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Foreword

By the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board



This past year has been a busy one for Overview and Scrutiny (O&S). We carried out 10 reviews which led to recommendations for improvements in policy and services on subjects as diverse as the borough's

green spaces, the provision of services for children up to the age of five, worklessness and childhood obesity. On behalf of our residents we continued to question Cabinet Members and senior officers on performance at Board Meetings, and we heard two Call-Ins on important issues – the support services for vulnerable older people and the Parks Strategy for the borough.

This annual report demonstrates quite clearly the breadth of Scrutiny's work over the year and reflects the cross cutting nature of so much of the work being done by the Council and its partners. During the coming year Scrutiny in Hackney will focus on the new Sustainable Community Strategy, which sets out a 10 year vision for the borough. In a period of economic downturn it will be important for Scrutiny to keep a focus on how that vision is being delivered by all partners.

Childhood obesity was one subject seldom out of the headlines this year and I was pleased that scrutiny took it on locally; examining what could be done in Hackney, where the rate is higher than the London or national averages. It is this role of responding to issues of current concern and looking for practical solutions which can work locally, which demonstrates the value of Scrutiny.

Increasingly our reviews have pointed to solutions which require not just the Council but our partners as well, such as the Police, NHS City & Hackney and Registered Social Landlords. Having a robust Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is key and this year Scrutiny has begun a process of working more closely with our LSP – Team Hackney.

For the past few years the Overview and Scrutiny Board ran a series of 'Directorate Question Times'. We heard from each Council directorate in turn about how they are addressing particular topics, such as climate change, and this has proved very useful in identifying where a more joined up approach would help. We will expand this approach with a 'Partnership Question Time' where we will look at each of the six priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategy and invite the relevant Team Hackney partners to our meetings.

O&S has a new duty to scrutinise the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. In Hackney, this is the Safer Cleaner Partnership Board of Team Hackney, jointly chaired by the Borough Commander and the Chief Executive of the Council. Now crime and disorder joins health as an area where Scrutiny has a statutory role. To reflect these new duties we had to amend some of the terms of reference of our Commissions accordingly.

Hackney's Scrutiny team continued to play a key role in the work of the pan-London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) and Cllr McShane, our Health Chair, is now the Vice Chair of this important body. It is examining the

provision of stroke and trauma services across London. This follows on from the work of the first pan-London committee, which scrutinised Lord Darzi's Healthcare for London proposals.

We welcome the arrival of Cllr Feryal Demirci to the Board as the new Chair of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny (CYP) Commission, and say thank you to Cllr Geoff Taylor who steps down from that post. His stewardship of this large, challenging portfolio has been excellent and during his time the CYP Commission has led a number of important reviews. We also say thank you and farewell to Cllr Angus Mulready-Jones and Cllr Clayeon McKenzie and wish Cllr McKenzie well in his new role as Deputy Speaker. Last but not least, we welcome two new members to the Board, Cllr Sem Moema and Cllr Carole Williams.

March also saw the departure of Ben Vinter, the Head of Overview and Scrutiny who has moved to a new role with Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trust. His work over the past six years built the scrutiny function to the success it is today and I, for one, was particularly appreciative of his excellent support when I took on the role of Chair. We would also like to extend our thanks to all officers who left the authority over the past year and who were supportive of scrutiny during their time here.

We begin 2009/10 with a busy programme of work across all the Commissions and we are most grateful to the Cabinet Members and senior officers who attend our meetings and respond to our

recommendations. We are also grateful to many other Councillors, officers and members of the public who provide support to the process. Last, but not least, I would like to thank the residents who have engaged with Scrutiny this year in a number of ways and invite them to continue to do so in the coming year.

Councillor Simche Steinberger

1. Scrutiny reviews carried out during 2008/09

The Overview and Scrutiny Board commissions reviews that focus in detail upon specific areas of policy or service delivery by the Council and/or its partners. Reviews may arise as a response to public interest or concern, national or local changes, or because an aspect of service delivery requires improvement. All reviews have a period of evidence-gathering, where the views of expert witnesses, service users and other key stakeholders are taken into account. Recommendations based on this evidence are then developed to improve policy and services.

The following pages provide a brief summary of the reviews that have been carried out over the past year, explaining why they were undertaken, how they were carried out, their findings and their recommendations. More information, and copies of all of these in-depth reviews, can be found on the Council's website – www.hackney.gov.uk/scrutiny - or by contacting the Overview and Scrutiny Team.

Growing a local economy

Community Safety and Social Inclusion
Scrutiny Commission

Councillor
Oguzkanli

Chair



Why?

Members wanted us to review the Council's consultation plans for three significant areas of regeneration in the borough covered by the 'masterplans' for Dalston, Hackney Central and Hackney Wick. Masterplans set out three-dimensional proposals for buildings, spaces, movement and land use in an area and match these aspirations with an implementation strategy. The consultations on these took place within the context of the wider statutory consultation on Hackney's new Local Development

Framework. The Commission wanted to learn from best practice elsewhere and ensure robust stakeholder engagement, particularly with businesses.

Councillors also reviewed the breadth and quality of business support provision in Hackney, in particular what support was being given to small businesses owned by minority ethnic people.

How?

The Commission received evidence from a wide range of officers and organisations. It investigated the best ways to raise residents' and stakeholders' aspirations about the masterplanning process, while also managing expectations when consulting on these major schemes. The Commission organised a series of small focus groups with some ethnic-minority business owners from Turkish/Kurdish, Afro-Caribbean, Vietnamese and Charedi Jewish communities; and meetings with representatives of stakeholders such as the Narroway Business Owners, OPEN Dalston and Hackney Co-operative Developments. Members also visited Camden and Bexley to learn about their approaches to economic development and learned about innovative approaches to stakeholder engagement elsewhere such as the 'Enquiry by Design' approach utilised for Walthamstow Town Centre. It also reviewed a wide range of key policy, guidance and research documents.

Findings

The Commission saw a need for greater clarity in relation to the masterplanning process and suggested that steps be taken to ensure that all residents and other stakeholders understand the process better and are therefore better placed to appropriately engage. It will be asking officers to report on progress in July 2009.

The Commission learned about the fears small business owners have of being swept aside by regeneration, for example,

being driven out of business by large chain stores. The level and quality of support to small businesses will be crucial as regeneration progresses. There will be a need to help them improve their offer to customers, and develop their skills to do this.

Recommendations

The Commission made a number of recommendations to improve community involvement in regeneration schemes, and welcomed the creation of the Town Centre Co-ordinator posts to provide some focus for this engagement.

The Commission noted the fragmented nature of business support provision in the borough and requested that the new provider for 'Hackney Enterprise Network' delivers on a number of key outcomes set out in the report. The Commission also echoed recommendations of two previous reviews on two issues which continue to concern small businesses – parking restrictions on suppliers loading and unloading; and the accessibility of the Council's procurement system. The latter issue was pursued jointly with Governance and Resources Commission whose "Review of Procurement" made similar recommendations. That Commission has since asked the Procurement Team and the Economic Development Team to report jointly to it again on the implementation of their recommendations.



Green spaces

Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

Councillor
Odze

Chairman



Why?

The Commission was eager to understand how the Council manages and maintains its parks and green spaces. This review was delayed in its completion due to changing timelines for the Council's 'Parks Strategy' (formally the 'Green Spaces Strategy'), with the final report being agreed by the Commission in October 2008. The review was originally agreed to consider the Council's 'Open Spaces Strategy', but this had not yet been scoped. The Commission was keen to contribute to this process and decided to focus on the extent to which the full range of green spaces in the borough meets the needs of residents and the wider community. The review was also intended to contribute to the process of defining appropriate local performance indicators for the management of Hackney's green spaces.

How?

The Commission received evidence on key themes and challenges for green spaces, assessments of the quantity and quality of green spaces in the borough, and information about tree management or arboriculture. Reports were received about the management of green spaces in and around housing estates, and the barriers that exist to promoting high-quality and well-used spaces in these contexts.

The Commission gathered evidence from a wide range of people including national expert organisations, Parks User Groups and community representatives (including residents, parents/carers and housing associations), senior officers from within Hackney Council and partners, and the voluntary sector. In addition, Members carried out a series of site visits which were instrumental in identifying many of the issues around provision of green space and allowing the Commission to see first hand the problems faced.

Findings


The preservation of public green space in urban boroughs is of clear importance. In Hackney, a large percentage of the population have no access to private gardens, so the provision of parks and other open spaces is vital for a variety of social, health and other considerations. In built-up city surroundings, parks are often considered to be the 'lungs' of a local community.

The Commission broadly supported the management and direction of the Parks Service, and hoped that the proposed restructure would lead to increased capacity for roles such as promoting biodiversity and publicising local spaces. The Commission would also like to congratulate the seven parks that were recently awarded (or re-awarded) Green Flag status.

Concerns were raised about the service's approach to performance management, as it was not clear how parks management could monitor service improvements against new investment.

