

Scrutiny

in Richmond upon Thames 2010 - 2011



Featured in this report:

Overview and Scrutiny in Richmond upon Thames
Overview and Scrutiny Committees
Scrutiny Task Groups
Get Involved in Scrutiny
Key Dates



1 Introduction by Gillian Norton, Chief Executive

On behalf of everyone involved in Overview and Scrutiny, I am delighted to introduce this report, which summarises the highlights and achievements of Scrutiny in Richmond upon Thames over the last 12 months.

2010-11 has been a busy year for scrutiny, reflecting the many different challenges facing the borough. Financial pressures have required decisions about the shape and focus of many services provided by the Council and its partners. The Coalition Government has a significant legislative programme that is already beginning to affect how some local services are delivered, particularly in terms of the new agenda for health. This report shows how the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees have responded to these challenges and sought to influence the key decisions and policies that affect the residents of Richmond upon Thames.



Task Groups continue to have a strong track record of producing well researched reports that get to the heart of important issues. These investigations are constructive and add value to the service or partnership under review. I am pleased to report that scrutiny activity in a number of areas has contributed positively to the development of key policies for example in relation to housing and homelessness and drug misuse.

2011-12 looks set to be another challenging year. However, Overview and Scrutiny activity, applied with common sense and a willingness to improve the way we do things, can deal with such challenges. I know Overview and Scrutiny Committees will relish this challenge with enthusiasm and I look forward to updating you on progress.

If you would like to contribute to the scrutiny process, or have ideas for areas which you think should be scrutinised, we welcome your suggestions. You will find a suggestion form on the website www.richmond.gov.uk/scrutiny or you can contact the Scrutiny Team directly via phone 020 8891 7158 or email scrutiny@richmond.gov.uk

Gillian Norton, Chief Executive

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2 Overview and Scrutiny in Richmond upon Thames

The most common definition of Overview and Scrutiny is that of the decision-maker's 'critical friend'. There are two parts to this. The first is the 'Overview' part: shaping of future policy in conjunction with the Executive. The second is the 'Scrutiny' part: holding decision-makers to account for decisions already taken.

The purpose of Scrutiny in Richmond upon Thames is defined on our website as the four roles set out in each of the statements below. Beneath them, we have added further detail to describe the ways in which these roles can be carried out.

Provide "Critical Friend" Challenge

- Challenge via scrutiny should be constructive, robust and purposeful
- Scrutiny should work effectively with the Cabinet and senior management
- Scrutiny should provide an effective mechanism for the executive to demonstrate public accountability

Reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities

- Scrutiny should take a community leadership role by focusing on issues of public concern
- Scrutiny should have a constructive relationship with the press and media
- Scrutiny should create the conditions for plural views and concerns to be taken into account, particularly those of minority groups

