facilities was facilitated
- the need for more 2, 3 and 4 bedroom family houses was taken into account in the development of the new Estates Strategy
- the need for the skills and experience of people involved in the Patient and Public Involvement Forums to be carried into the new Local Improvement Network was taken into account in the contract specification
- recommended to Cabinet that representation be made to the Mayor of London about building healthcare facilities on derelict sites, if these are not going to be used to generate employment
- Social Services were urged to ensure that they refer carers to the Carers Centre
- the Housing Allocation Scheme Summary was re-written in plain English to make it easier to understand.
- advice was given on the implementation of the council's Key Estates strategy

Looking forward

Key learning points for the coming year include:

- It was helpful when members of the public with relevant knowledge and skills contributed
- More public input is desirable - more publicity could be sought through 'Around Ealing' and more work could be done to target relevant voluntary organisations

- It is disappointing that the future of the Nuffield Speech and Language Unit issue is still unresolved – this has undermined the process of scrutiny as the panel has not been able to do its job
- More GPs should be invited to attend
- Asking for quick follow-up reports has been effective – the panel has been able to see developments, e.g. on Wheelchair Services

Panel Attendance

Panel Member	Max possible	Attended	Substituted	Apologies
Cllr Mark Reen (Chairman)	8	6	1 Cllr Clifford Pile	1
Cllr Jasbir Anand (Vice-Chairman)	8	7	1 Cllr Shahbaz Ahmed	0
Cllr Kate Crawford	8	7	0	1
Cllr Phil Greenhead	8	7	1 Cllr Jarnail Jandu	0
Cllr Seema Kumar	8	7	1 Cllr Edmond Yeo	0
Cllr John Popham	8	8	0	0
Cllr Elizabeth Reilly	1	1	0	0
Cllr Gurcharan Singh	8	4	1 Cllr Jarnail Jandu	2
Cllr Gregory Stafford	5	5	0	0
Cllr Philip Taylor	8	6	1 Cllr Peter Allott	1
Co-optees				
D S Bhasin / Sikhander Minas	7	6	-	0
Francesco Fruzza	6	3	-	2
Carl Johnson	7	6	-	0
Steve Lunniss	6	3	-	2
Adrian March / Wendy Myerson	7	4	-	3

TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL

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*Councillor Diana Pagan
Chairman of the Transport and Environment Panel*

Introduction

The specific role of the Transport and Environment Panel is to review and scrutinise the planning, management, provision and performance of local transport, environmental services and planning policy issues, including transport, roads, refuse, street cleaning and open spaces.

The work of the panel has supported all three of the council's top priorities, in particular that of cleaner streets. It is also relevant to a number of council commitments and priorities beneath the Corporate Plan's strategic goal of making Ealing a better place to live, including: improving the cleanliness and appearance of local environments; improving the collection and management of waste; and ensuring local traffic management is sensitive to local needs.

I should like to thank the former Chairman, Cllr Ann Chapman for all her assistance in the handover period after the first meeting of the year. Also my Vice-Chairman and all the Members, not forgetting our 2 co-opted members who refreshingly bring a different perspective to our discussions, for their diligent attendance and lively participation. I should also like to express my appreciation to the Officers for all their support during what has been a very busy year.

Background documents, including the panel's terms of reference and work programme, reports and minutes of the meetings can be found at www.ealing.gov.uk/services/council/scrutiny/.

External engagement

The scrutiny process aims to encourage public debate and greater involvement of local people and organisations in council policy and decision-making. To this end, the panel:

- developed the work programme out of a long list of topics put forward in response to general invitation;
- retained its co-opted two representatives of external organisations (Ealing Civic Society and Ealing Passengers and Transport Users Group);
- distributed papers to local residents' groups and other stakeholders;

- encouraged public attendance and contributions at meetings;
- elicited a good external response on estate agents' boards.

Outcomes

Key outcomes for the panel, demonstrating how scrutiny made a difference in 2007/08, include:

- holding Scottish & Southern Electric to account for its failure to repair street lighting faults within nationally prescribed timescales;
- recommending further door-knocking campaigns in the borough to raise domestic recycling participation levels as part of the council's response to the landfill tax escalator;
- acting as the main consultative forum for the development of a new street trading policy for the borough;
- bringing together members, residents and estate agents to discuss whether estate agents' boards are causing a problem in the borough;
- recommending the council's immediate adoption of powers to take action against motorists who make use of unauthorised vehicle crossovers and utilities companies whose carriageway and footway reinstatements are sub-standard;
- putting forward a proposal for an Ealing Disabled Parking Permits scheme.
- monitoring the street cleaning which reached its average target of 90% by the end of the financial year.
- monitoring the Refuse & Recycling improvements that were introduced in November 2007.
- recommending to Cabinet that the investment for Highway Maintenance in 2008/09 should be no less than in 2007/08, leading to an increase to £8.5m.
- Members accompanied the Noise Control Team on their weekend late night Party Patrols.

Learning points

- making connections between the work of various Scrutiny Panels so that complementary recommendations are made.
- scrutiny of the Council's Waste & Recycling services has been particularly rewarding.
- a recognition that Panels continue to find their workloads challenging, not always completing their full programme in a year.

Looking forward

Possible topics for the Panel's 2008/09 work programme:

- Controlled Parking Zone Policy
- City Car Clubs
- Bus Lanes – monitoring the Specialist Panel's recommendations
- Review of last year's Showcase Streets
- Performance of Council Contractor Mouchel
- Changes to Transport infrastructure, including Rail Utilisation Policy

- Performance of Highway maintenance
- Performance of Accessible transport services
- Review Trading Standards Policy after 6 months operation
- Monitoring progress on the procurement of alternative waste capacity to Landfill, progress on the Pre-paid Commercial Waste collection service and Flats Recycling
- Estate Agents Boards – review of complaints