There were also concerns about how the Council engaged with local interest groups, and the nature of consultation around service changes such as the Parks Strategy. It was these concerns which led to the strategy being Called-In (further details on page 30).

Recommendations



The Commission made thirteen recommendations in total. It was recommended that effective performance management processes be implemented across all Council-operated green spaces, and that quality standards are agreed for the various spaces on housing estates. It would also like the Council to continue in promoting the importance of independent play opportunities for young people, especially through the provision of informal play equipment. It recommends that options are considered to combine the two Council Tree Teams into a single service.

The Commission received feedback on the recommendations at their meeting in March 2009. The Directorate supported all recommendations. They raised an alternative approach to compiling performance management data. They also explained that whilst they were due to return to the Commission in July to feed back on progress, they were not waiting until then to start acting on them. In particular, reference was made to the recommendation relating to a PCT-funded survey of parks users, explaining that the Shoreditch Trust had been selected to complete this project, in partnership with the Hackney Parks Forum.

HR – recruitment and retention

Governance & Resources Scrutiny Commission

Councillor
Chapman

Chair



Why?

The rationale for this review emerged from officer-led work covering the whole of the Council's Human Resources service. The Commission received a number of briefings and it became clear that Members had potential to add value by focusing on recruitment and retention.

Through its role as the Scrutiny Commission for budgetary oversight, Councillors were and remain aware of the constraints placed upon the Council's finances through spend on agency staff. This issue was given due consideration throughout the review.



How?

The Commission received the majority of its evidence in public meetings mostly from the Council's Human Resources service. It detailed the range and scope of the work underway to improve local practice, which led to a number of other areas for further work.

In July 2008 some Commission Members visited Camden Council to compare approaches and help with the review.

In addition, Members conducted a series of discussions with three of the Council's directorates: Children and Young People, Finance and Resources, and Neighbourhoods and Regeneration. These provided the Commission with a clearer understanding of the challenges faced in each area, notably around reputation, use of agency staff, online recruitment, training, and equalities.

The Commission also received briefings on the composition of the borough's population and workforce, including ethnicity and workforce profiles.

Findings and recommendations



- The Commission made recommendations for areas of improvement and ongoing review with the Commission. These included:
- The need for more robust recording of performance in relation to recruitment and retention.
 - Improvements to the collection and compilation of data relating to agency staff.
 - The Council's approach to online recruitment.
 - Analysis of work undertaken to date in support of the 'Valuing People' scheme.
 - Consideration of the annual 'Equalities in Employment' report.



0–5 years service provision

Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission

Councillor
Taylor

Chair



Why?

In its earlier work on ‘youth and crime’, the Commission learned about the vital importance of parenting and support through a child’s first five years. The consequences of getting this wrong are far reaching for children, families, local communities and our wider society. This inspired Members to focus its next review on how local services are being provided to support children and families, during this crucial period.



How?

Evidence was gathered for this review in a variety of ways:

- The Commission held a series of public meetings between June and November 2008. On these formal occasions Members were able to hear from and question people representing a range of organisations and interests related to services for children up to the age of five. These included The Learning Trust and primary schools, Children’s Centre staff, partners from the PCT, Hackney Homes, GP practices, the voluntary sector, and interested members of the community. At the meetings, Members encouraged attendees to make brief introductory statements and then form a panel for discussion. This technique often proved useful for the Commission to compare and contrast different viewpoints, and it provided an evidence base for its conclusions.
- Of particular value to Commission Members were the opportunities taken to speak to parents, carers and staff within early years settings. Working in smaller groups on separate dates, Members visited three nursery providers (from the public, private and voluntary sectors)

and three Children's Centres. These site visits provided a really practical sense of what is actually on offer, what the buildings are like, who turns up, and how services are advertised. Many of the recommendations made in the final report came as a direct result of speaking to service users. For example, the provision of English language classes

was raised by a number of parents at both the Ann Tayler and Stamford Hill centre visits.

- The Commission was given expert advice and support throughout this review by Kate Brown from The Learning Trust, for which Members wish to record their gratitude.

Findings and recommendations



Two major themes were identified through this review. Firstly the absence of robust, unified data for the quality, use and cost of services for children aged 0-5. The absence of figures, tables and charts in the Commission's final report is partly a reflection of the limited evidence that was available to Members throughout the review. While progress has been made through the implementation of a new IT system, the Commission remains concerned about the overall picture of performance, and the responsiveness of Children's Centres services to their local communities.

The second major theme which emerged was the integrated service provision from various public, voluntary and private providers. The 'hub and spoke' model for Children's Centres, based on six strategic areas, offers parents easy access to a number of universal services. The Commission identified several

key partners which could benefit from better awareness of, and involvement in, Children's Centres, such as Housing Services and General Practitioners. In addition to organisational partners, Members were particularly interested in the issue of parental involvement, and whether the Children's Act 2006 requirements for specific input in the planning and delivery of services in Children's Centres, are being achieved.

Other themes identified included the progress made in reaching out to disadvantaged groups, who are typically less likely to use services. The evidence also prompted interest from Members regarding the awareness within early years services of a Councillor's role; the implications of the 'Healthcare for London' proposals, the establishment of polyclinics and the importance of retaining and nurturing the early years workforce.

Tackling worklessness

Routes to employment for those in receipt of long term inactive benefits

Community Safety and Social Inclusion
Scrutiny Commission

Councillor
Oguzkanli

Chair



Why?

Hackney has one of the largest proportions of people in this country claiming Incapacity Benefit for mental or behavioural disorders and has three times the national average of schizophrenia sufferers. 'Reducing poverty and supporting residents into sustainable employment and promoting employment opportunities' is also one of the six overarching goals of Hackney's Sustainable Community Strategy. The Commission decided to focus on one major review this year which would look at how to better assist residents on long term 'inactive benefits' back into employment. This review reflected a national concern about this issue which has led to the Welfare Reform Bill 2008/09 currently going through Parliament. By finding ways to help this group the Commission felt it could begin to make some in-roads into the problem locally. It also aimed to improve the quality of life for these residents and the life chances of their children.

The recent welfare reforms have abolished Incapacity Benefit and replaced it with the new tougher regime of Employment and Support Allowance. In addition, the age thresholds for receipt of childcare related Income Support have been lowered and the effects of both of these reforms will

be widely felt locally. The Commission also wanted to pursue further issues which had arisen during its two previous reviews, 'Supporting Socially Excluded Adults' and the 'Growing a Local Economy'.

How?

The Commission heard evidence from a wide range of officers across the Council as well as from officers from the Primary Care Trust, the Mental Health Trust, City & Hackney Mind and in particular from Jobcentre Plus and its agency, Work Directions.

A key element in Hackney's response to the problem of worklessness has been the City Strategy Pathfinder project, which the Commission examined in detail. This pilot programme involves the Council working closely with Registered Social Landlords to identify residents who would benefit from training and support to find a job. It is locally focussed and locally based and Members made a site visit to the Pembury Estate to view some of the projects in action. They met with residents benefiting from the scheme as well as the providers and managers of the programme. The Commission was particularly impressed by the innovative approaches to recruitment

used by the agency Talent, which is succeeding in placing people who had been long removed from the labour market into employment.

The Commission also wanted to hear first hand from residents. This was not an easy task considering residents were sensitive about giving information to the Council about their medical conditions and benefits status. It decided to employ an independent consultation company called Continental Research to carry out focus groups with local residents, which took place at a research facility in Old Street. The residents were carefully recruited by the agency to detailed sample briefs and all took part anonymously. These anonymous focus groups proved invaluable and the Members heard from people who are balancing managing their conditions with the requirements of the new and tougher benefits regime.

Findings

The Commission learned in detail about some of the regional and sub-regional approaches to worklessness and about the City Strategy Pathfinder programme. It also explored in detail with Job Centre Plus and Work Directions how the welfare reforms were playing out locally, and members discussed the public health implications of worklessness with health professionals. Members also discussed the new Skills for Employment Strategy with the Co-Chair of the Economic Development Sub Partnership of Team Hackney. As the review concluded, the government published the Houghton Review on worklessness which echoed a number of the Commission's own recommendations.

Recommendations

During the course of the review, the country entered into recession; a fact which will no doubt impact greatly on how the nine recommendations can be implemented. The Commission expressed particular concern that Job Centre Plus and its agencies do not, in this new context, lose focus on the need to continue supporting those furthest from the labour market.

The Commission noted that a number of its recommendations will require a regional or sub-regional response and therefore it is requesting the Mayor to lobby on a number of specific points as part of the proposed Multi Area Agreement with the other four Olympic boroughs. It also expressed its full support for the continuation of the City Strategy Pathfinder programme and made a number of recommendations aimed at JobCentre Plus, which it hopes can be progressed via the Economic Development Partnership.