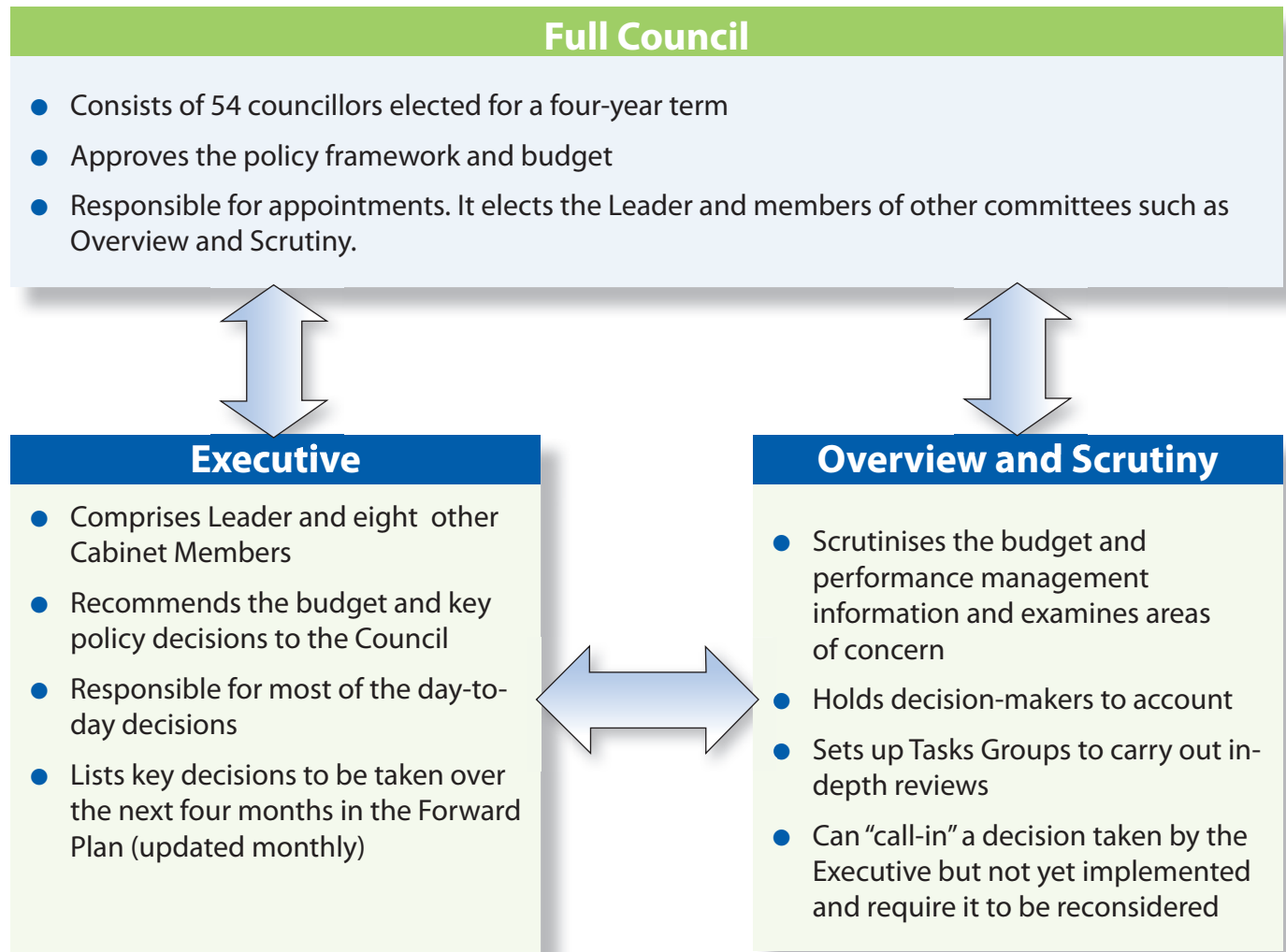
Take the lead and own the scrutiny process

- Scrutiny should operate with political impartiality
- Scrutiny should have ownership of its own work programme
- Scrutiny members should have a worthwhile and fulfilling role

Makes an impact on service delivery

- Scrutiny should have access to timely and accurate performance information
- The scrutiny work-programme should be balanced, well co-ordinated and integrated into corporate processes
- Scrutiny work should be carried out with strategic objectives in mind
- Scrutiny should contribute to improvement in local public services

Overview and Scrutiny is one of the three distinct but interconnected parts of the political structure in the Authority. The different roles and responsibilities are shown in the flow chart on page 4.



N.B. There are also non-Executive decision-making Committees (e.g. Planning, Regulatory)
 (As of September 2011)

3 Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Education and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee started the year by inviting the newly appointed Cabinet Members, Councillor Hodgins and Councillor Percival, to talk about their priorities for the next four years. This meeting also heard from the Director of Children's Services who was invited to talk to the Committee about his department, enabling newer members to meet the directorate's senior leadership team.

During the course of the year, the Committee welcomed three co-opted members, two church representatives and thanked those returning as well as those who were joining the Committee for the first time. The Committee is still seeking parent governor representatives and is keen to fill these important positions.

The Committee has dedicated a lot of time to looking at school exam results and examining trends that have occurred over the past few years. It was pleased to note that there had been an improvement and that the borough continued to perform strongly when compared to the national figure. To build on this work, the Committee will look at how the borough's three transformational academies have been achieving.

Other areas that have been scrutinised this year include:

- Admissions - The Committee recognises that this is a significant issue both nationally and locally. In light of this, both primary and secondary admissions have been looked at as has the ongoing primary school expansion programme.
- The planned shared service with the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames - The Committee has received information on the proposed new organisation and what services it would be offering. This work built on efficiencies the Committee looked at in the early part of the municipal year.



- The Children and Young People's Plan. The Committee reviewed the success of last year's plan, as well as looking at targets for the forthcoming plan.
- The ten year plan to expand primary places and the consequent need to then increase provision across our secondary schools.

The Committee's Chairman, Councillor Gareth Evans, said of the Committee's work over the past year and going ahead:



"The Committee has focused much of its time looking at the new administration's plans to improve and extend the standard, provision and choice of education in the borough, which we'll continue to scrutinise in the year to come."

Moving forward, the Committee will no doubt be playing a leading role assessing the ground-breaking shared service plan with the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. Finally the Committee currently has a task group, headed by Councillor Blakemore, examining Special Educational Needs; we eagerly await their report, which is scheduled for February 2012."

Environment, Sustainability and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2010/11 was a busy year for the newly configured Environment, Sustainability and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which held nine meetings. A common theme throughout the year was the scrutiny of external partner organisations, in particular utilities companies. The Committee also reviewed amendments to the Council's environmental and community policies, focusing on the new parking and highways strategies.

