



LONDON BOROUGH OF HILLINGDON

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

**2004/5**

**ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL**

***Members of the Committee***

Cllr Catherine Dann *Chairman*

Cllr Keith Burrows *Vice-Chairman*

Cllr Michael Cox

Cllr Richard Lewis

Cllr Peter Ryerson

Cllr Anthony Way



## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

**2004/5**

### **Members**

<b>Cllr Catherine Dann</b> Chairman	<i>Health and Social Care</i>
<b>Cllr Keith Burrows</b> Vice-Chairman	<i>Housing</i>
<b>Cllr Michael Cox</b>	<i>Environment</i>
<b>Cllr Richard Lewis</b>	<i>Corporate Services</i>
<b>Cllr Peter Ryerson</b>	<i>Education (including Youth and Leisure Services)</i>
<b>Cllr Anthony Way</b>	<i>Community Partnerships and Economic Development</i>

### **HILLINGDON'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WEBSITE**

You can find us on the Internet at

<http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/central/democracy/scrutiny/index.php>

## CONTENTS

Chairman's Foreword

\* \* \*

Introduction.....	Page 1
Main areas of work.....	Page 1
New developments this year.....	Page 2
Achievements in 2004/5.....	Page 4
Looking ahead – development for 2005/6.....	Page 7
Major review topics.....	Page 10
Scrutinising decision-making and service delivery.....	Page 16
Overview and Scrutiny budget.....	Page 18
Member development.....	Page 19

\* \* \*

Appendix 1 – Assessment tool.....	Page A1
Appendix 2 – Scrutinising decision making and service delivery.....	Page A3
Appendix 3 – Audit Commission review (2003) recommendations....	Page A24



## CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD



---

Throughout 2004/5 Overview and Scrutiny Committees have continued to make good progress in their working arrangements. Building on the previous three years, Overview and Scrutiny has continued to provide a strong contribution to the Council through policy reviews and in holding Hillingdon's Cabinet and Primary Care Trust to account on behalf of the people of Hillingdon.

With my colleagues on the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee we have taken a strategic role in the development of the Overview & Scrutiny function. This has included agreeing standard measures by which Overview & Scrutiny Committees (OSCs) will evaluate the success of their recommendations, and introducing a system of performance management to aid the Council in reviewing and improving performance. We have also sought to ensure that the OSCs focus on those areas where they have most to contribute.

On Overview, by the Annual Council Meeting eleven major reports are expected to have been completed this year, representing a more considered work programme than the fourteen completed last year. The reviews undertaken cover a wide range of topics which reach all communities in Hillingdon.

On Scrutiny, we have analysed and investigated key aspects of the Council's decision making during the year. This has included careful examination of the Budget setting process for 2005/6, commenting on Council officers' proposals to Cabinet and, where necessary, calling in Cabinet decisions for further consideration. We have also monitored the Council's service delivery and identified the implications of internal and external inspection reports.

I would like to pay tribute to all my fellow Councillors on the OSCs for the determined efforts they have made this year to build on the last year's improvements to further strengthen Overview and Scrutiny. On behalf of all the Councillors involved I would also like to express our thanks to the witnesses who gave their time and expertise to help us and to the Council's officers without whom little of this would have been possible.

**Cllr Catherine Dann**

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TEAM**

*The Overview and Scrutiny Team are based at the Civic Centre and are part of Democratic Services in the Chief Executive's Office*

### **Guy Fiegehen**

*Head of Scrutiny and Members' Services  
01895 277733*

### **(Vacant)**

*Scrutiny Manager  
01895 277488*

**Martine Cazeau**  
*Scrutiny Advisor  
01895 250692*

*Community Partnerships and  
Economic Development,  
Education*

**Alan King**  
*Scrutiny Advisor  
01895 250833*

*Health and Social Care,  
Corporate Services*

**Charles Francis**  
*Scrutiny Advisor  
01895 556454*

*Environment,  
Housing*

**Jane Coker**  
*Democratic Management  
Officer  
01895 250813*

*Education Appeals,  
General Support*

*The Team can be contacted by telephone at the numbers above or as follows:-*

*E-mail*            [scrutiny@hillington.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@hillington.gov.uk)

*Fax*                01895 277373

*Post*                Overview and Scrutiny Team  
London Borough of Hillingdon  
3E/05 Civic Centre  
High Street, Uxbridge  
UB8 1UW

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

## ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL FOR 2004/5

### INTRODUCTION

1. This report covers the work of Hillingdon Council's Overview and Scrutiny function in the municipal year from 14<sup>th</sup> May 2005 to 19<sup>th</sup> May 2005. It was completed on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2005.
2. Councillors' involvement in Overview and Scrutiny is through six service-area Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs) and the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee that comprises the Chairmen of those committees.
3. The six subject-area OSCs cover

Community Partnerships and Economic Development  
Corporate Services  
Education (including the Youth and Leisure Services)  
Environment  
Health and Social Care  
Housing.

