

SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT - 2006/2007

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:

- other local authorities
- training providers
- schools
- street site visits
- youth clubs
- day centres
- older people in their own homes
- mental health facilities

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
- traffic and parking issues in Southall
- neighbourhood policing
- special education needs transport policy
- street lighting (heritage lamps)
- Dickens Yard redevelopment
- grants to voluntary organisations
- street cleaning
- council website

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

- Chambers of Commerce
- PPI forums (health)
- Alzheimer's Concern
- Ealing Passengers and Transport Users Group
- Ealing Civic Society
- Ealing Connexions
- Action Acton
- Contact a Family
- Church of England and Roman Catholic nominations (education matters)
- An Apprentice from a local Training Centre

Overall, over 300 individuals have contributed to scrutiny's work in 2006/07, 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 2007 was very successful with local people contributing their ideas, expertise and knowledge to work with scrutiny councillors on the work programme for the coming year.

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 - **Education Leisure and Children's Social Services; Council, Business and Community Partnerships; 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 that performance and make recommendations for improvement. During 2006/07 the standing panels made over 20 recommendations covering a range of issues, for example:

- improvements to waste services
- allocation of resources to libraries and to the youth service
- improvements to make housing benefit documents and the council's website more user friendly
- improvements in consultation, liaison and provision of health services
- improvements to communication and liaison between police Safer Neighbourhood Teams and area committees
- improvements to communication between the Local Strategic Partnership and ward councillors

The annual statements of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the standing panels can be found at **Appendices 1-5** 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 Care in the Home Panel was set up to identify ways of improving the working arrangements between the council, NHS and voluntary sector. It made over 18 recommendations to Cabinet about:

- improving advice and information for all older people
- expanding joint working between different organisations
- publicising the direct payments scheme to give older people more choice and control
- improving accessible transport services

The Borough Apprenticeship Scheme Panel acted as a sounding board for the emerging scheme. In addition to the cabinet decision to progress the scheme, the panel further recommended that the Council:

- engages and motivates apprentices to ensure high retention rates;
- identifies the longer term funding and resourcing needs to ensure the continuing viability of the scheme;

- works closely with local Ealing employers to encourage them to take up the places available;
- enhances partnership working with Connexions Service and the Education Business Partnership in order to target the local schools, young people and businesses already within their networks.

The task of the **Southall Traffic Congestion and Parking Provision Panel** was to identify, with the help of local people, solutions to the ongoing traffic and parking issues in Southall. Key outcomes include:

- recommendations to improve parking provision in the short medium and longterm;
- recommendations to improve traffic flow;
- recommendations about ongoing parking enforcement;
- recommendations in respect of school and business travel planning to reduce car use.

Neighbourhood Governance is a key issue which will impact on the ways that ward councillors interact with their constituents and the ways that decisions are made. This panel will continue into the new municipal year and is now expected to report in September 2007.

SCRUTINY IMPACT

Influencing the Executive

- Over 90% of the recommendations made in 2005/2006 have been implemented.
- About 80% of the 160 recommendations made in 2006/2007 were accepted outright. This excludes the Neighbourhood Governance Panel that will be reporting in September 2007.

Scrutiny in 2007/2008

During 2007/2008 scrutiny will be preparing for the introduction of new powers proposed in the Local Government Bill and the Police and Justice Act. These powers include not only the well heralded 'community call to action' but also the power for scrutiny to examine the service provided to local people by other public bodies. Guidance on the new powers is expected in early 2007 with implementation likely from April 2008.

Scrutiny Panels for 2007/2008

Standing Panels	Specialist Panels
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Neighbourhood Governance (to September 2007)
Education, Leisure and Children's Social Services	Bus Lanes
Health, Housing and Adult Social Services	Ealing Homes Repair Works
Transport and Environment	Parking Services
Council, Business and Community Partnerships	Pest Control

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2006/2007



Cllr Anthony Young
Chairman, Overview and
Scrutiny Committee

This year Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) became responsible for hearing called-in decisions with the result that the number of meetings had to increase in order to accommodate the potential to hear items called in from every cabinet meeting. Additionally OSC met specifically to accommodate scrutiny of the budget, taking the total number of meetings to fifteen.

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; and
- interrogated the chairman of the LSP on accountability, communication and performance

Full details of these discussions can be found in the reports and minutes of the meetings at www.ealing.gov.uk/council/services/committees.

Key outcomes for OSC demonstrating how scrutiny makes a difference include:

- holding debate in public on (14) cabinet decisions and referring three items back to cabinet for reconsideration;
- enabling the public to be involved in the democratic process by enabling them to speak to specific items of public interest, for example photocopying charges; siting of a multi games area; street lighting; grants to voluntary bodies; Dickens Yard development;
- recommending that the LSP becomes more accountable to, and communication is improved with, local communities through ward councillors;
- scrutiny of the budget to ensure that proposed savings would not impact adversely on service provision and
- holding the Leader to account for the specific performance of community safety, waste management, value for money and regeneration issues during 2006/07.

