

Also in this issue

- Consultation Task Group
- Healthcare for London
- Make a difference and more...



Developing Overview and Scrutiny



Introduction by Cllr Sue Jones, Chair of the Coordination, Finance and Performance Commission.

Earlier this year, an independent evaluation, by Professor Steve Leach, reviewed the Council's Overview and Scrutiny (OSC) arrangements. We received mixed feedback and Professor Leach highlighted a number of areas, in relation to structure and process, which needed to be improved.

Cllr Sue Jones, Chair of the Co-ordination, Finance and

Performance Commission explains in detail about the changes that have been made as a result of his recommendations:

"In terms of structure, changes have already been made with the number of committees being reduced from six to four. However, we're aware that structural change is not the panacea which its proponents sometimes claim and I'm pleased that many of the suggestions made by Professor Leach have already been acted upon.

"One of the biggest changes has been the way in which Committees operate. I'm pleased that the number of items on each agenda has reduced. By using criteria to select topics for review we're now more focused. This means we're able to add value to all items rather than just noting reports which are now circulated for information outside of meetings.

"We've also introduced a more flexible approach to 'in-depth' studies. Whilst the importance of task groups continue we now recognise there are opportunities for shorter more focused exercises. The Environment and Sustainability OSC recently set up a mini review group to look at the scheduling of road works by utility companies.

"We've made good progress but we've lots to do if we're to implement all of the recommendations made by Professor Leach."

For more information, please contact Christian Scade on 020 8891 7158

Learning and Development

Following on from the Leach report the Member Training Steering Group has agreed to organise a number of learning events which will help Members (and officers) implement the recommendations made by Professor Leach.

The first session is on the 13 November and will focus on the role and functions of effective financial scrutiny.

Cllr Eleanor Stanier, Chair of the Member Training Steering Group, said:

"The evening seminar will be highly interactive with all terminology, jargon and acronyms explained in plain English. We are also planning a series of site visits to learn from good practice and about innovative ideas. Further information will be circulated in due course. I hope all those involved in overview and scrutiny will be able to take part".

The steering group plan to hold an evaluation event after the visits and training event to enable an open exchange on what has been learned together with discussion on topic selection.

Members wishing to take part in any of these development opportunities should contact Sally Foster, Member Services Manager on 020 8891 7163 or email sally.foster@richmond.gov.uk

Task Group Update

Consultation Task Group

The Council's Co-ordination Finance and Performance Commission has set-up a scrutiny task group to examine how public consultation is undertaken in the borough. It will assess how satisfied residents are with the process and where improvements might be made.

The group will make recommendations based on evidence from witnesses such as external experts in consultation, the Council's own Environment and Finance Directorates, and partners such as Richmond Housing Partnership.

In addition, the task group invited Richmond United Group to express its views on recent consultations, and it is hoped that other organisations,

including local voluntary groups, may also give evidence.

The programme will include a telephone survey, contacting borough residents who have recently been consulted on local issues, and will aim to find out how efficient the consultation process is in terms of:

- How well briefed respondents felt on the purpose of the consultation
- The extent to which the Council explained the degree of influence that the views of the public might have
- How satisfied respondents felt with the way the Council conveyed the results of the consultation.

Performance Management Task Group

Following comments from the Audit Commission regarding performance management, in the Council's recent Corporate Assessment, the Council set up a Performance Management Task Group.

The group, which will report back to the Co-ordination, Finance and Performance Commission on the 4

November, has received information from a variety of witnesses including an academic, an Audit Commission officer, the Leader, Cabinet Member for Performance, Chief Executive, the Directors, the police and the Primary Care Trust. Members also interviewed members and officers from four Councils highly-rated for their work on performance management.

Chairman of the Group, Cllr

Geoffrey Samuel, said: "The remit of the group was to investigate the Audit Commission's findings and to consider ways of making improvements. We readily agreed that the principal difference between Richmond upon Thames and the 'excellent' Council was one of culture. I hope the task groups findings will influence Council thinking."

For more information, contact Christian Scade on 020 8891 7158



Dementia Strategy Task Group

A year ago the government announced a one year programme of work to develop a National Dementia Strategy and Implementation Plan, which was

to focus on three key themes:

- Improving awareness and understanding
- Improving early diagnosis and intervention
- Improving the quality of care

The consultation on the National Dementia Strategy was carried out this summer and a Task Group, chaired by Cllr Anna Davies, was established to look at the local response. Individual members have input into Richmond Council's response and contributed nationally.

The group will review existing services in the borough and will establish how they relate to the

National Strategy, identify gaps in current services and set out a view for future services. Members will consult with health and social services, voluntary organisations and individual sufferers and carers. However, they welcome input from as wide a range of groups as possible, not only the professionals, but particularly users and carers.

The Task Group intends to produce its report for April 2009 and interested parties should contact Bernadette Lee on: 020 8891 7761 or email Bernadette.Lee@richmond.gov.uk

News in brief



Parents' role in their children's education

The Children's Services Committee is to launch a task group looking at how parents engage with their children's education, and the extent to which this can boost attainment at secondary level.