In September and November 2010 the Committee responded to residents' concerns about the reliability of the electricity and water supplies by inviting representatives from EDF Energy and Thames Water to its meetings. The utilities companies provided evidence on how they were addressing supply faults and improving local communication. At the same time the Committee took the opportunity to receive an update from Thames Water on the proposed Thames Tideway Tunnel project. In March the Committee heard a presentation from BT Openreach on the installation of broadband cabinets across the borough and examined why the process had met with complications. The Committee was able to secure a further meeting between BT Openreach and the Council's planning and highways officers in response to concerns raised.

The Committee continued to provide a strong level of scrutiny for the Council's environmental and cultural services. As well as carrying out in depth examinations of traffic and parking



policies at its special meetings, the Committee was able to monitor the impact of improvements to the recycling services via the receipt of waste and recycling reports in September and March. Members discussed proposals to improve the built environment of the borough as part of the Uplift Strategy and reviewed how sustainability issues were being addressed via the Climate Change Strategy. Both schemes would continue to be monitored by the Committee in the future.

The Committee embraced its new role in scrutinising cultural and community services by examining the issue of library stock supply and efficiency in November and looking at the Cabinet's community development proposals in January. In its capacity as the designated Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Members had the opportunity to input into the Community Safety Partnership Plan in January 2011 and to contribute to the work of the Drugs Misuse Task Group which reported back to the Committee in March.

The Committee was provided with a continuing overview of the work of the Environment Directorate via the consideration of quarterly performance reports. Scrutiny Members also had input into the fees and charges set for environmental and cultural services and inspected the proposed Environment budget in early 2011.

In response to the Committee's new wider remit, it was agreed to approach the 2011/12 municipal work programme in a thematic manner, in order to



allow members to explore fully the different areas of the Council's work. In September the Committee will consider a Community and Consultation theme involving an in-depth review of the results of the All-in-One consultation. As the Council continues to adapt to a climate of financial constraints, the exploration of the Efficiency and Transformation theme in November 2011 will allow members to examine issues relating to the Commissioning Council model. Proposed themes for 2012 are Budget; Crime and Community Safety, to allow for a review of the Community Safety Partnership Plan and Test on Arrest policies; and Localism and Planning, to coincide with the progression of the Localism Bill.



Councillor David Porter, Chairman of the Environment, Sustainability and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee, said:

"We live in difficult economic times. In line with all UK councils we need to address the challenges of maintaining the quality of our environment in a cost-effective manner. The scrutiny function will play a vital role in ensuring that difficult decisions are reviewed and challenged constructively."

Finance and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Over the last year, the Finance and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee focussed on the authority's budget, performance and strategic direction. The Committee applied effective scrutiny to a range of cross cutting issues including:

- The Council's Efficiency and Transformation programme
- The Council's Strategic Direction and Future Commissioning arrangements
- The Corporate Plan
- The Budget Setting Process
- Quarterly Performance reports
- The first Local Economic Assessment
- Ways to promote Social Enterprise in the Borough
- Findings from the All in One Survey

Throughout the year, the Committee reviewed the progress of the Voluntary Sector Grants and Commissioning Programme. This independent view point enabled members of the Committee to ensure decisions on the commissioning process fitted within the Council's priorities and budget setting arrangements.

In January, the Committee discussed the merging of legal services between Richmond and Merton. A question and answer session, with senior



management, allowed concerns held by residents, staff and councillors to be addressed. Taking this key issue to scrutiny ensured new ways of working were fully considered by the Council's decision makers. Residents and members of the Committee were able to comment and observe the detail of the proposals. In the New Year the Committee will consider the lessons learnt from the project to ensure the service is meeting efficiency expectations.

Over the last year, announcements by the Coalition Government have radically altered the previous performance regime for local government. The Coalition have ceased the Comprehensive Area Assessment process, abolished Local Area Agreements and informed public sector organisations that the National Indicator Set

is no longer in effect. The compound effect of these announcements is that there is currently no nationally mandated performance regime for councils. This has allowed and encouraged councils to develop and implement local solutions. With this in mind, Members of the Finance and Performance OSC have carefully monitored and reviewed the new style performance reports. Members have reviewed both the format and content of these new style reports and have used data provided to ensure areas of under performance are picked up in the scrutiny work programme. This has involved communicating with the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees to ensure performance is reported in a consistent format across all Committees.

Scrutiny of the budget setting process has been a priority this year. The Committee has been proactive asking for information as soon as it becomes available. The budget setting process for 2012/13 has allowed scrutiny to participate in the budget process at an appropriate stage. This positive development has improved the links between the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny.