4. Terms of reference and procedural rules for all the committees are in the Council's Constitution, which is available via the Internet on the Council's website at

<http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/central/democracy/constitution/index.php>

Health scrutiny work is based on separate legislation approved by Parliament. A guide to this is available at

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/06/62/38/04066238.pdf>

### MAIN AREAS OF WORK

5. The work of Overview and Scrutiny divides into two broad areas.

**(a) Major review topics (mostly 'Overview' items)**

Major reviews tend to involve long-term policy issues and the development of policy frameworks based on evidence collected by the OSC. Detailed decision-making and implementation of policy is primarily a matter on which the Cabinet and the PCT lead.

Topics are usually identified by the subject-area OSCs. Their proposals are passed for endorsement to the Coordinating Committee who are responsible for agreeing the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme, ensuring the efficient use of OSCs' time and minimising the potential for duplication of effort.

In some cases Hillingdon Cabinet, Hillingdon Primary Care Trust (PCT) or the Hillingdon Hospital NHS Trust may also refer issues to Overview and Scrutiny for review or to allow for consultation. This has occurred with the Health & Social Care OSC being consulted by the local NHS on the redevelopment plans for Hillingdon Hospital.

**(b) Scrutinising decision-making and service delivery**

This involves monitoring and, where necessary, detailed investigation of the following

- items on Hillingdon Cabinet's Forward Plan for decision-making
- decisions made by Hillingdon Cabinet that OSCs have the right to 'call in' for further consideration
- the way Hillingdon Council service departments are spending their budgets
- Hillingdon Council's budget setting process for the following financial year
- Hillingdon Council service department plans
- Best Value reviews, audit and inspection reports.

6. The Health and Social Care OSC may also deal with a number of other matters affecting the health of people living in Hillingdon, including any substantial variation in health service provision.

**NEW DEVELOPMENTS THIS YEAR**

7. Last year saw a number of changes made as a result of the Audit Commission's review of Hillingdon's Overview and Scrutiny function in 2003 (the recommendations made by the Audit Commission are given at Appendix 3). These changes have been built upon and consolidated during this year, for example;

- Overview and Scrutiny Committees have continued to take more of the initiative in setting their own Work Programme priorities and spend more time focusing on major reviews and less considering items being dealt with as part of the Cabinet's agenda, thereby being more proactive in making policy recommendations
- project management techniques have been used to ensure that OSCs complete the reviews they have begun. This has included



the Overview & Scrutiny Coordinating Committee receiving quarterly updates on the OSCs' progress in reviews.

8. On 7<sup>th</sup> April 2004 the Coordinating Committee agreed the following proposals to strengthen their role:

- Request to Council that the Coordinating Committee be given the power to determine the terms of reference for each Overview and Scrutiny review, subject to taking into account the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) concerned

*The Constitution was amended to that effect at Annual Council Meeting in May 2004*

- Issuing clearer guidelines to OSCs on spending the Overview and Scrutiny budget

*This was provided during the year*

- The Coordinating Committee to meet quarterly with additional meetings to deal with any urgent business

*Implemented, with additional meeting in February to sign off comments on Budget and Service Plan proposals*

- OSC Chairmen to be responsible for reporting on the work of their committee to the Coordinating Committee

*This practice now in place*

- A new format for reporting the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme to the Coordinating Committee

*Work Programme 'Almanac' agreed on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2004 and in place.*

- *'Stakeholder' satisfaction surveys to inform the Coordinating Committee on how Overview and Scrutiny is perceived.*

9. At the start of the Council year the Coordinating Committee asked each OSC to identify up to two topics on which they would focus their Overview activity for the 2004/5 Council year and to use a common set of selection criteria to assess the topics it would be most productive to review – see Appendix 1. The Coordinating Committee also asked the OSCs to use a common template to draw up a project plan for each topic they intended to review. The Coordinating Committee confirmed the OSCs' choice of topics.

10. In total, OSCs worked on 11 major reviews during 2004/5, as well as the annual budget-setting consultation and on scrutiny activity.