COUNCIL, BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY PANEL – 2006/2007

ANNUAL SUMMARY 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:

- by an open invitation on the Council's website for the users to give their comments on its user-friendliness; and
- representatives of local residents' associations and neighbourhood watch teams to give their comments on how the safer neighbourhood programme worked in their areas.

Key Outcomes

The key outcomes for the Panel include:

Community Participation

- recommending:
- that service officers contact independent schools and churches to advise on temporary events notices; and
- further promotion of the safer neighbourhoods teams in the Council's "Around Ealing" magazine.

Influencing the Executive

- expressing concern at the closure of the Members Enquiries Unit and the reliability of information gathered on responses by service areas;
- recommending:
 - that Cabinet consider alternative arrangements for members enquiries;
 - that the Parking Services' draft code of practice on complaints and appeals includes examples and that it is a "live" document, with case law and relevant adjudications as they became available;
- that in the proposed consultation process on new S106 schemes ward councillors are informed of the planning gain and its conditions and are invited to submit proposals; and
- that the report on major contracts becomes six monthly and to contain information on all contracts over £250,000.

Organisational Improvement

- achieving significant service improvements e.g. social services income collection leading to increased collection rate, increase in payment by standing order and the development of a direct debit facility;
- ensuring that the Housing Benefits documentation was more user friendly;
- conducting an annual/biannual review of the Council's major contracts and selecting the CCTV/security and golf grounds maintenance contracts for in-depth review;
- contributing to the Ealing local area agreement and reviewing this by exception on a six-monthly basis;
- making proposals for the Council's website to be more user friendly, including enhancing information available to the public e.g. clarifying the presentation of the advanced search functions, etc.; and
- recommending:
 - that officers draw up clear protocols for the escalation of unresolved or unanswered enquiries;
 - that members be issued with a complete contacts list and automatic replies be sent by all identified recipients of members enquiries;
 - that the contact list for enquiries by members be updated regularly;
 - that officers ensure that careful consideration is given before any purchase of corporate complaints tracking software takes place;
 - that members be invited to participate in a demonstration of the agreed software; and
 - that the Corporate Complaints Improvement Group consider how it might gather member input e.g. by an invitation to a meeting.

Working with Partners

- recommending:
 - that police officers from the Safer Neighbourhood Teams attend the borough's area committees, including making a yearly presentation of their work; and
 - that councillors are invited to the meetings of the ward panels in all wards.

EDUCATION, LEISURE AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL – 2006/2007

ANNUAL SUMMARY REPORT



Cllr Julian Bell
(Chairman)

Introduction

The Education, Leisure and Children's Social Services Scrutiny Panel consists of nine councillors, three statutory and one non-statutory 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:

- Gurnell Leisure Centre in Greenford to establish the quality and standard of cleanliness and receive the views of the users;
- W13 Social Club in West Ealing to see the youth centre facilities and seek the views of the young people and staff; and
- Breakfast Club at Viking Primary School in Northolt to find out how the Extended Schools programme works.

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).

Key Outcomes

The key outcomes for the Panel include:

Community Participation

- co-optees providing community based and informed advice to the Panel;
- problems identified with the health suite during the visit to the Gurnell Sports and Leisure Centre to be addressed during refurbishment;
- positive image that Councillors are visible through visits to ensure that value for money was being achieved;

- young people at the W13 Social Club were keen to have Councillors visiting and proposed that they be invited to future events e.g. for judging contests;
- young people welcomed meeting Councillors in an informal environment; and
- the users of the Special Education Needs transport service and school experts expressed their views and concerns to the Panel on the draft policy.

Influencing the Executive

- increasing the number of books at the renovated Central Library by 10,000 to 73,000;
- recommending that the library café should initially operate on a two-year trial;
- continuing provision of different language books for the diverse community;
- supporting the consideration of increased funding for Youth Services;
- supporting the Youth Services' financial bid for a mobile youth unit targeting estates with high rates of antisocial behaviour and improve service contact;
- recommending funding breakfasts for pupils eligible for free school meals;
- commenting on the proposals for the Jubilee Gardens Health Centre and Library project;
- recommending that the scheduling of routes to schools be looked at as concern had been expressed about the journey times to schools resulting in some pupils missing out on lesson times;
- requesting that there be more explicit information about the criteria for which pupils were to be picked up at home and pupils to be picked up at pick-up points;
- noting the concerns raised about the suitability of pick-up points whilst acknowledging that this had not been a major issue with parents;
- asking for the sections relating to the needs of the family and pre-school to be made more explicit in the SEN Transport Policy;
- recommending that adult bullying in schools should also be looked at and that on-line reporting of bullying is progressed (with the option of being non anonymous) in order to deal with the problems of bullying more effectively;
- commending the proposed Anti Bullying Strategy but also recommending that the use of plain English and a user friendly presentation style be applied to improve it; and
- commending the efforts being made to make the most of the opportunities arising from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and will continue to monitor developments on a six monthly basis.

Organisational Improvement

- recommending that the level of investment be maintained in the new Sports and Leisure Contract;
- identifying, monitoring and reviewing corrective action to ensure that re-registrations on the Child Protection Register met the year-end target of 10%;
- reviewing and monitoring the 12% Looked After Children absence from school which was high; and
- recommending an increase in funding for Youth Services to be in line with the national benchmark of £100 spend per head of the 13-19 population.