The Commission was most impressed by the work of Work Directions in supporting incapacity benefit claimants back to work and made recommendations to drive greater take-up of their services. It also fully supports the proposal for a Public Sector Human Resources Action Group to do more on apprenticeships and on recruiting locally.

Finally the Commission hopes that its findings will inform the Council's larger 'Cross Cutting Review on Worklessness' which is just about to begin looking at the 'bigger picture'.



Childhood obesity

Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

Councillor
J McShane

Chair



Why?

Growing concern about the prevalence of child obesity led the Department of Health to launch the national child measurement programme for 4-5 year olds and 10-11 year olds. Data was published suggesting a much higher percentage of children in Hackney are overweight or obese. The Commission commenced a review of the current work undertaken to tackle obesity in the borough. It sought to understand the role and impact of current prevention methods, the national agenda and partnership working.

How?

The Childhood Obesity review commenced in July 2008 with background information from the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) local team about the guidance issued on how to tackle childhood obesity, work of the Government, health risks associated with obesity and the local picture. Evidence was received from a range of stakeholders including statutory health partners, voluntary sector organisations, The Learning Trust and Hackney Council's planning and transport services. In addition, Members carried out site visits and held discussions with

parents/carers to find out about the challenges families face in eating and living healthily.

Findings

From the review, the Commission noted the first step in addressing childhood obesity was recognition of the scale of the problem. Data collected showed that a large proportion of children in Hackney are overweight as they enter school for the first time and have the second highest overweight rate for year six. Over 40 per cent of Hackney's children are either overweight or obese at age ten.

The review uncovered multiple work-streams which included work by the health trusts, the Council and voluntary sector organisations (either directly by health trusts or commissioned through the Local Strategic Partnership) to tackle the issue of childhood obesity in Hackney. The Commission Members were not satisfied that there was sufficient clarity about the methods which would be used to capture the knowledge gained and results achieved from these projects in order to identify successes.

The review identified the need for a strategy which covered policies for early years, schools, food, sport and physical activity, planning, transport and health services. It was revealed from conducting the review that sympathy and understanding would not be enough to establish the radical culture shift the Commission believes is required; which means everybody must do their part to effect a change in lifestyle.

Recommendations



From the review, it appeared that the causes of childhood obesity are complex and an effective response must involve partnership working. Local services would need to identify any obesity hotspot areas, so that interventions can be targeted. Recommendations centred on the need for a single strategy covering multiple policy areas including early years, schools, food, sport and physical activity, planning, transport and health services, the use of health impact assessments for future transport and planning policy developments and the need for an agreed monitoring framework to track success of service provision to tackle childhood obesity.



Healthcare for London Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee Review Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

Councillor
J McShane

Chair



The first Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) for London was established with the largest membership ever seen for a scrutiny review. Thirty five members from all 33 London boroughs and bordering councils of Essex and Surrey came together to consider the proposals for changes to healthcare services in London by Lord Ara Darzi.

This review was conducted without a dedicated budget, the work was done on goodwill by all boroughs. It elected a Chairman and two Vice Chairmen and established an officer support group to provide support for North West, North East, North Central, South East and South West London (based on the old Strategic Health Authorities' structure). Hackney's Overview and Scrutiny officer for health rose to the challenge and represented North East London to form part of the key officer support group, giving quality advice and support whilst still continuing to support the local Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission. Hackney's officer supporting the JOSC soon began to provide direction and steer for the JOSC officer support group.

Why?

Lord Ara Darzi conducted a review for government of the NHS in London and presented a case for change, in order to meet the demands of the population in the next ten years and beyond. In response there was a statutory obligation for all of London's health scrutiny committees to be consulted on these proposals.



How?

The JOSC took evidence in meetings held in various boroughs across London where it heard from a variety of stakeholders covering the following areas:

- Context of the healthcare for London review, next steps and plans for consultation and engagement with stakeholders.
- Background to and rationale behind 'Healthcare for London'.
- An independent view of healthcare for London and the way forward for the JOSC.
- Partnerships, infrastructure and economics.
- Local authorities and social care.
- Primary, secondary and specialist care.
- Access, accessibility, equalities, public health and further evidence on primary, secondary and specialist care.
- Health inequalities impact assessments for healthcare for London.
- End of life care.

Findings

The proposals presented amounted to a vision for future NHS service provision but not a detailed strategy or plan. In the review, the JOSC identified that limited consideration had been given to mental health, children's services and the impact of changes in the NHS on social care. Further work is being conducted as a result of these gaps having been highlighted. There were no detailed proposals about the implications for NHS estates and finances from the review.

A recurring theme throughout the review was the need to ensure that reforms improved the accessibility of healthcare services and physical access to facilities. The review highlighted the need for effective partnership with local authorities as the distinction between health and social care becomes increasingly blurred. Local consultations were conducted by Primary Care Trusts and the JOSC noted that these consultation processes had varied in each case.

Recommendations

Broadly, recommendations focused on issues that caused the Committee concern such as financing the proposals and their impact on social care, whilst also highlighting areas where further work is required. The full report is available on www.londoncouncils.gov.uk



Overcrowding

Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

Councillor
Odze

Chairman



Why?

The Commission was eager to consider one of the housing problems in the borough. In 2001, Hackney had the third highest rate of severe overcrowding in Britain, with its social rented sector particularly affected (as elsewhere in London). In a densely-populated borough and in a period of economic downturn, the Council needs to find creative ways to tackle overcrowding.



How?

The Commission received presentations from officers in various divisions across the Council, to understand the nature of the problem locally and nationally. This work included looking at the definition of overcrowding from the 'Bedroom Standard', the demographics of those affected, current Government policy, and related Council initiatives. These focused on the options for maximising the number of local family-sized homes available, by supporting moves to less densely-populated regions for residents who are currently under-occupying their council property and prioritising severely overcrowded families on the Housing Register.

Information was also received about policies which aim to increase the supply of affordable housing, Council work to decrease the number of empty homes in the borough, and an understanding of the health and social impacts of overcrowding.

The Commission was also eager to gain an understanding of the quality of housing advice and tenancy options offered to residents, particularly those who had not previously approached the Council. It was decided that the best way to understand

this would be to ask professional mystery shoppers to complete an exercise gauging the customer services and quality of advice. A report on this exercise produced by the consultants will be considered by the Commission in June, and the results will form part of the final report.

Emerging Findings

The Council is due to produce a strategy to combat overcrowding in June 2009, and the Commission is expecting the opportunity to comment and advise on it before it is approved by Cabinet.

Initial findings suggest that the Council is taking the issue of overcrowding seriously with severe overcrowding listed in the second-highest priority banding on the Housing Register, the production of a strategy to alleviate the problem, and extra funding allocated through this year's budget.

It was also learned that the Council will receive a grant from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) of £130,000 for 2009/10, to continue the positive work being completed to alleviate overcrowding. The grant should be used to address severely overcrowded households in the social stock, under-occupiers who are looking to downsize, better use of the private rented sector, ongoing participation in the DCLG's data collection, and increased partnership working with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

The Commission learned that training had been provided to various outlets (such as voluntary organisations and libraries) to help residents to use the Choice Based Letting system, which allocates social housing. This support is provided flexibly to small groups, and the Commission has suggested that this be offered to all Members as excellent support to their ward work. This is yet to be formally agreed by the Members Services Advisory Group, who co-ordinate Members training.

The Commission found that the Council was experiencing difficulties in receiving data from some RSLs with the housing details of all RSL tenants, hindering attempts to alleviate overcrowding. The Commission also wanted further information about how best to influence a National Bedroom Standard, and a shared approach to referring overcrowded families to the Council by local charities and support groups.

The Mayoral Model

Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission

Councillor
Chapman

Chair



Why?

Hackney introduced a Mayor and Cabinet model of leadership in 2002. The borough is now more than halfway through a second term under this system, the merits of which continue to be debated at a national level. This review is also timely because it links to other projects being undertaken within the Council responding to the recommendations of a national Councillors Commission in 2008.



This review focused on the operation of the Elected Mayor model itself, and is not an assessment or commentary on Mayor Jules Pipe. The subject was chosen by Members of the Commission so that they might take a view on a number of issues, including:

- the impact a mayoral system has had on the authority's recent performance;
- its implications on the leadership of Hackney;
- the impact of the constitutional settlement on all elected Members; and
- approaches to support and models of engagement for all Councillors in their many roles.

How?

The Commission has considered evidence for this review at three meetings to date. The information covered includes:

- Comments from the Audit Commission on Hackney's performance over the last nine years, with reference to leadership, and political party views on the Mayoral Model.
- Discussion with a representative of the Local Government Information Unit on its publication "Frontline Councillors".

- Arrangements for supporting Councillors within the authority and plans for improving the service in future.
- A survey of all Councillors regarding the impact of the Mayoral Model on their many roles and the way in which current structures affect their ability to influence decision-making.
- National views on the effectiveness of a mayoral system from Professor George Jones of the London School of Economics.
- An invitation to make comparisons with the neighbouring Borough of Newham, which has also adopted the Mayoral Model.