The Committee has also led the Scrutiny Task Group on Income Generation which will report back to Committee before the end of the 2011/12 municipal year.

Cllr Miller, Chairman of the Committee, said:



"I would like to thank everyone who has assisted us in our scrutiny work over the last year. I am particularly grateful to the newly appointed Co-opted Members. In order to function effectively, the scrutiny process

relies on the invaluable knowledge and expertise of co-opted members, not least to provide the necessary degree of robust challenge to witnesses. This contribution has significantly helped in this respect, and has also improved the development of major policies, as well as public participation and engagement in key areas of interest and concern. Despite significant reductions in funding, the work of this Committee has helped to maximise the Council's productivity. Next year, in order to provide the best possible service for Borough residents, the Committee will identify value for money in services as a priority."

Health, Housing and Adult Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The implications of the Health & Social Care White Paper, Equity and Excellence – Liberating the NHS, in July 2010, has driven some of the priorities for the Committee as it has led to the development of changing structures in local health services and the greater involvement of GPs in the commissioning of health services. Whilst these changes were due to come fully into effect by April 2013 shadow structures have formed to help the transition process. Local authorities will have a greater role in health improvement through the creation of Health & Wellbeing Boards and Public Health becomes a local authority responsibility. Health & Social Care services in Richmond are working closely together to commission integrated services at a local level and the commissioning of acute services is now the

responsibility of NHS South West London, formed from the five PCTs that previously existed.

Existing statutory powers for health scrutiny will continue to exist and Health & Wellbeing Boards will be subject to local authority overview & scrutiny and there will be greater flexibility over how to exercise scrutiny powers, in line with the Localism Bill.

The Committee had prioritised housing early in the year and the implications for national changes to housing benefits, the responsibilities of the borough to the homeless and for the provision of social housing were all considered and a Housing Scrutiny Task Group established.



The implications for the changes to the funding of adult social care: Self Directed Support (SDS); eligibility criteria and the review of the day care centres were considered in detail, additional meetings held. A Scrutiny Task Group was established to consider the implications for users and carers of the proposals for changes to the intensive day care centres and make recommendations of possible other means of identifying the savings required.

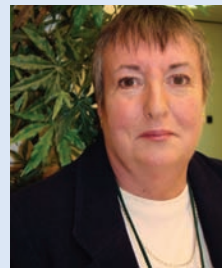
The Committee also worked on a wide range of other issues including: the development of joint commissioning, GP Commissioning Consortia (now called Clinical Commissioning Consortia) and the Health & Wellbeing Board; mental health services; the priorities for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults; People with Learning Disabilities Change Management Programme; Kingston Hospital Foundation Trust application, West Middlesex Hospital's progress and Child Sexual Exploitation and Substance Misuse.

One of the priorities for the coming year will be participating in a South West London Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Better Services Better Value, a review of health services in SW London which plans to significantly change the delivery of services with the aim of providing more services in the community, as close to home as possible, whilst more specialised services should be available in centres of expertise. Other priorities include the in patient provision for mental health services, the effects of the changes to funding of

adult social care, Homelessness Strategy & Housing Allocations Policy, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Supporting People Modernisation Programme.

The Committee led the Scrutiny Task Groups on Housing and Intensive Day Care Centres and two members also participated in the Drug Misuse Scrutiny Task Group.

Cllr Jones, Chairman of the Committee, said:



"This has been a very important year for scrutiny work within Health, Housing and Adult Social Care. The amount of new legislation and draft legislation being thrown at local authorities is massive and therefore it is not surprising that the scrutiny work carried out by the Committee has increased significantly. It is only with the support of all Committee Members, Co-opted Members and officers that the Committee can continue to function at the high level that it does.

Due to the changes to legislation on Health, Housing and Adult Social Care, agenda items have been concentrating on all three disciplines within our remit. Kingston Hospital, West Middlesex Hospital and South West London & St. Georges Mental Health Trust, have all reported on their progress and were questioned on the way forward for each organisation. The closure of Tangle Hall and the move to Ham Day Centre were discussed on numerous occasions and a Task Group formed, which reported in January. Housing, Elderly Care, Teddington Memorial Hospital, Hounslow & Richmond Community Healthcare and NHS Richmond have also reported to us and been questioned on their work and direction this past year. The Cabinet Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing has been held to account for her decisions, as has the Director of Adult and Community Services, along with other senior officers.

While it has been a very busy year with new responsibilities thrust upon us there will be no slackening of the pace or the level of scrutiny."

4 Scrutiny Task Groups

Task groups are smaller than Committees and are set up to examine specific issues in detail, which means they tend to work more flexibly and informally. They are made up of between 3-6 members and have the support of a dedicated Scrutiny Officer.