Performance Management of Schools

- commending the staff and governors of John Perryn Primary School on the improvements made in the school but recognised that there was still some way to go; and
- acknowledging the satisfactory progress being made at the Perivale Primary School.

HEALTH, HOUSING AND ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL

ANNUAL SUMMARY REPORT 2006/7



Cllr Clifford Pile
Panel Chairman

Introduction

The Panel met 8 times during the year. At the beginning of the year, 3 of the 8 meeting dates were allocated for any urgent issues such as NHS consultations and/or special meetings. In the event, all 3 additional meeting dates needed to be used.

The Panel appointed 4 non-voting advisory members. These were people nominated by Ealing Community Network and the 3 local Patient and Public Involvement Forums. A further 45 members of the public attended a meeting of the Panel, 35 of whom contributed by speaking.

Full details of the Panels work can be found in the reports and minutes of the meetings at www.ealing.gov.uk/council/services/committees

Key outcomes

The Panel:

- By making a referral to the Secretary of State for Health, ensured that (a) the Nuffield Speech and Language Unit (as run by the Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust) remained open in 2006/7 and (b) that a fresh consultation on the future of the Unit will be undertaken by the service commissioners (rather than the service provider) in 2007.
- Agreed a 'Health Scrutiny Protocol' with local NHS bodies.
- Visited the Wells Unit, a new Adolescent Forensic Unit, being run by the West London Mental Health NHS Trust at St Bernard's Hospital.
- Supported proposals to Cabinet on Better Governance for Older People but with comments about the need to improve the presentation of the report and provide information on how the project would be evaluated.
- Gained Cabinet's support for partnership working between the council and local NHS bodies when seeking public/patients' views, eg through the Residents' Panel.

- Monitored progress on action to tackle the local incidence of diabetes - derived from the previous Panel's recommendations to Cabinet and local NHS bodies.
- Persuaded Ealing PCT to take further action to ensure that Twyford patients do not face problems in registering with a local GP.
- Recommended to Cabinet that the council make productive links between the development of the Council's Property Strategy and the PCT's Premises Strategy for the benefit of the health of Ealing residents, noting that the PCT is keen to work with the Council on the development of town "hubs".
- Recommended to Ealing PCT that further work be undertaken to ensure that patients are better informed about the arrangements for patient feedback and involvement in the development of service improvements by the Practice Based Commissioning Groups.
- Recommended to Cabinet that the Council start to review and consult on its No Smoking Policy prior to the implementation of Smokefree England July 2007.
- Persuaded Ealing Hospital to take greater account of its outlying geographical areas (Northolt and Acton) in its initial proposals for the membership of the Foundation Trust Governors' Council.

TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL

Annual Report 2006/07



Councillor Ann Chapman
Chairman of the Transport and Environment Panel

This year the specific role of the Transport and Environment Panel has been 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.

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;
- 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. An average of 6.6 external people attended the panel's meetings during 2006/07 compared to 4.4 across all scrutiny panels in 2005/06;
- elicited a good external response on bus lane issues.

Outcomes

Key outcomes for the panel, demonstrating how scrutiny made a difference in 2006/07, include:

- raising concerns about proposed collection times, consultation with businesses, sack ordering and payment methods for the roll-out of the pre-paid commercial waste collection service;

- proposing a 12-month commercial waste paper recycling trial;
- recommending an appointment system for special waste collections;
- bringing together a range of stakeholders for a debate on bus lanes and traffic management, identifying key areas of concern to inform a future review;
- recommending to Cabinet that the issues of bus lanes that are considered to end too close to a junction and the hours of operation of bus lanes be the subject of immediate review;
- proposing the topic of bus lane operation for a specialist scrutiny panel in 2007/08;
- recommending that a strategy be drawn up to extend the provision of recycling facilities to all flats in the borough, taking into account the outcomes of the consultation on waste and recycling;
- monitoring the performance of street cleansing services under the Clean and Green contract;
- suggesting that officers investigate and propose innovative ideas for waste reduction and increased use of reuse and recycling facilities.

Looking forward

It has been a busy and productive year for the Transport and Environment Panel. Above all members recognise the value of engaging with the community: on bus lanes for example the panel heard from people on all sides of the debate culminating in a well-informed discussion at its meeting. The panel is also grateful for the contributions of its co-opted members and the fresh perspectives they have brought. Key learning points for the coming year include:

- The remit of the panel is very broad. The panel should avoid trying to cover larger topics better suited to scrutiny by a specialist panel. To this end topics need to be specific with deliverable intended outcomes;
- When agenda planning, the number and breadth of topics should be carefully considered to ensure both that they can be fully considered and also completed in a timely manner;
- Better understanding of the budget process and resource implications would enable panels to formulate recommendations more appropriately;
- The value of public engagement is acknowledged, but it is recognised that support and training may be needed to enable public contributions to be maximised;
- The benefits of involving suitably qualified co-opted members are recognised.