This review will conclude early in the next municipal year when its findings and recommendations will be put forward to Cabinet and Council.



Child and adolescent mental health services

Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission

Councillor
Taylor

Chair



Why?

The review topic was proposed in early 2008 as a key issue of Member interest. The topic, in part, arises from the Commission's 2007-08 review, *Youth and Crime: Prevention and Early Intervention*, as it was felt there had not been time to sufficiently consider mental health issues and their impact on young people's lives during the course of that review.

This was the Commission's second review of 2008/09 and so its investigative work did not commence until the beginning of 2009. This schedule proved timely as a national review of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) was published by Government in November 2008. The research for this national work had included nine 'practice visits', including to Hackney, and the borough was praised indirectly for its services. This provided the Commission with an opportunity to test the extent to which the service, and its new three-year strategy, addresses national findings, local priorities, and any issues raised by the Commission's earlier work.

How?

The Commission has held four public meetings at which it has examined various aspects of the CAMHS service. In January 2009, Members were given an introduction to the service by lead officers from the Council. From this they were able to identify topics that might warrant further investigation. These have included:

- Prevention and early intervention, including details of current projects being conducted to support and guide staff in universal settings (i.e. schools), regarding mental ill health.
- Definitions of mental ill health from lead clinicians.
- Designing and delivering services that are appropriate and responsive to particular community needs.
- Learning lessons from other boroughs, including hearing from colleagues at the Tavistock and Portman Trust in Camden.
- Hearing from local voluntary and community sector organisations regarding their provision of mental health and related services.
- The impact of cannabis use on mental health, its prevalence amongst young people and their attitudes towards it.
- A national perspective of CAMHS from the national charity, Young Minds.

Findings and recommendations



The Commission is due to reach its conclusions in summer 2009. Its final report, including findings and recommendations, is scheduled for completion in July 2009.



2. Progress on recommendations from reviews from previous years

In order to ensure that recommendations arising from previous in-depth reviews are followed up and implemented, each Commission receives regular updates on progress. Examples of this monitoring are shown below.

Team Hackney

Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission

Team Hackney is Hackney's Local Strategic Partnership and brings together key people from organisations across Hackney to agree and deliver goals that will improve the local area. In 2007/08 the Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission completed a review making a number of recommendations to the partnership. To date Members have received updates on two of those recommendations:

Mainstreaming

The Commission asked how many short term projects that receive initial funding from the Partnership are extended and become permanent projects, requiring funding from Team Hackney's core budget. This is called 'mainstreaming'. In its report, Team Hackney gave detailed responses relating to three key areas which have received initial funding from the Partnership: infant mortality; worklessness; and guns and gangs. We found a varied approach:

- 20 per cent of the infant mortality programme has been mainstreamed by the City and Hackney Primary Care Trust to date
- the worklessness project, known as the 'City Strategy Pathfinder' is a more complex example, as the main funding body is the Department for Work and

Pensions. Team Hackney is exploring ways to influence government policy to ensure that the excellent work delivered by this project can continue

- examples were also given of funding of other projects which had proved less successful and as a result funding has been discontinued.

In receiving this update Members posed challenging questions to provide assurance that: funding is directed at projects which relate strongly to Hackney's needs; projects are stopped if they cannot demonstrate value; there is an appropriate harmony with regional and national priorities; and that the voluntary sector has a fair chance to access such funding.

Neighbourhoods and locality working

Another of the Commission's recommendations concerned the opportunities available for non-executive Councillors to engage with Team Hackney at a neighbourhood or ward level. A report was submitted to the Commission outlining a number of ways in which these might be addressed, including:

- a pilot project responding to the recommendations of the Roberts Commission on barriers to being a Councillor;
- the viability of creating new political structures at neighbourhood or ward level;
- Overview and Scrutiny's potential to provide a means of influence for non-executive Councillors; and

- examples of devolved working and decision-making.

Members were concerned that the update report signalled a lack of political will to revitalise structures for engagement at a neighbourhood level. It was concluded that the Commission would return to this area and is now doing so as part of its current review into the impact of the Mayor and Cabinet model of leadership in Hackney.

Youth and crime: prevention and early intervention

Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission

A number of specific recommendations resulted from this review and the Commission is already beginning to see benefits of encouraging progress in particular areas. To date Members have heard responses in relation to two areas: the Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) service; and the use of restorative approaches in favour of school exclusions.

The Careers IAG service has conducted an audit of its services and has been the subject of a Service Improvement Review. Changes made as a result of this work have led to an interim report from Ofsted describing the service as 'excellent'.

Changing approaches to the use of exclusions in schools have seen even more remarkable improvements for young people. In its review the Commission had reflected on the correlation between external exclusion and youth crime, and so had recommended further work on reducing the use of exclusion

in schools. An update was provided to Members in November 2008 which described pilot projects being delivered in six Hackney schools to use restorative approaches, rather than exclusions. Restorative approaches are an alternative to punitive approaches when there is a breakdown in relationships. It is a form of mediation which aims to mend and repair a relationship so that, for example, a teacher and student might continue to work together. Possible types of restoration range from a short conversation to a whole family network conference: the focus of any such intervention would be to repair the relationship.

Three of the six schools involved in the pilot projects and in receipt of training were secondary schools, which saw reductions in the use of exclusion between 50-67 per cent. Schools that were not involved in the pilot project saw up to a 30 per cent increase in the number of exclusions.

Members were encouraged by this progress and sought reassurance that restorative practices could be expanded to other schools across the borough. Officers from The Learning Trust assured Members that the training provider is working continuously with schools to help embed the learning.

Supporting socially excluded adults

Community Safety and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Commission

In November, the Commission received updates on the recommendations of this review, which it published in March 2008. It focused, in particular, on four

client groups: care leavers, offenders under probation supervision, adults with secondary mental health problems, and adults with moderate to severe learning disabilities. The cross-cutting nature of this review required responses from nearly all Council directorates; and officers from Supporting People, Housing Needs and Older People's Provision attended the Commission to provide verbal updates.

The Commission was pleased to hear that good progress was being made on most of the 15 recommendations, which covered such diverse areas as the operation of rent deposit schemes; the operation of the Hackney Choice Based Lettings system; the use of referral protocols with supported housing providers for single homeless; optimising volunteering opportunities in London 2012; and the remodelling of services for offenders. It noted that the roll out of the 'dual diagnosis' project for clients with both drug and alcohol issues had experienced delays because of staffing issues but would continue to be funded into 2010.

Members were concerned at slow progress on the 'Valuing People' pilot project, which was a scheme to encourage the employment of those with learning disabilities into appropriate posts in the Council. The Commission asked for a further report on this which it received in February 2009 and it was glad to note the issue would now be championed by the Learning Disabilities Employment Partnership.

Registered Social Landlords – estate management

Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

The Commission noted the corporate response to last year's review of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and Estate Management, which made four recommendations relating to information storage and sharing, production of a common standard across all housing partners in relation to addressing anti-social behaviour (ASB), and identification of lead agencies for a given policy area whether across the borough or in a given neighbourhood or area. It also supported a previous scrutiny review relating to *Safer Neighbourhoods*, which asked the Safer Cleaner Partnership Board (part of Team Hackney) to rationalise the number of local agencies engaged in alleviating ASB.

The Executive was broadly supportive of these recommendations, accepting all four and recognising the need to address some of the issues that are related to Housing Management on multi-landlord estates. The response also refers to a growing recognition amongst social housing providers that information sharing and partnership working is key to improving the quality of life of residents of the borough.

The recommendations from this review will be revisited to prepare for the joint scrutiny review of ASB and Estate Safety, in September 2009.

Council licensing policy and its Special Policy Area

Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

This Scrutiny review of the Council Licensing Policy took place during the Council-wide review of the Special Policy Area (SPA), so most of our recommendations were incorporated in it. The review endorsed the retention of the SPA in Shoreditch as proposed within the borough's draft Licensing Policy 2007, as well as the general approach and manner by which the borough seeks to regularly review and discuss the implementation of its policy with its partners, residents and the trade.

The review produced seven recommendations, which the Executive responded to in September 2008. The report suggested (among other things) that any review of the Licensing Policy should begin up to a year in advance, that the Council should develop a coherent and comprehensive approach to managing the consequences of the smoking ban on public spaces, fuller exploration of a locally developed partnership framework designed to support and manage the consequences of the licensed trade, and consideration of creating a taxi rank in an appropriate zone and away from residential areas. All these recommendations were agreed by the Executive.

Dignity in care: Older People's Services

Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

The dignity in care review aimed to raise awareness of the local services available

to older people and to provide a platform for the voices of older people. During the review the Commission found that the Older People Reference Group had developed a 'dignity code', which provided broad principles and very specific steps that should be taken to ensure dignity is maintained. The Commission encouraged partners to adopt the 'dignity code'. We are pleased that health partners now include the 'dignity code' in service contracts and we were subsequently very pleased to learn that the Primary Care Trust won a London Health and Social Care Award for the implementation of the code.

