

# Scrutiny in Richmond upon Thames

## 1<sup>st</sup> Newsletter – October 2005

Welcome to the first ever Scrutiny newsletter in Richmond upon Thames! The aim is to provide you with greater awareness of the activities of all the O&S Committees, not just the one(s) you sit on.

In this issue you will find information about:

- O&S listening to the views of young people as part of Local Democracy Week.
- The Annual Work Programme for O&S Committees 2005/6 (overleaf). Key dates and progress report.
- Waste Disposal Scrutiny Task Group

### **Local Democracy Week event (Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2005)**

A meeting with Councillors and young people was organised as part of the lead in to Local Democracy Week which runs from 17<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> October. It involved a general discussion about services for young people, the results of which will be circulated. The second part was Political Speed Dating and was filmed live by the BBC Politics Show. Each young person spoke with each Member for three minutes. Ten young people and Councillors were filmed in the background while interviews were conducted with the Member of the Youth Parliament, a member of the Youth Forum, and Cllrs Arbour and Knight. Initial feedback was good. If you are interested in viewing the programme, you can do so online by following the Politics Show links.

(This week only:

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/politics\\_show/4337958.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/politics_show/4337958.stm))

Some of the feedback comments from the meeting with young people:

- Very positive, challenging and useful - repeat as often as possible, with a range of groups of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.
- Yes, I learnt a lot and found that I can talk to councillors and try and sort out my problems.
- Spend a minute or two longer talking to each councillor
- Have a bit longer, more introduction on who they are
- More time with each councillor (6 min?)
- Yes interesting to find out what the council does for the borough

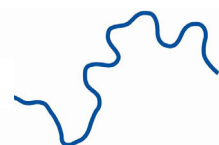
### **O&S Annual Report 2004-5**

You should all now have received a hard copy of the report. Please let Jonathan Hill-Brown know if you haven't and would like one.

### **Children's Services Scrutiny**

Children's Services in the Borough will be changing completely as a result of the Children Act 2004. The aim is to provide a joined-up service between Education, Social Services and local NHS children's services. A Children's Trust will be set up by April 2006 encompassing all these services and headed by the current Director of Education and Leisure Services, Anji Phillips.

A Joint O&S Committee made up of members of the Education and Culture, Health and Social Care and Housing O&S Committees was set up to scrutinise the integration of Children's Services in the Borough. The last meeting on 4 October considered the proposed priorities for Children's Services and expressed their views on a number of issues connected with this. The Director Designate for Children's Services agreed to make changes regarding the clarity of the priorities.



At the next meeting on 28 November it is intended to look at the Terms of Reference for the key structures for the Children's Trust as well as to receive an update on how the first service area to integrate – Services for Children with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties – is progressing.

### **O&S Priority Topic Areas**

At the Committee meetings in June, the four O&S Committees (with the exception of Health which has a more comprehensive annual work programme) agreed on three priority work areas.

#### Education and Culture O&S Priorities:

- ❑ Integrated Children's Services (part of Joint O&S Committee)
- ❑ 14-19 Strategy
- ❑ Secondary School Performance

Integrated Children's Services is being considered in the Joint O&S Committee. The 14-19 Strategy will be the focus of the Committee's meeting on 1 December 2005 concentrating within this on partnership working. Three Members of this Committee have formed a small review group which will be examining secondary school performance in the Borough. They will be interviewing headteachers within and outside the Borough and expect to publish their report in March 2006.

#### Environment O&S Priorities:

- ❑ Planning enforcement
- ❑ Road speed
- ❑ Rail Commuter experience

Planning enforcement will be the central theme at the next meeting of the Committee on 28 November. Road speed will be considered along with updates on the Executive response to the Vulnerable Road Users Scrutiny Task Group in January 2006. As the piece of work on rail commuter

experience is dependent on using the website to record commuter data, it is subject to the capacity of the Council's web team.

#### Social Care and Housing O&S Priorities:

- ❑ Integrated Children's Services (part of Joint O&S Committee)
- ❑ Day services for people with learning disabilities
- ❑ Day services for older people needing intermediate care

Day services for people with learning disabilities was the main topic on the agenda at the Committee's September meeting. Barbara McIntosh from the Mental Health Foundation was invited to give background to the national picture and provide feedback on the Borough's PLD strategy. Staff and the voluntary sector/parent representatives found Barbara's input very useful. The parent representative in particular was very grateful to have had the chance to hear what she had to say.

The meeting focusing on day services for older people will be in March 2006.

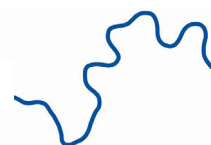
#### Strategy and Resources O&S Priorities:

- ❑ Anti-Social Behaviour
- ❑ ICT Strategy
- ❑ Council Tax Revaluation

The issue of Council Tax revaluation is no longer of such relevance since the Government postponed their own review. However, it should be noted that the Committee's decision to look at this issue attracted a good deal of local media interest and attention.

There was a special briefing for Committee Members on the ICT Strategy in July. It was then brought to the Committee in September.

Anti-Social Behaviour will be the main topic at the meeting on 23 November



2005. The Head of Prevention at the Youth Justice Board for England has been invited to give a presentation. There will then be a discussion with the Leader of the Council, key Council officers and other stakeholders on this issue.

Health O&S Committee:

- ❑ Integrated Children's Services (part of Joint O&S Committee)
- ❑ Changes to specialist Mental Health Services
- ❑ Changes to local mental health services

The Council Chamber was packed in September when the Committee considered the proposed changes to local mental health day services for adults. A number of local voluntary organisations and carer and user representatives gave very helpful presentations. The local mental health trust's offer of a 6-month extension of the consultation process was considered at the meeting. However, the trust has subsequently decided not to proceed with their closure plans. Instead they will undertake a comprehensive service redesign and improvement programme from December onwards. The November and February meetings of the Committee will be considering the proposed changes to Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts in London and ensuring that effective local consultation takes place.

Waste Disposal Scrutiny Task Group:

The Group's report was approved by the Environment O&S Committee on 13 October 2005. The Executive response from the Cabinet and the West London Waste Authority is expected in December.

Website:

To see these reports, or other information about scrutiny in the Borough, please visit the website:

[www.richmond.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/scrutiny)

email: [scrutiny@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@richmond.gov.uk)

or phone Jonathan on 020 8891 7191  
or Ron on 020 8831 6274

Please also send in any feedback about the usefulness of this newsletter. It is planned to compile a further two this municipal year.

