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Health, Housing and Social Care O/S Committee with Cllr Urquhart



As a result of a consultation focused on the working of Overview and Scrutiny (O/S) committees in Richmond upon Thames, led by Professor Leach, the Council agreed to merge the Health O/S with Adult Social Care and Housing O/S. We now have a very large portfolio of work to cover but with our six expert co-optees and strengthened support from Democratic Services we hope to continue to do justice to the enlarged subject matter.

One of the effective innovations suggested by Prof Leach was the limiting of agenda items to three at most. This has resulted in a substantial briefing pack containing extra items not for discussion but which allows our co-optees to concentrate on their subject and raise any queries

with the author of that paper outside the main meeting. Any ongoing concerns will then be brought to committee.

The Committee having spent a lot of time scrutinising and finally ratifying plans for the future provision of Older People's Mental Health Continuing Care Services must report that the plan has stalled and alternative provision is now being sought.

We are also coming to the final stage of a review that we started in 2007, looking at the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. The final report will be handed over to the Children and Young People's Service to take up and monitor, as we are now no longer responsible for that age group.

In addition, we are also reviewing Dementia services and the Charging Policy for Adult Services but have yet to report back. I don't for a moment imagine that we will ever be short of topics for review or that over the next few years, as a result of Lord Darzi's review, changes to London's Health Services will dry up or be immune from scrutiny. Committees give our residents a platform from which to voice their doubts and concerns and we are grateful for

Councillor Call for Action

Over the last couple of months, Ed Hammond, Research and Information Manager at the Centre for Public Scrutiny, has been developing sector-led guidance for the Councillor Call for Action elements of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, 2007. The CfPS will also host a number of regional awareness events in the spring. For further information please visit www.cfps.org.uk

the input of those who come to our meetings and enliven the debate.

We do have a work programme which is drawn from the Council's Forward Plan and the Health Service. But there is some flexibility to review any topic at any time alongside the main agenda items. We are expecting a steer from the newly formed Local Involvement Network with regards to topics for review in the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all co-optees of O/S committees for their considerable gift of time and knowledge, without which our job would be infinitely more difficult.

Cllr Nicki Urquhart

Environment and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Environment and Sustainability O/S has a wide remit and covers the physical environment of Richmond upon Thames; the provision, planning and management of the built and natural environment; environmental services; transport services for client groups and concessionary fares.

Cllr James Mumford, Chair of the Committee, says: "Following the review by Professor Leach the Committee has been far more selective choosing items for review. This means our meetings are more focused and it enables the Committee to 'add value' to all items on the agenda."

The last couple of meetings have seen the following items scrutinised, Parking Charges and Payment Facilities, the Scheduling of Road Works by Utility Companies, and Flooding.

Councillor Awareness Day: 28 March 2009

This event is for any member of the public with an interest in becoming a councillor or a co-opted member of a scrutiny committee. There will be presentations from the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, Leader of the Opposition and back benchers who will be available during the morning to answer questions.

It will be held from 9.30am to 1.00pm, 28 March 2009, at York House. For further information contact Sally Foster, Member Services Manager, on: 0208 891 7163.

Task Group Updates

Allotment Task Group

Members of the Allotment Task Group have been busy gathering evidence from interested and relevant parties. The activity is very popular in Richmond upon Thames, with waiting lists for plots massively over-subscribed. The Chair, Cllr Jonathan Cardy, says: "This is a topic close to many people's hearts and I know the outcome of this review will be keenly awaited."



Public consultation task group

Launched in September 2008, the group has held several meetings through the autumn. The five task group members are now reviewing the evidence given by a variety of witnesses, including an academic expert, Council officers and partners, and local community groups. Their recommendations will be reported to the Co-ordination, Finance and Performance Commission in April.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Task Group

The Task Group has finished its work on reviewing the CAMHS Strategy produced by the PCT and the November overview and scrutiny meeting received a six month update on its implementation. The final report is being prepared and the Children's Services O/S Committee have agreed to monitor future progress.

Dementia Scrutiny Task Group

The Dementia Strategy Scrutiny Task Group, chaired by Cllr Davies, is reviewing existing services in Richmond to identify any gaps in current services and to set out a view for future services in the light of the new national strategy.

The task group has met with witnesses from Richmond & Twickenham PCT, the Alzheimer's Society, carers, Adult Social Care, Homelink and a Consultant Psychogeriatrician. Representatives of the group had a fascinating visit to the Croydon Memory Service which runs an integrated mental health and social care service for older people. This service aims to support people with memory loss from an early stage thus preventing the need for crisis intervention.