Measles and immunisation

Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

In response to growing public concern among local residents about two serious measles outbreaks within the borough the Commission conducted a review. The review helped to dispel an assumption that low take-up was associated with the discredited link between MMR and autism. The Commission found that a combination of factors affected take-up including high population mobility, provision of inconsistent information and weak data systems. Recommendations included reminding parents about childhood immunisations on entry to school, encouraging all health trusts and partners to work together to provide a consistent message and, in the absence of a satisfactory IT system, encouraging the PCT to use the GP immunisation data to help identify immunisation gaps and increase immunisation uptake in the borough.

3. Holding The Executive to account

The Board reviews the Council's 'Forward Plan' on a quarterly basis and, along with the Scrutiny Commissions, it also fulfils its role of holding the executive to account and influencing policy in the following ways:

Call-In

One of the main responsibilities of Overview & Scrutiny is to make sure that the Cabinet is effectively discharging its powers. In order to do this, Scrutiny Councillors have the right to question

Cabinet decisions. This is known as a 'Call-in'. After four years when no Call-ins were made two Cabinet decisions were called-in in April and July of last year.

How a Call-In works

A Cabinet decision comes into force and may then be implemented, five working days after its publication, unless at least five members of the Council object and wish to call it in. A Call-in request is made to the Council's Monitoring Officer who, if it complies with the rules, will Call-in a decision for scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Board (OSB). The Mayor and Cabinet will be alerted. The item is then placed on the next Overview and Scrutiny Board agenda or alternatively, a special meeting of the Board may be called to address the item.

Decisions can be called-in if five non-Executive Members have evidence which suggests that the decision is not in accordance with the principles in the Constitution, contrary to the Council's policy framework, not in accordance with the Council's budget, if the Executive has failed to consider relevant evidence when taking a decision or if the decision would not be in the interest of the borough's residents and a preferable alternative decision could be adopted.

Parks strategy Call-In

In April 2008 the OSB heard a Call-in of the decision of the Cabinet on 31 March 2008 on "Social Spaces – a Strategy for Parks in Hackney". The concern of the signatories to the Call-in was lack of due regard to consultation and the format in which the engagement had taken place. It was noted for example that the Parks User Groups had expressed concern that they had not been given sufficient time to respond to the consultation. OSB heard from the Members requesting the Call-in, the relevant officers and from the Chairman of the Hackney Parks Forum. After a lengthy debate Members voted to reject the Call-in but agreed that a reference be made to Cabinet requesting more detailed consultation on the make-up and membership of the proposed Green Spaces Forum and that OSB be given a timetable for this activity.

Floating support for older people Call-In

In July the OSB heard a Call-in of a decision of Cabinet in June relating to the procurement of a 'Floating Support' service for older people in Hackney. This new system of housing related personalised support for vulnerable older people would help them to maintain independent living in their own homes. As well as hearing from the Members who requested the Call-in and from the key officers concerned from both the Council and the PCT, Board members discussed the proposals with a number of representatives of older people service users, who expressed a range of concerns about this change of service provision. After a lengthy debate Members voted not to formally refer the matter to Cabinet but instead made a Reference detailing how the proposals could be strengthened and how communication could be improved. The Board also requested a full progress report after six months. In March 2009 the Board then considered a detailed report on the implementation of the new service which responded in detail to each of the Board's points.

Performance monitoring: quarterly performance information

The Board continues to monitor quarterly performance information on an exceptions basis, to ensure a focus on areas in need of attention. OSB Members question Cabinet Members and Corporate Directors in particular on areas showing up as 'red' or 'amber' in performance data. The Mayor and/or Cabinet Members and Corporate Directors attend these meetings to give answers to Members' questions and to provide details of measures being taken to address any under-performance. This year the Board has spent a significant amount of time pursuing detailed responses to issues which have arisen from the quarterly performance information.

Directorate Question Time on 'Climate Change'

Directorate Question Time was introduced two years ago to ensure that, over the course of the year, Board Members had opportunity to review activity across all directorates, giving them the chance to explore the Council's current performance and future aims in relation to a selected area of policy.

This year the Board focussed on 'Climate Change' as its overarching theme, offering Members an overview of how this challenge is being addressed. Members explored in detail, with officers from each Directorate in turn, how the climate change agenda was impacting on

a whole range of frontline services and the Board requested follow up briefings where necessary e.g. from the Children and Young People Directorate on the 'sustainable schools agenda'.

As this remains a developing policy area, the Board recognised that while it was offered an insight into a number of bespoke approaches pursued by various directorates in reducing carbon use, significant potential existed to develop a stronger and more coherent corporate approach.

We found that the more significant examples of successes in this area tend to relate to significant capital schemes and the operational activity that follows such investments e.g. the London Fields Lido, Clissold Leisure Centre and the development of 1 Hillman Street. The biggest challenges facing the borough in this area however continue to be how Members and Senior Officers can embed the necessary culture change with our employees and the local population to make a difference. We believe that it is only through such behavioural change that sustained improvements can be realised and we hope to witness a significant increase in focus in this area following the adoption of a 'Climate Change Strategy' for the borough.

Next year, the Board will continue to fulfil its role in assessing and challenging performance, taking into account the operation of partnership working in Hackney. It is proposed to replace the 'Directorate Question Time' with 'Partnership Question Time' and to focus

on the borough's high level Strategic Policy Framework which includes the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement. This approach will contribute to an assessment of how the borough will fare under the Audit Commission's new 'Comprehensive Area Assessment' inspection regime. Each meeting will focus on one of the six themes in the Sustainable Community Strategy and will include input and presentations from the relevant thematic partnership of Team Hackney, our LSP.

The Budget and Corporate Plan

In February, the Board received copies of the Council Budget and Corporate Plan for 2009/10 prior to deliberations by Cabinet and Council. Cabinet Members, the Chief Executive and other senior officers attended the meeting to answer questions and receive feedback from the Board Members. The Board acknowledged the recent achievements such as the three star rating from the Audit Commission, no increase in Council tax or no cuts in Council services and the 72 per cent overall satisfaction rating coming from the statutory 'Place Survey' of residents. The Board also examined the priority corporate programme for the next three years as outlined in the Corporate Plan. Members asked a number of questions on the impact of the economic downturn on the Council's reserves and investments and on its ability to meet LAA targets in the new climate.

Renewing Hackney's Sustainable Community Strategy

The Board had a preliminary briefing in June on the process of refreshing Hackney's Sustainable Community Strategy and returned to it in November when it reviewed a final draft of the document. The Board asked for further detail on the consultation undertaken and the plans for promoting the document to residents as well as for clarification on the definition of 'affordable housing' as used in the document. The Sustainable Community Strategy was published in February and will be kept live by six-monthly 'cross cutting reviews' on particular themes in the strategy.

Equalities briefing

The Board considered the Centre for Public Scrutiny's report "Equal to the Task" which explained how scrutiny could involve itself more in championing the importance of equalities in service delivery based around the four principles of good scrutiny. This was an opportunity for the Board to examine the operation of the various statutory equality duties in the Council, and to hear about the work being done to achieve 'Level 4' of the Equality Standard for Local Government. Level 4 focuses on "information systems in place and monitoring against targets". It was confirmed by peer assessment that the Council had achieved Level 3 of the Standard in September 2008.

Revising the remits of the Commissions

The Board revised the remits of the Commissions in response to changes to Council directorates and Team Hackney sub partnerships, and in light of legislation which requires additional capacity for scrutiny of the local 'Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership' (CDRP). Hackney's CDRP is the Safer Cleaner Partnership of Team Hackney and the new remits included designating Community Safety and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Commission as the 'crime and disorder scrutiny committee' for the borough. This required a name change from its old title of Regeneration and Social Inclusion. The changes also mean Community Safety and Social Inclusion's remit continues to include economic regeneration, while Living in Hackney takes on physical regeneration (housing and public realm). The functional operations of the Chief Executive's department will also now come under Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission.

Hackney Homes delivery plan

The Board considered an update on the Hackney Homes Delivery Plan 2007-09. Under its agreement with the Council, Hackney Homes (Hackney's arms length management organisation or ALMO) must submit a delivery plan to the Council each year and OSB took on the task of examining this report in detail. The Board questioned the Chief Executive and

senior officers and requested additional information on areas of concern such as the leaseholder buy-back scheme for residents of Woodberry Down. It was noted that Hackney Homes was just about to be inspected by the Audit Commission and subsequently it was announced in February that it had achieved the two star rating it was seeking. Members were pleased that this allowed significant additional funds to be released to Hackney Homes to fully implement its Decent Homes programme.

Support and backing from a national charity

Shelter, the national housing and homelessness charity, met with the Overview and Scrutiny team to learn more about a recommendation for greater interaction between Children's Centres and housing services made by the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Commission in its report on '0-5 years Services'.