Each task group sets itself clear terms of reference. The group refers to these throughout the review, particularly when it is deciding what information to gather and what witnesses to hear from. A task group can obtain information through many different media, including face-to-face interviews; questionnaires; focus groups; site visits; reports; and written submissions. The most common witnesses are Council Officers, representatives from partner agencies and service users.

When a task group has finished gathering evidence, it reports its findings to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee and recommends achievable improvements or developments. The group's report is discussed by the Committee, and if approved, is sent to the Council's Cabinet. Cabinet has a duty to respond to the recommendations and will decide whether to fully accept, partially accept or reject them. Sometimes the task group will also make recommendations to partner organisations, such as the NHS Richmond.

Six months later, the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives an update report which outlines the progress made in implementing the accepted recommendations. This allows the Committee to ensure that the improvements identified in the report are delivered.

Over the last twelve months, the following issues have been reviewed via a task group:

- Intensive Day Care Centres
– published in January 2011
- Drug Misuse
– published in March 2011
- Special Educational Needs (SEN)
– A report is due to go before the Education and Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee in early February 2012.
- Income Generation / Advertising & Sponsorship
– This task group is still collecting evidence but will complete its work before May 2012.
- Housing / Homelessness
– This task group is still collecting evidence and will feed their recommendations into the new Homelessness Strategy and Housing Allocations Policy.

Further information about each review can be found below and full task group reports are available via:

http://www.richmond.gov.uk/home/council_government_and_democracy/council/decision_making_council/scrutiny/scrutiny_task_groups/pastscrutinytaskgroups.htm

Intensive Day Care Services Task Group

The Intensive Day Care Services Scrutiny Task Group was set up by the Health, Housing and Adult Services OSC in November 2010. The membership was Cllr Sue Jones (Chair), Cllr Meena Bond, Cllr Frances Bouchier and Cllr Liz Jaeger.

The review of the Day Care Centres and the decision to close Tangley Hall had considerable implications for the users (and their carers) of the Intensive Day Care Centres and it was agreed that the task group would consider the savings identified and attempt to identify the same savings through other means. They considered whether other proposals could be brought forward which would more fit a user perspective, their care needs, transport requirements and lead to a longer term strategy for Adult Social Care within the borough. They intended to make their recommendations before Cabinet agreed their decisions on the Adult Social Care Budget proposals.

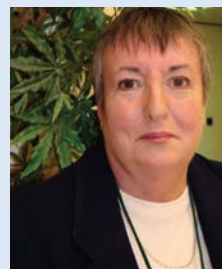
The task group had a very short time frame in which to work and the areas it considered included:

- The strategic vision for the provision of community care and support for vulnerable older adults
- Short term savings that could be made in staffing costs, overheads and provision of meals
- Intermediate term savings that may be possible from working with the Voluntary Sector in the development of the Intensive Day Care Centres and the potential for reviewing the transport system
- Revenue generation ideas including increased promotion of the services and possible demand from neighbouring boroughs
- The potential development of the Dementia Care Strategy as a means of expanding the range of services in the Intensive Day Care Centres
- The importance of good partnership working between health, social care and the voluntary sector



The recommendations of the Task Group highlighted the importance of the Intensive Day Care Centres for the independence and well being of vulnerable adults and their carers. The Members were impressed by how highly they were regarded by their quality and range of provision.

Cllr Jones, Chairman of the Committee, said:



"No longer should it be the prerogative of the local authority to provide such services and indeed in Richmond upon Thames we are extremely lucky in having such a thriving voluntary sector, who we ignore at our peril. I would like to thank all those witnesses that came forward from all areas of the local authority and the voluntary sector to aid us in our deliberations, their support and knowledge was invaluable."

The recommendations were widely discussed at the OSC meeting and Cabinet and a wide range of people and organisations contributed to the debate. Cabinet considered the report and whilst the proposals for closing two of the day care centres was agreed the wider recommendations of the task group were noted by Cabinet.

Drug Misuse Task Group

The Drug Misuse Task Group report was agreed by the Environment, Sustainability and Community OSC at its meeting on 24 March 2001.

The Environment, Sustainability and Community OSC leads on community safety scrutiny but it was agreed that representatives from Education and Children's Services OSC and Health, Housing and Adult Services OSC should also serve on the task group. The membership of the task group was: Cllr Jaeger (Chairman); Cllr Blakemore; Cllr Day; Cllr Elengorn and Cllr Harborne.

During its nine month investigation, the task group interviewed a variety of witnesses, both from Richmond upon Thames and further afield, including: service users, members of the community, health and social care professionals and those working in the criminal justice system. This ensured issues associated with enforcement, the supply/availability of drugs, treatment, preventing harm, public information and community engagement were all considered along with other cross-cutting issues.