The group will research the drivers for parental engagement (including increasing use of technology), and also potential inhibitors, e.g. parents' own (negative) experience of education, or other demands upon their time.

Schools within and outside the borough will provide case studies of successful parental engagement and effects upon attainment.

Healthcare for London: Consulting the Capital

Healthcare for London (HfL) aims to develop new ways to improve healthcare for Londoners over the next 10 years and involved the largest ever consultation on health services in London. This included the establishment of a Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) for London.

The JOSC agreed with the need for change; however they were concerned about significant gaps in the review including: mental health and children's services, which were late additions; the impact on social care and the implications for NHS estates and finances. They reserved the opportunity to comment on specific proposals until the detail becomes available.

Committee Update

The Academies Programme: Current Status

Academy Status has been proposed for Hampton Community College (HCC), Shene and Whitton Schools.

On the 10 September 2008, the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that Cabinet should proceed to the feasibility stage in respect of all three schools.

However, in the case of Hampton Community College (HCC), the Committee felt that during the feasibility a review should be undertaken to determine:

- Whether HCC still warrants becoming an Academy in light of its continuing improvement.
- The possible reduction of parental

choice resulting from Kunskapsskolan being the sponsor of both Whitton School and HCC.

- Whether the full curriculum can be provided using the Kunskapsskolan model of teaching.

On 22 September 2008, the Cabinet agreed the draft of the Expression of Interest documents and subject to Government approval, agreed to proceed to this time. The Cabinet also allocated £1 million to fund building design and site investigation works during the feasibility stage from Reserves. The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be keeping a careful eye on this.

For more information contact Thayyiba Shaah on 020 8891 7191

Have your say – you can make a difference



Ever wondered how you can help to improve local public services? The answer is to get involved with Richmond Council's Overview and Scrutiny process.

It holds the Council and partners, such as the Primary Care Trust, to account by investigating the big issues affecting the borough.

As a result, the Council actively encourages public involvement in the process.

Previous topics for investigation have been chosen by local people, such as an examination of the borough's waste disposal.

This looked at the key issue of waste management, options for increasing recycling rates, and reducing the amount of waste going to landfill.

It resulted in a number of recommendations being made, many of which were adopted.

Some members of the public are also co-opted members of the Council's Scrutiny Committees, and regularly take part in in-depth investigations, carried out by Task Groups.

Paul Leonard is one such resident.

He said: "I'm delighted to be able to help and use some of my own experiences for the benefit of other residents.

"For example, I was involved in task groups dealing with special educational needs, mental health and flooding. And as a parent of children with special needs, and as an environmental scientist, I was able to bring my experience to bear on these issues."

For more information contact Christian Scade on 020 8891 7158

Committee Calendar

All meetings at 7 pm at York House, Twickenham.

Date	Overview and Scrutiny
4 November 2008	Co-ordination, Finance and Performance Commission
10 November 2008	Environment and Sustainability
24 November 2008	Health, Housing and Social Care
27 November 2008	Children's Services
12 January 2009	Environment and Sustainability
15 January 2009	Co-ordination, Finance and Performance Commission
22 January 2009	Children's Services
28 January 2009	Health, Housing and Social Care

New Members of the Team

Since the last newsletter two new scrutiny officers have been appointed.

Bernadette Lee

I started as the Health Scrutiny Adviser in May. I have worked in clinical research in the pharmaceutical industry and in the NHS undertaking health promotion projects including managing a cervical screening programme. Latterly I have been working in a private business but have stayed involved with health matters via the old Community Health Council & the Maternity Services Liaison Committee at the West Middlesex Hospital.

To contact Bernadette call: 020-8891-7761 or email:

Bernadette.Lee@richmond.gov.uk

Glenna McCulloch

I joined as Scrutiny Officer at the beginning of June 2008, having previously worked in management advisory services in the private sector, so this is my first experience of working in local government in general, and scrutiny in particular.

To contact Glenna call: 020 8891 7760 or email:

Glenna.McCulloch@richmond.gov.uk

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

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, Civic Centre, 44 York Street, Twickenham TW1 3BZ, Telephone 020 8891 1411

اذا كنت تريد معرفة في ميم ف استور، فتوجو ويرة الاستعجاب، في
العتوان عطر، دنا حيب بـكالتنا، في تونب خدمة ترفمة سموية
د.د.د.د.

اگر در چمیدن این شماره مشکلی دارید لطفاً به موز پدیرش
در آمرا، اید سمده در زیر بر حجه غایت تا تونب، ترجمه
تلفنی برایشان فراهم آورده شود.

اذا كنت تريد معرفة في ميم ف استور، فتوجو ويرة الاستعجاب، في
العتوان عطر، دنا حيب بـكالتنا، في تونب خدمة ترفمة سموية
د.د.د.د.

Contacts for Scrutiny

Overview and Scrutiny Team
Democratic Services
York House
Richmond Road
Twickenham
TW1 3AA

Telephone: 020 8891 7158
Fax: 020 8891 7701

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