Whilst making a contribution to a separate scrutiny review on overcrowding, officers from Shelter learned about the related work on services for children aged 0-5 and took interest as it is a national priority area for the charity. Shelter's representatives were very supportive of the Children and Young People Commission's recommendation that housing services be represented on the strategic boards for Children's Centres.

Having met the team, Shelter's Regional Children's Co-ordinator plans to encourage other overview & scrutiny committees in London and the south east to undertake

similar work, with Hackney's precedent being cited as an example of good practice from which others can learn.

Children's Trust arrangements

In February 2003, the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Commission considered the consultation on proposals for developing Hackney's Children's Trust.

Hackney must, by law, have Children's Trust arrangements in place. Interim arrangements have existed since 2007, which have developed strongly. The proposals put forward do not represent any radical change but build on recommendations made recently in a report from the Audit Commission, called 'Are We There Yet?'

The lead Member for Children's Services and the Director of Partnership presented the proposals to Members of the Commission, which was largely supportive of the approach but keen to ensure that appropriate relationships exist between the Trust and the Scrutiny Commission. It was felt that ensuring proper public accountability for the partnership was vital. A statement highlighting scrutiny's role has been added to the proposal and further discussions are planned which will provide more detail on how the Trust and Commission can best work together in future.

Scrutiny of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

Hackney's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) is the 'Safer Cleaner Partnership Board' of Team Hackney. It is jointly chaired by the Borough Commander and the Chief Executive of the Council and includes all the stakeholders involved in community safety. Under the Police and Justice Act 2006, the Council has now had to designate a 'crime and disorder scrutiny committee' which will have a duty to scrutinise the operation of the local CDRP. Partly in anticipation of these new powers, Full Council revised the remits of the Commissions in June 2008 and the Community Safety and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Commission (CSSI) was designated as Hackney's CDRP Scrutiny Committee. The Commission prepared for its new duties by receiving briefings about the Safer Cleaner Partnership Board and its work in September and discussed community safety priorities with the Co-Chair of the partnership and the Cabinet Member. It also continued with its work of scrutinising community safety issues such as street drinking and anti-social behaviour and requesting progress reports on previous scrutiny reviews in this area such as the 'Safer Neighbourhoods' review.

Following a long delay in their publication, the regulations for CDRP scrutiny have finally been published and they came into force on 30 April, 2009. The Commission now has powers to request community safety partners to attend meetings and respond to recommendations. Commission

members welcomed the very positive engagement received so far from members of Safer Cleaner Partnership Board and look forward to working closely with them on this policy agenda.

Street drinking and anti-social behaviour

Following on from a Member Enquiry from a Commission Member, the CSSI Commission agreed to request a briefing from the Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) on the issue of anti-social behaviour and street drinking and heard from the City and Hackney Alcohol Service, a local voluntary organisation working in this field. The Commission learned about the scale of the problem and about successful interventions from elsewhere, such as the possibility of introducing a borough-wide DPPO (designated public place order) which would give police additional powers to confiscate alcohol from those engaged in drink related anti-social behaviour. The Commission will receive the forthcoming Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy and to undertake pre-decision scrutiny on any proposed consultation on a borough wide controlled drinking zone.

Annual Health Check process

The Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission has a unique role in scrutiny in that it is involved in the performance review of local health trusts in the borough (City and Hackney Teaching NHS Primary Care

Trust, East London NHS Foundation Trust, and Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust). The Commission receives the self assessment declaration from each Trust, whose senior managers then attend Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission meetings where any areas of concern can be examined in greater depth.

Keeping the streets clean

As part of the Living in Hackney (LiH) Commission's ongoing interest in the service improvement review, a briefing paper was provided to it with the latest information. It was explained that this was the last year of the existing best value performance indicators (BVPIs), and noted that whilst physical cleaning was important, enforcement and public education were also key. Officers noted that they appreciated the opportunity to meet with Members and discuss this in a public forum, allowing greater accountability for their performance.

The Commission requested more information following the presentation, particularly relating to how the service raises public awareness of litter issues. The Commission has agreed to continue receiving updates relating to this review.

Enforcement Strategy

The LiH Commission received a draft copy of the Council's new Enforcement Strategy at its meeting in October, and took the opportunity to provide comment and suggest amendments which helped to shape the final version. The strategy covers

all services responsible for enforcement of local environmental quality delivered within the Safer Neighbourhoods Division, with the exception of Parking Services. Members were particularly interested in issues of noise, dog fouling and licensing publicity.

The Commission is awaiting an update on the suggestions they made, but this has been deferred due to a delay in producing the strategy. This will now be received in the new municipal year.

Markets Strategy

The LiH Commission has continued its interest in the way the Council supports and regulates the borough's markets, following the review completed in 2006/07. Members received a useful update from the new team responsible for the markets strategy in the Neighbourhoods & Regeneration directorate, which provided a more corporate approach to the analysis needed to consider how markets should be provided locally.

Following significant input to this area in the past, Members were broadly supportive of the new approach, and have agreed to keep a watching brief on development of the markets study and subsequent strategy.

Leaseholder buy-back scheme

The Board asked the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission to review a report relating to the Woodberry Down interim schedule of works and the leaseholder

buy-back scheme. The Commission noted that the basis of the leaseholder buyback initiative was that the Council offers to repurchase properties on a voluntary basis at market value, with resident leaseholders gaining an extra 10 per cent on top of market value, and non-resident leaseholders gaining 7.5 per cent. The Commission supported this initiative. It was also noted that all leaseholders get £5,000 towards disturbance costs, regardless of whether they were a resident in the property. Officers confirmed that this was not a statutory obligation and the Commission questioned the offer, as non-residents would not be disturbed by a move.

There was lively debate with submissions from residents affected by the development, after which the Commission concluded that the schemes should be supported. They did however question the £5,000 disturbance payment to non-resident leaseholders, and following discussion with the relevant Cabinet Member it has been agreed that this aspect be reviewed as part of the wider leaseholder strategy, due to be agreed by Cabinet in the near future.

Compulsory recycling

The LiH Commission learned that Hackney was the second borough in London to introduce compulsory recycling, and that others have duly followed. Recycling rates were reviewed (outlining the increases since the introduction of compulsory recycling and accompanying publicity campaign). At the time of receiving the update there had been 609 referrals to the Enforcement service.

The Commission also noted discussions at the Scottish Executive's Rural Affairs and Environment Committee which referred to Hackney's source-separated approach to recycling.

Council officers accepted there had been operational issues during the implementation of the compulsory recycling service, but explained that many of these had been resolved through guidance provided to kerbside collections staff.

Tuberculosis

Following a local resident raising serious concerns about the provision of Tuberculosis (TB) services in Hackney, the Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission organised a meeting in June 2008 requesting the attendance of all key health partners and stakeholders involved in the delivery of TB services to discuss the standard of provision in Hackney. Attendees at the meeting included: Joint Director of Public Health; Chairman of the City and Hackney Primary Care Trust (CHtPCT); Chief Executive from Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust; a consultant physician, a TB case worker and TB nurse specialist in respiratory medicine from Homerton Hospital; Head of Environmental and Consumer Protection from Hackney Council; Health Improvement Advisor for TB from CHtPCT and the Council; and a consultant nurse from North East and North Central London Health Protection Unit.

The meeting highlighted some concerns and resulted in the TB working group

for City and Hackney undertaking an audit of 'TB directly observed therapy services', patients' notes and service user experiences. The outcome of this audit will be reported to Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission during 2009/10.

Other items

OSB members also requested detailed briefings on a number of sensitive local issues such as the proposals to narrow Seven Sisters Road from six to four lanes as part of the Woodberry Down Masterplan, and on the enforcement of local Trade Waste Agreements.

4. Feedback - annual residents survey

As in previous years, we surveyed residents and local organisations about the issues that mattered most to them, as a part of the wider decision-making about Commission review topics for 2009/10.

The Consultation and Scrutiny Teams looked at previous research, consultation results, complaints and issues reported in the local media together with information from the Sustainable Community Strategy to put together a list of issues that the public could prioritise. Unlike in previous years, however, respondents were also offered the opportunity to provide qualitative feedback about other issues which they felt should be considered.

Publicity

Members were eager to attract a wide and varied response, and the survey was publicised in a wide variety of ways:

- Hackney Council's newspaper, *Hackney Today* ran a short piece outlining the purpose of the exercise and this was accompanied by a cut out version of the survey, with freepost return address.
- A press release was produced and circulated to local papers such as *Hackney Gazette* (who published an article in January) as well as the various community newspapers.
- Hard copies of the survey were sent to all public-facing receptions, GP surgeries, Neighbourhood Offices and Children's Centres. HCVS promoted it through a weekly newsletter distributed to 700 local groups, and the City & Hackney Health & Social Care Forum (HSCF) weekly e-newsletter also featured the survey.
- The survey was publicised on the front page of the website for the duration of consultation including the online 'have your say' database of Council consultations and the Scrutiny pages, with a link to an online survey.
- Internal promotion was completed over a month via the 'Staff Headlines', a weekly online internal communication tool. All Councillors received an email publicising the survey, and hard copies were made available.
- Finally, the survey was mentioned at all Scrutiny Commission meetings in January, and the four Neighbourhood Forum meetings.