This methodology allowed the task group to address their terms of reference, outlined below:

- To understand the problems associated with drug use in Richmond upon Thames.
- To identify the controls, treatments and remedies currently used in Richmond upon Thames and assess their effectiveness in reducing drug related harm.
- To investigate other controls, treatments and remedies that could be used in Richmond upon Thames to help minimise the health harms, violence and antisocial behaviour associated with drug misuse.
- To make recommendations to Cabinet and the Community Safety Partnership, and where appropriate other stakeholders, to develop

an effective and efficient borough wide drug strategy ensuring Richmond upon Thames is doing everything it can to reduce drug misuse.

- To report back to the Environment, Sustainability and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee by 24 March 2011.

It should also be acknowledged that many things changed in the period from setting up the task group and the reporting back to Committee. For example, there were three significant changes to national drugs policy (a) the abolition of inappropriate drug targets; (b) a new National Drug Strategy was launched and (c) the introduction locally of powers to test for drugs on arrest.

However, despite this rapidly changing backdrop, the report was timely and a useful contribution to addressing the considerable harms caused by illegal drug use. Cabinet have agreed that recommendations taken forward will feed into policy decisions during 2011/12; or into the 2012/13 Community Safety Partnership Plan / Drug Treatment Plan.



"Drug services, like all public services, will be expected to work with less funding in the current economic climate but this should not mean that services should suffer. I am pleased that many of our recommendations will be taken forward and would like to thank

all the witnesses who met with us, particularly those such as the Kent Police, the Home Office and the Drug Education Forum, who took the trouble to come to us in Richmond."

- Cllr Liz Jaeger, Chairman, Drug Misuse Task Group

Special Educational Needs Task Group

On 9th March 2011 the government published the SEN and Disabilities Green Paper Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability - a consultation. The Green Paper unveiled proposals which would mean the biggest programme of reform to education and health support for children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities in 30 years.

Overview and Scrutiny has been keen to address aspects of SEN and has done so through the Special Educational Needs Statements Scrutiny Task Group (April 2008). Following the SEN Green Paper's publication, The Education and Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on the 7th April 2011 agreed to set up a task group with the aim of:

"Responding to the SEN Green Paper, looking at its impact on the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and reviewing the quality of the borough's special schools".

The task group was established with the following terms of reference:

- To make recommendations on the Borough's response to the Green Paper and on changes arising from it.
- To ascertain the views of young people, parents, carers, education and health professionals on the development of services for children with special educational needs in the borough.
- To look, at the emotional and developmental impact travel has on the SEN child; the financial / budgetary implications for the council; and to make suggestions for future savings.
- To compare current SEN Service provision in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames with other London Local Authorities and make suggestions on ways to improve provisions.



"The overarching focus of this review is to identify issues that impact on meeting the needs of young people up to the age of 25 with SEN and to make recommendations that will bring about a positive and effective change"

Cllr Lisa Blakemore, Chairman SEN Task Group

The task group's review is currently underway. The methodology used so far is:

- Desktop (secondary) research, to provide context and to evidence approaches, issues, guidance and best practice regarding various aspects of Special Educational Needs provision.
- Primary research – the task group have met with parents of children with Special Education Needs, visited and held discussions with a number of specialist and mainstream schools, consulted with health and educational professionals and spoken to a number of students with special educational needs.

The report is due to go before the Education and Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee in early February 2012.

Income Generation / Advertising and Sponsorship Task Group

On 11 October 2010 Cabinet received an update report on efficiency work at the Council, including the potential to generate additional income through a review of certain fees and charges. After interviewing a number of organisations Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) were appointed, following a decision under delegated authority by the Cabinet Member for Performance in November 2010, to carry out a review of the potential for the Council to raise extra income.

Members of the Finance and Performance OSC have been kept informed of developments and at their meeting on 30 September 2010 they set up the Income Generation Task Group. Councillors Harrison, Elliott, Miller and Salvoni and Co-opted Member Alison McDade were appointed to the task group.

Cllr Harrison was elected Chairman and the task group agreed to complement rather than duplicate work already underway. Once a list of income generation projects had been identified the task group helped to refine and develop such proposals and identified Advertising and Sponsorship as a longer term project which the task group could add value to.

Cllr Harrison and Cllr Salvoni were both appointed Cabinet Members at May Council and as a result Finance and Performance OSC agreed to appoint the following new task group members: Cllr Marlow, Cllr Linnette and Cllr Elengorn. Cllr Miller was elected as the new Chairman and it was agreed that the task group should act as a "critical friend" as the Advertising and Sponsorship business case is developed.