11. The Coordinating Committee agreed several new developments to the process of Overview & Scrutiny in Hillingdon. These serve to improve the effectiveness of the function and raise the profile and role of OSCs. The new developments are given below.
- A recommendation action plan, identifying what action is recommended and who / what organisation is asked to implement the recommendation will be included as an appendix to all Final Reports from OSC main topic reviews.
  - An evaluative report will be timetabled into the Committee's work programme to receive an update on how the recommendations have been implemented.
  - O&S Final Reports will be sent directly to the relevant Cabinet Member with a letter requesting a response to the Report's findings and recommendations.
  - Attendees at O&S meetings will be asked to complete a short survey questionnaire so that feedback on the processes can be obtained.
  - Leaflets informing members of the public who attend O&S meetings about the process and protocols have been created and will be distributed.

#### **ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2004/5**

12. The OSCs have produced reports on 11 major reviews and the annual budget setting process (shown in Table 1). This shows a continued high level of performance by Overview & Scrutiny following the achievements of last year.
13. The OSCs have also continued to scrutinise decision-making and service delivery. In line with the Audit Commission recommendations they have sought to focus their interventions on areas where they can make a difference and to evaluate the resulting outcomes.
14. Two of the OSCs – for Education and for Health and Social Care – undertook a parallel review of health promotion in Hillingdon (with Education focusing on the work done in the borough's schools). This included holding a joint meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2004, building on the Committees' previous experience of Joint Committee meeting (in 2003 concerning the Government's Green Paper, *Every Child Matters*).
15. The Corporate Services OSC have agreed to classify some quarterly update reports as information reports which inform Members about the level of implementation of recommendations from internal and external

audit. These reports are discussed at Committee only if specific questions are raised in advance of the meeting. This method has improved the efficiency of Committee proceedings and reduces time pressure on officers.

16. The Environment OSC held a meeting at the Hayes Carnival that successfully engaged local community members in a review of the Council's Green Spaces Strategy.
17. The Health & Social Care OSC has liaised with the Patient and Public Involvement Forum for the Hillingdon Hospital Trust, another body in the growing democratic influence on the local NHS. The Committee's idea to include comments on reviews connected to the operation of the Hillingdon Hospital from the Forum has been cited as good practice by the North West London Strategic Health Authority.
18. The Coordinating Committee have agreed a standard set of measures to ensure effective evaluation of the acceptance and implementation of recommendations made during previous reviews.
19. Another new method for decision-tracking has been to identify action points more clearly in decisions sheets – the accounts of outcomes from OSC meetings. These action points can then be reviewed at the next meeting.

### **The 2004 IDeA Peer Review**

20. The IDeA was invited to carry out a peer review of the Council. Cabinet considered the IDeA's report on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2004. Key findings of the IDeA Peer Review Team included:
  - Overview and Scrutiny seen as 'constructive, responsible and non-partisan'
  - A 'willingness amongst backbenchers to make [Overview and Scrutiny] work with encouraging signs of success'.
21. The IDeA also noted
  - Overview and Scrutiny needs to pursue 'consistency of behaviour, output and impact'
  - There is scope for Overview and Scrutiny to be more involved in performance issues
  - Improvements are subject to availability of resources in Democratic Services.
22. Following this report, the Overview & Scrutiny Coordinating Committee have worked towards the development of a performance management system for Overview & Scrutiny to be more involved and effective in monitoring and assessing performance, and to contribute to the Council's efforts in advancing the Comprehensive Performance Assessment rating.

**TABLE 1: MAIN REVIEW TOPICS IN 2004/5**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Main review topic</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b><i>Community Partnerships and Economic Development</i></b>	Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy	On track for completion	Incorporates Hayes Heston Southall (Heathrow City Growth) continued from 2003/04
	Town Centre Partnerships	On track for completion	
<b><i>Corporate Services</i></b>	Anti-Social Behaviour	<b>Completed</b>	
	Business Continuity Planning	<b>Completed</b>	Seen by Cabinet 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2005
	Budget Setting Process	<b>2005/6 budget review completed</b>	Continuous
<b><i>Education</i></b>	Health Promotion in Hillingdon	<b>Completed</b>	Seen by Cabinet 25 <sup>th</sup> November 04
	Recruitment and Retention in Education Services	On track for completion	
<b><i>Environment</i></b>	Local Development Framework	On track for completion	
	Planning Performance	Working Group membership agreed	
<b><i>Health and Social Care</i></b>	Health Promotion in Hillingdon	<b>Completed</b>	Seen by Cabinet 25 <sup>th</sup> November 04
	National Service Framework for Older People	<b>Completed</b>	
<b><i>Housing</i></b>	Supporting People	<b>Completed</b>	
	Choice Based Lettings	<b>Completed</b>	

## LOOKING AHEAD – DEVELOPMENTS FOR 2005/6

23. The achievements made this year are part of an ongoing development of Hillingdon's Overview & Scrutiny function. This section details some of the areas that will be further developed through 2005/6 and the principal drivers for these developments.