Results

This exercise returned 207 responses in total, with the majority (178) completed online and a further thirty responses from the *Hackney Today* feature or additional publicity.

The following table outlines the most popular topics from the list of 10 issues:

Q1. Please put a tick in the boxes of the top three areas that you think should be looked at:

(Number of respondents: 207)

Answer options	Response per cent	Response count
Making the borough safer and addressing fear of crime	49.8	103
Affordable housing and quality social homes	41.5	86
Keeping Hackney clean	39.6	82
Employment and the local economy	39.1	81
Public transport and traffic congestion	38.6	80
Education services for children and adults	31.4	65
Cultural, sports and leisure facilities	24.2	50
Pride in the community	20.8	43
Services for older people	18.4	38
The local health service	16.9	35

The open response section of the survey generated large number of responses covering a wide range of themes and topics. Broadly, the question “which particular issue that you would like us to look at more closely?” received the most responses for transport, keeping Hackney clean/recycling, and crime, safety, enforcement & anti-social behaviour, with the most popular topics including better provision for cycling & walking, more focus on litter, and traffic congestion. The question “tell us about any area, issue or

policy that is not included in the list but is important to you?” also drew responses which reflected the original list with more specific topics including provision for cycling, more facilities for young people, and expanding & enhancing Hackney’s green spaces also mentioned.

All the responses have been included in the wider consideration of work programmes of individual Scrutiny Commissions, and have guided the decisions taken for topics listed in section six (page 46).

have **your** say

What matters most to you in Hackney?

The borough's Scrutiny Councillors need to know your views.

From prevention of crime, to traffic, to health and education, we want to know what your top priorities are, as part of an annual survey to shape the next year's Scrutiny agenda.

Scrutiny Commissions are made up of Councillors who work across party political lines to investigate issues of local concern, and they need to know what Hackney residents want to see reviewed from June this year.

Good Scrutiny plays an important role in the development of better policies and improving performance, and can hold the Council and outside agencies to account, including police and the health service.

Last year's residents' survey put prevention of crime at the top of the list, and so the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Commission investigated ways of preventing young people from getting involved in crime.

To take part in the anonymous survey, visit www.hackney.gov.uk/scrutiny-residents-survey, email scrutiny@hackney.gov.uk, or contact 020 8356 3341.



Survey

1. Please put a tick in the box of the top three areas you think should be looked at.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment and the local economy | <input type="checkbox"/> Making the borough safer and addressing fear of crime |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education services for children and adults | <input type="checkbox"/> Keeping Hackney clean |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Services for Older People | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural, sports and leisure facilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable housing and quality social homes | <input type="checkbox"/> Pride in the community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The local health service | <input type="checkbox"/> Public transport and traffic congestion |

2. Considering your selection please use the space below to let us know of any particular issue that you would like us to look at more closely.

3. Please use the space below to tell us about any area, issue or policy that is not included in the list (above) but is important to you.

Please cut out this survey and place in an envelope labelled Scrutiny Consultation, FREEPOST, LON18819, 2 Hillman Street, Hackney London E8 1FB

Look out here for feedback on the new programme in April 2009, when a decision on the next set of reviews will have been taken.



PJ9877

The annual residents survey

Review feedback

Each Scrutiny Commission sends feedback questionnaires to all participants of a scrutiny review. The feedback questionnaire was amended in 2006 as agreed by the Board. The new questionnaires were distributed for the scrutiny reviews conducted in 2006/07 and 2007/08.

The number of feedback responses received for 2006/07 was 18, and for 2007/08 rose to 22. The Overview and Scrutiny Team reviews the feedback responses and will continue to look to improve the rate of responses post review.

Responses were broadly positive about scrutiny, and supported the recommendations that were reached following the review. The response rate was somewhat disappointing however and, due to this, it was difficult to get a balanced picture. The highest response rates came from Commission Members closely followed by Council officers, while those with external viewpoints were under-represented, especially external witnesses involved in the scrutiny process for the first or second time. Again, this made it difficult to get an overall picture of satisfaction levels.

5. Public engagement and raising our profile

The Board considers community engagement to be vital to all that it does and indeed the involvement of relevant service users, stakeholders and residents is a real part of everything we do. When scoping our reviews we take time to consider how residents and stakeholders can be effectively engaged.

The scrutiny review reports list the range of often innovative engagement methods we use. We also list here a number of examples of how we have taken a fresh approach to engagement and/or increased the profile of the function.

Focus groups on the impact of the welfare reforms with those in receipt of incapacity benefits

As part of the evidence gathering for the 'Tackling Worklessness' review the Community Safety and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Commission engaged the research company, Continental Research, to carry out focus groups with residents who are being affected by the reforms to the welfare system. How to support those on health related benefits back into employment was a major focus of the review. Because these discussions inevitably involve individuals detailing their health conditions or benefits status the Commission acknowledged that it would be difficult to get people to talk openly before Councillors or council officers. Continental Research therefore devised two focus groups with very carefully selected samples in each and the focus groups were held at a special viewing studio. The groups were excellently

facilitated by experienced moderators and only research agency staff had contact with the participants. A few Commission members and officers attended to observe the groups from a viewing studio. Participants naturally gave full consent and were given shop vouchers as an incentive to take part, to a value that did not affect their benefits status. The exercise allowed Members to gather, in a structured way, an invaluable range of views of local residents directly affected by the welfare reforms. The evidence fed in to the Commission's recommendations, in particular those aimed at Jobcentre Plus.

Interviews with parents in Children's Centres

As part of its review of Services for 0-5 year olds, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission found it of great value to speak to parents, carers and staff within early years settings directly. Working in small groups on separate dates, Members visited three nursery providers (from the public, private, and voluntary sectors) and three Children's Centres. These site visits provided a really practical sense of what is actually on offer, what the buildings are like, who turns up, and how services are advertised. Many of the recommendations made in the final report came as a direct result of speaking to service users, for instance the

recommendations relating to the provision of English language classes was raised by a number of parents at both the Ann Tayler and Stamford Hill centre visits.

Focus groups with ethnic minority business owners

As part of its review on 'Growing a local economy' the Community Safety and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Commission held a number of small focus groups with ethnic minority business owners from the key ethnic minority businesses in the borough namely the Turkish/Kurdish, Vietnamese, African, Caribbean and Charedi Jewish communities. The discussions explored the quantity and quality of business support available to small, ethnic minority owned, businesses in the borough and the review made recommendations on how these businesses, which are a key part of Hackney's economy, can be helped to prosper in the context of the continuing regeneration of the boroughs town centres.

Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Major Trauma and Stroke

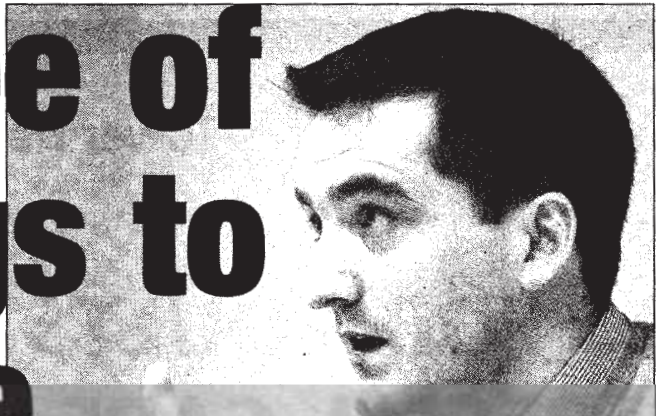
Following the success of the first Joint Overview and Scrutiny Commission for London on Health (JHOSC), the London Health Scrutiny Chairs group agreed to set up a second JOSC to examine NHS London's proposals for reform of major trauma and stroke services in the capital. Hackney continued to play a key role in this initiative and Cllr McShane (Chair of Health

in Hackney) was elected Vice Chair of the new JOSC Commission. The proposals outline three options for major trauma networks to serve London (either three or four centres) and a new proposed care pathway / service model for stroke services in London. The JOSC hopes to report back in May 2009. Hackney's pivotal role in this innovative attempt at pan London scrutiny continues with this second review and its outcome will impact on all London residents.

Press coverage

The work of the Board and the five Commissions continued to receive wide coverage in the local press. Please turn over for some examples.

Shape of things to come



Gazette reporter **PETER SHERLOCK** meets the new chairman of the team looking to make Hackney healthier

DEFINITION of committee: a group of people who individually do nothing but as a group decide that nothing can be done.