Since May the task group has looked at the feasibility of allowing advertising on the Council's public website and the methods for procurement. This involved taking evidence from the Head of Commercial Operations at the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and learning from the experiences of other local authorities. Suggestions, put forward by the task group, will be presented to the Cabinet Member for Performance to help decision making in this area.

Moving forward, the task group will also have an opportunity to make comments and suggestions on the following key areas: Billboards, Lampposts, Other Street Furniture and Event Sponsorship. To help with this piece of scrutiny the task group are keen to gather evidence from corporate sponsorship and advertising specialists.

Cllr Miller, Chairman of the Task Group, says -



"For a variety of reasons, progress has been slower than expected. This is frustrating but the task group has made a number of useful suggestions in relation to website advertising and are awaiting

full details in terms of how this area of work will be progressed. It is hoped that the plans in other areas, such as advertising on Council properties and event sponsorship, will soon emerge so the task group can begin to make a meaningful contribution."

Housing Task Group

The Housing Task Group was set up by the Heath, Housing and Adult Services OSC in November 2010. The membership is: Cllr Blakemore (Chairman); Cllr Coombs, Cllr Elengorn, Cllr Naylor, Mr Kingsford (Co-opted Member) and Mr Sangster (Co-opted Member).

Given the significant developments in national housing policy, it was agreed, at the start of the review, that the task group should look at how such changes would affect the statutory homeless and vulnerable households in Richmond upon Thames. It was also agreed that the task group should act as a "critical friend" in the development of policies to prevent and reduce homelessness, making comments on reports before decisions are made by Cabinet.

It was agreed that the task group's terms of reference should focus on the following issues:

- Residents who may be newly at risk of becoming homeless;
- To make recommendations to Registered Social Landlords to ensure best use of stock;
- To investigate how changes to housing policy will affect health and social care in the borough;
- To look at ways to prevent homelessness – including services currently available for the 16 – 17 age group and how these services might change in the future;
- To make recommendations, in relation to homelessness, to assist in the development of the Council's Tenancy Strategy.

Cllr Blakemore, Chairman of the Task Group, says:



"This scrutiny review has been very timely and given scrutiny members and co-opted members an opportunity to be involved in the policy making process. We have received valuable updates from officers, learnt from the experience of other local authorities and interviewed civil servants from the Department for Work and Pensions to gain a better understanding of housing benefit reform."

A new Homelessness Strategy and Housing Allocations Policy will be considered by Cabinet in January, 2012. With this in mind, the task group will complete their investigation and report back to Committee in November 2011. This will ensure the task group's findings can be considered before decisions are made.

5 Get involved in Scrutiny

One of the key roles for scrutiny is to work on behalf of residents to address the issues that are causing concern to people who live and work in the Borough. We are using this report to tell you what we have done and we want you to tell us what you think we should be doing next. Please use the contact details below if you would like us to focus on a particular issue in the future.

All agendas and minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committees as well as reports from Scrutiny Task Groups are available by following the links on the

- Service Users
- Carers
- Local Schools
- NHS Richmond
- NHS South West London
- Alzheimer's Society
- Hounslow and Richmond Community Healthcare
- South West London & St George's Mental Health Trust
- Richmond upon Thames LINK
- West Middlesex University Hospital
- Kingston Hospital
- Friends of Barnes Hospital
- Age Concern
- Homelink
- Richmond Drug and Alcohol Team
- London Drug and Alcohol Forum
- Drug Education Forum

website – www.richmond.gov.uk/scrutiny. Hard copies of agendas and reports are also available from public libraries and on request from the Council's scrutiny team.

This report is also an opportunity to say thank you to everyone who has contributed to the scrutiny process over the last 12 months. In order to function effectively, scrutiny relies on the invaluable knowledge and expertise of witnesses. Last year a wide range of individuals and organisations assisted us in our work, including:

- Crime Reduction Initiatives (CRI)
- SPEAR
- The Voluntary Sector Strategic Partnership
- Richmond upon Thames LGBT Forum
- Home-Start Richmond
- Richmond upon Thames Borough Police
- Kent Police Force
- Other Local Authorities
- EDF Energy
- Thames Water
- BT Openreach
- The Centre for Public Scrutiny
- The National Audit Office
- The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- The Home Office
- The Home Affairs Select Committee
- Jobcentre Plus
- Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC)

But we are not content to leave it there, and have identified several opportunities for increasing public participation in scrutiny.

Speak at Committee:

You can address any of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Just register with the Democratic Services Department by 2:00pm on the working day before the meeting, stating the agenda item(s) on which you want to speak.

Up to six speakers are allowed on any one agenda item. Speakers have three minutes to make their remarks, or longer at the Chairman's discretion.

If you speak at an Overview and Scrutiny Committee you must declare any current or prospective financial or personal interest you may have in the subject under discussion.