Professor Leach update



In November 2007, the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group commissioned Professor Steve Leach, from De Montfort University, to carry out a review of the Council's overview and scrutiny function. The review highlighted a number of areas in relation to structure and process that needed to be improved. As a result of the review there are now four Committees in place:

- Co-ordination, Finance and Performance Commission

- Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Health, Housing and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Environment and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Committee

To facilitate the structural and process changes identified by Professor Leach and as part of the Democratic Services modernisation programme, to challenge and improve working practices, the scrutiny team have reviewed the format of scrutiny agendas and minutes to promote greater awareness and participation in the democratic process.

Ron Schrieber, Head of Democratic Services, says: "I am pleased with the outcome of the recommendations implemented to date. Over the coming months the scrutiny team will be working with various stakeholders to further fine tune and enhance the democratic process."

Scrutiny Briefing – 12 March 2009

The Member Development Steering Group has agreed to hold a briefing session to update members, co-opted members and key stakeholders on changes that have been made to the council's scrutiny function.

The meeting, which will be facilitated by Professor Steve Leach, will be held on Thursday 12 March 2009 and will start at 6.00pm in The Salon, York House.

Cllr Eleanor Stanier, Chair of the Member Development Steering Group, says:

"This evening seminar will be interactive. There will be an opportunity for delegates to feedback on what has worked well and what could be improved further since the recommendations were implemented. Professor Leach will also cover topic selection and the scrutiny of partnerships. I hope all those involved in overview and scrutiny will be able to attend."

Update from the Commission

The Twickenham Riverside Scheme, Teddington School re-build project, updates on the 2007 Staff Survey, the development of the Corporate Plan and the 09/10 Budget have ensured the first meetings of our new Co-ordination, Finance and Performance Commission have not been dull.

In January the Commission set up a Small Business Task Group. This timely review will look at the business and employment

support that is provided to local business and consider ways to help small businesses in the short term, during the economic downturn, and the long term. The group will report back early in the new municipal year.

Cllr Sue Jones, Chair of the Commission, says: "I am pleased that we've been able to scrutinise a number of important issues in 2008/09. Our special 'single issue' budget meeting on the 10 February allowed the

Commission to scrutinise key financial information at a strategic level. We will follow this up by ensuring the Commission's future work programme allocates enough space for budget monitoring."

For further information about the work of the Co-ordination, Finance and Performance Commission contact Christian Scade, Senior Scrutiny Officer, tel: 0208 891 7158, email: christian.scade@richmond.gov.uk

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Following the tragic events at Haringey, the committee has agreed that a special meeting on Richmond's policy on safeguarding children is essential, and this will take place in March. Richmond's service was assessed as outstanding in the last OFSTED inspection but

the need for constant monitoring via O&S is seen as critical.

The chair of the committee, Cllr Nicholson, commented that:

"Our members are committed to scrutinising all aspects of issues relating to our children and young people in order to ensure

that Richmond delivers the highest quality service and that no-one slips through the net."

In recent meetings, the committee has been keen to understand the degree of consultation used in the development of the new Children and Young People's Plan; how the modernisation of the Youth Service has increased the participation of young people; and how the new anti-bullying strategy might be evaluated over time in order to demonstrate its effectiveness.



Committee Calendar

All meetings at 7pm at York House, Twickenham.

Dates	Overview Scrutiny Committee
11 March 31 March 28 April	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
10 March 8 April	Co-ordination, Finance and Performance Commission
16 March 14 April	Environment and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Committee
17 March 29 April	Health, Housing and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny

Please contact us if you need this leaflet in Braille, large print, audio tape, or another language.

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إذا كانت لديك صعوبة في فهم هذا المنشور، فنرجو زيارة الإستقبال في العنوان المعطى أدناه حيث بإمكاننا أن نرتب لخدمة ترجمة شفوية هاتفية.

اگر در فهمیدن این نشریه مشکلی دارید لطفاً به میز پذیرش در آدرس قید شده در زیر مراجعه نمایید تا ترتیب ترجمه تلفنی برایتان فراهم آورده شود:

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਪਰਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਪੇਸ਼ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਪਤੇ ਉੱਪਰ ਰਿਸੈਪਸ਼ਨ 'ਤੇ ਆਓ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਤੇ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰਿਟਰ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

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Further information is also available on our website:
www.richmond.gov.uk/scrutiny