It's an old joke but a cynic would argue working groups at the town hall spend an awful lot of time "talking shop".

Cllr Jonathan McShane, the new chairman of the Health in Hackney scrutiny committee, wants to change that perception.

He hopes the panel of eight councillors and two members of the public can be "more effective".

Tre gjëra që ndryshojnë Hackneyn



Ja dhjetë kategoritë e hyrjes në kompeticion

- Ricklini më i mirë
- Ehviromentalisti i ri i vitit
- Shkolla më e mirë më e mirë (Primary)
- Shkolla më e mirë më e mirë (Secondary)
- Universiteti / Kolegji më i mirë
- Biznesi environmental i vitit
- Familja më e perkushtuar në proces
- Projekti më i mirë / iniciativa
- Restoranti më i mirë organik
- Ricikluesi i vitit

Cashpoint charges hit vulnerable

HACKNEY residents are paying through the nose when they use their nearest cashpoint, according to a new report. Upper Clapton, Lower Clapton and Homerton have all been named as "free ATM deserts", where a fee is charged for the use of all machines.

The three areas of the borough are among five such hotspots in London suffering from a lack of high street bank branches which do not normally charge customers a fee for using cashpoints or ATMs (Automated Teller Machines).

Early warning

A REPORT by the council's children's and young people's scrutiny committee is calling for intervention at an early age to prevent children getting into crime. It's an area where "nanny-state" government interference should be welcomed for once because the way children are raised and their consequent future behaviour is inextricably linked to upbringing.

FAT CHANGE!

Plans to tackle childhood obesity

RADICAL new ideas have been put forward to stop Hackney's fat kids sparking a health crisis in years to come.

by **PETER SHERLOCK**

of obese kids rising to a quarter. This is seven per cent more than the national average.

Councillors have put together a raft of proposals to get kids healthier and keeping fit.

One idea is to ban children leaving school at lunchtime them out of greasy fast-food

Another is to offer free meals to ensure kids eat a nutritious

leisure centres. The proposals included...

Sheltered residents live in fear as live-in warden's job is axed

ELDERLY residents of Ajax House in Stamford Hill say they have no one to turn to after losing their battle to keep their live-in warden.

The decision to replace resident warden Nora McAuliffe with a floating warden was confirmed by Hackney Council's scrutiny committee, which decided at a meeting last Thursday not to refer the matter back to Cabinet.

Now residents of the sheltered housing scheme, which caters for Jewish ex-servicemen and women, are terrified they will be left to cope alone. Leila Abrahams, 87, has lived at Ajax House for 10 years and says they have been treated appallingly.

we don't answer she'll come to our flat. She's very compassionate.

"This floating warden isn't going to do all that. We'll be lucky if we see her for half-an-hour a week and she'll only help us with paperwork. She won't deal with repairs and we won't know who to turn to for that."

"Change is very difficult to cope with for old people and we're frightened."

Pearl Douieb, 83, who helped make parachutes during the Second World War, says many of the residents chose Ajax House because they were promised that level of care.

"They are saying it is not cost cutting, but it is," she said.



Discover good health

FUN for all ages will be the order of the day at an event featuring a bouncy castle, face-painting, relaxing massage and health checks.

Information on health services, including GPs, a mobile dentist unit and immunisations will also be on offer.

The fun day is organised by the Council's Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission, and members will be asking residents for their views on healthcare services in the borough.

Cllr Jonathan McShane, Chair of the Health in Hackney



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6. Planned reviews for 2009/10

The Board discussed, at its meeting in March 2009, potential areas of work for next year following consultations with the Mayor, Cabinet Members, senior officers, Team Hackney partners, and the community.

The Board will continue to complete its work programme through five thematic Scrutiny Commissions. Membership of the Commissions for 2009/10 was agreed following the Council's AGM in May and formal work programmes are being devised, based upon the suggestions already identified. To ensure reviews are given sufficient consideration and to allow greatest scope for evidence gathering, it is recommended that no more than two reviews are completed each year by each Commission.

To ensure the Scrutiny function continues to hold the Cabinet to account, Commissions also request information on specific topics outside of these reviews - these one-off items can range from regular performance information, urgent issues or specific queries about a particular policy or service provision.

Below is a list of potential areas for review, and known one-off items, for the Overview & Scrutiny Board and the five standing Commissions. In addition to this indicative list, the Overview and Scrutiny Board will continue to monitor the Council's Forward Plan and Consultation Forward Plan for other potential items for consideration by Overview and Scrutiny.

Overview and Scrutiny Board

- Partnership Question Time – Comprehensive Area Assessment
- Quarterly performance monitoring
- Scrutiny of the budget
- Council's annual report
- The Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions
- The Council's Consultation Forward Plan

Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission

In depth reviews:

- Debt, debtors and debt collection
- Directorate value for money programmes

Known one-off or regular items:

- Overall financial position
- 'Service First' briefings
- Application of ALMO credits
- Preliminary budget discussions

Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission

In depth reviews:

- Child poverty
- Youth provision

Known one-off or regular items:

- Safeguarding children
- The Children and Young People's Plan

Community Safety and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Commission

In depth reviews:

- Estate safety and talking anti-social behaviour (joint review with Living in Hackney)

Known one-off or regular items:

- Betting shops in Hackney
- Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy and pre-decision scrutiny on possible borough-wide Controlled Drinking Zone
- Scrutiny of Hackney's CDRP (Safer Cleaner Partnership) including the work of the Community Engagement Board one year on

Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

In depth reviews:

- Health and Worklessness Review – A Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) Action Learning Project. This review is different to our normal reviews in that a bid was submitted to the CfPS to conduct a review and host an 'action learning' event for health scrutiny looking at the wider determinants of ill-health. The bid was successful and is one of only four selected for funding nationwide. The topic of health and worklessness complements two reviews being conducted within the Council on worklessness however this will examine the health impacts and the role of preventative services. It will explore

how to increase preventative work, the opportunities available for work related support for those who become ill, the shaping of services to reduce health inequalities by promoting access to health advice, support programmes and local amenities and it will look at how local agencies can further maximise opportunities for promoting healthy living in all our communities.

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults – impact of changes in adult social care.

Known one-off or regular items:

- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
- Quarterly updates from health partners.

Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

In depth reviews:

- Estate safety and tackling anti-social behaviour (joint review with Community Safety and Social Inclusion scrutiny commission).

Known one-off or regular items:

- Hackney Waste Strategy
- Delivery of Affordable Housing
- Transport for London's operation and business case
- Management of Allotments
- Follow-up to the 2008/09 work on the Enforcement Strategy

7. Members of the board and O&S team contacts

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board for 2008/09

Cllr Simche Steinberger

Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Board
Vice Chair of Governance and Resources
Scrutiny Commission

Cllr Daniel Kemp

Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Board
Vice Chair of Health in Hackney Scrutiny
Commission

Cllr Robert Chapman

Chair of Governance and Resources
Scrutiny Commission

Cllr Gulay Icoz

Vice Chair of Children and Young People
Scrutiny Commission

Cllr Clayeon McKenzie

Vice Chair of Living in Hackney Scrutiny
Commission

Cllr Jonathan McShane

Chair of Health in Hackney Scrutiny
Commission

Cllr Angus Mulready-Jones

Vice Chair of Community Safety and Social
Inclusion Scrutiny Commission

Cllr Harvey Odze

Chairman of Living in Hackney Scrutiny
Commission

Cllr Deniz Oguzkanli

Chair of Community Safety and Social
Inclusion Scrutiny Commission

Cllr Geoff Taylor

Chair of Children and Young People
Scrutiny Commission

If you would like to receive more information, or would like to be involved in any of the reviews included in this report, please contact the Overview and Scrutiny Team.

For membership of the newly composed Board in 2009/10, please visit www.hackney.gov.uk/scrutiny

O&S team contacts

- **Overview and Scrutiny Board**
- **Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission**
- **Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission**

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- **Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission**

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- **Community Safety and Social Inclusion Scrutiny Commission**

Contact: Jarlath O'Connell

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jarlath.oconnell@hackney.gov.uk

- **Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission**

Contact: Matt Clack

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Further information about the scrutiny process can also be found at www.hackney.gov.uk/scrutiny

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Bengali

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Somali

Haddii aad jeclaan lahayd in aad ogaato waxa dokumeentigani sheegayo fadlan calaamadi godka ku haboon, ku qor magacaaga, cinwaanka iyo telefoon lambarkaaga boggan dhankiisa hoose ka dibna ku celi cinwaanka hoose.

French

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Turkish

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Urdu

اگر آپ یہ جاننا چاہتے ہیں کہ دستاویز میں کیا لکھا ہے تو ازراہ کرم مناسب باکس میں صحیح کا نشان لگائیے اور اپنا نام، پتہ اور فون نمبر اس صفحہ کے نیچے لکھئے اور اسے نیچے دیئے گئے پتہ پر واپس بھیج دیجئے۔

Chinese

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