Write in:

Send us your comments on any item being heard at Committee or being investigated by a Scrutiny Task Group. You can do this by e-mail, post or fax.

If you are writing about any topic on the agenda of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, please ensure your correspondence reaches us by 2:00pm on the working day before the meeting.

Raise an Issue for Scrutiny

If you think there is an issue that Scrutiny should be looking at, please let us know. You can submit topics by [using our online form](#) or returning our [Scrutiny Suggestion form \(pdf, 15KB\)](#). We will consider all suggestions in light of our criteria and current workload.

Scrutiny cannot promise to form the same conclusions as you do but your comments will be acknowledged and considered. Sometimes we receive correspondence that raises issues outside of Scrutiny's remit – should this happen we will forward your comments to the relevant department or organisation and ask them to provide you with a response.

6 What Scrutiny Doesn't Do

Please remember that Overview and Scrutiny is not an individual complaints system. The role of Overview and Scrutiny is not to look at individual complaints but at general policy areas and major decisions taken by the Cabinet. If you have a

complaint about how your case has been treated by the Council please call the main Council switchboard on 020 8891 1411 or visit Richmond Council's Complaints page on the website: www.richmond.gov.uk/complaints_procedure

If you would like further information about Overview and Scrutiny, please use the contact details below:

Scrutiny,
Democratic Services,
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames,
York House,
Richmond Road,
Twickenham TW1 3AA

Tel: 020 8891 7158

Fax: 020 8891 7701

E-mail: scrutiny@richmond.gov.uk

Website: www.richmond.gov.uk/scrutiny

7 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Dates for 2011/12

| Finance & Performance OSC | Education & Children's Services OS | Environment, Sustainability & Community OSC | Health, Housing & Adult Services OSC |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| 6 September 2011 | 17 October 2011 | 12 September 2011 | 14 September 2011 |
| 14 November 2011 | 21 November 2011 | 15 November 2011 | 22 November 2011 |
| 17 January 2012 | 8 February 2012 | 23 January 2012 | 31 January 2012 |
| 9 February 2012 | 19 March 2012 | 20 March 2012 | 13 March 2012 |
| 17 April 2012 | 11 June 2012 | 12 June 2012 | 19 June 2012 |
| 12 June 2012 | | | |

Please note: Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings will be held at 7.00pm in York House. Members of the public are welcome to attend. Dates can sometimes change so please check the website www.richmond.gov.uk/scrutiny or contact the Scrutiny Team via telephone 020 8891 7158.

Scrutiny in Richmond upon Thames

Scrutiny,
Democratic Services,
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames,
York House,
Richmond Road,
Twickenham TW1 3AA

Tel: **020 8891 7158**

Fax: **020 8891 7701**

E-mail: scrutiny@richmond.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.richmond.gov.uk/scrutiny>

| | |
|----------|---|
| Albanian | Nese keni veshtersi per te kuptuar kete botim, ju lutemi ejani ne recepcionin ne adresen e shenuar me poshte ku ne mund te organizojme perkthime nepermjet telefonit. |
| Arabic | إذا كانت لديك صعوبة في فهم هذا المنشور، فنرجو زيارة الإستقبال في العنوان المعطى أدناه حيث بإمكاننا أن نرتب لخدمة ترجمة شفوية هاتفية. |
| Bengali | এই প্রকাশনার অর্থ বুঝতে পারায় যদি আপনার কোন সমস্যা হয়, নিচে দেওয়া ঠিকানায় রিসেপশন-এ চলে আসুন যেখানে আমরা আপনাকে টেলিফোনে দোভাষীর সেবা প্রদানের ব্যবস্থা করতে পারবো। |
| Farsi | اگر در فهمیدن این نشریه مشکل دارید، لطفاً به میز پذیرش در آدرس قید شده در زیر رجوع فرمایید تا سرویس ترجمه تلفنی برایتان فراهم آورده شود. |
| Gujarati | જો તમને આ પુસ્તિકાની વિગતો સમજવામાં મુશ્કેલી પડતી હોય તો, કૃપયા નીચે જણાવેલ સ્થળના રિસેપ્શન પર આવો, જ્યાં અમે ટેલિફોન પર ગુજરાતીમાં ઇન્ટરપ્રિટીંગ સેવાની ગોઠવણ કરી આપીશું. |
| Punjabi | ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਪਰਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ 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। |
| Urdu | اگر آپ کو اس اشاعت کو سمجھنے میں کوئی مشکل ہے تو، براہ کرم نیچے دیئے ہوئے ایڈریس کے استقبال پر جا کر ملیئے، جہاں ہم آپ کیلئے ٹیلیفون انٹرمیڈیٹنگ سروس (ٹیلیفون پر ترجمانی کی سروس) کا انتظام کر سکتے ہیں۔ |