### **(a) Motion on Overview & Scrutiny passed by Council.**

24. On 27<sup>th</sup> January 2005, Council passed the following motion on the role of Overview & Scrutiny:

“This Council recognises the potential value of the Overview & Scrutiny functions in providing a major opportunity:

- To directly engage with service users and communities on specific issues, to hold the Cabinet and key decision-makers to account,
- To help improve performance and therefore the Comprehensive Performance Assessment rating,
- To have an influential role in the policy making process of the Council,
- To give leadership and to influence other local agencies and service providers.

Council also recognises and values the significant contributions made by each of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees and support staff in their work to date.

However Council accepts a robust programme of action is needed in order to develop the full potential of Overview and Scrutiny and agrees:

1. To welcome the increased number of reports from Overview & Scrutiny Committees going to Cabinet and to urge Cabinet members to treat them with the seriousness they deserve and to monitor the implementation of agreed recommendations.
2. To ensure that Overview & Scrutiny functions are clearly understood and given due attention and priority by Corporate Directors and their staff through inclusion in the Council's training programme, staff briefings and by other relevant steps.
3. To hold an annual event for Overview & Scrutiny Members to share knowledge, information and expertise together with best practice from elsewhere.

4. To promote the work of scrutiny with local organisations and through Hillingdon People in order to involve the community more effectively in the process.
  5. To ring-fence and protect the resources currently allocated to Overview & Scrutiny and to request the Head of Democratic Services to bring forward detailed proposals to the Cabinet for consideration, including in light of the Best Value Review of Democratic Services and the Overview & Scrutiny report on the role of the Community Councillor, as part of the 2005/06 budget in order to enhance the support services currently available to Overview and Scrutiny Committees.”
25. The motion gives Overview & Scrutiny a mandate to work to in future developments and raises the profile of Overview & Scrutiny in the Council. The O&S Coordinating Committee will incorporate the points of the motion in its work programme during 2005/6.

**(b) Recognised priorities for the future development of Overview & Scrutiny**

26. As well as the future developments contained within the Council Motion of 27<sup>th</sup> January 2005, the Overview & Scrutiny Coordinating Committee agreed the following items as priorities for developing the Overview & Scrutiny function.

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Priority level</b>
1.	<b><i>'For information' reports</i></b>	EITHER a. Circulate separately to agendas with option for members to raise at next meeting OR b. Include as 'below the line' items on agenda	<i>Not clear why some reports on agenda. Having fewer items on agenda aids focus.</i>  <i>Currently done by Corporate Services OSC for Internal Audit reports.</i>	<b>High</b>
2.	<b><i>Audit and Inspection work and service performance Information</i></b>	Policy agreed in 2003/4. O&S role needs further clarifying.	<i>See comment above and IDeA Peer Review recommendation. Need for O&amp;S work on CPA rating?</i>	<b>High</b>
3.	<b><i>Best Value Reviews</i></b>	Policy agreed in 2003/4. O&S role needs further clarifying.	<i>Needs major re-think on lines of this year's O&amp;S Budget and Service</i>	<b>Medium</b>

			<i>Planning process</i>	
4.	<b>Annual Cabinet Member attendance at O&amp;S Committees</b>		<i>Aim to share view of Cabinet agenda for coming year to help plan O&amp;S work.</i>	<b>Medium</b>
5.	<b>O&amp;S relationship to Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)</b>	May be able to link to ODPM/ALG initiative on LSPs	<i>O&amp;S role unclear. Minimum aim to regularise consultation and monitoring</i>	<b>Medium</b>
6.	<b>'Handling brief' from O&amp;S Team for each meeting</b>	EITHER a. at start of each agenda OR b. circulated separately	<i>Aim to provide context to Members and form of desired outcome. Would - strengthen ability to challenge service departments - require reports to be received earlier - have big resource implication for O&amp;S Team.</i>	<b>Medium</b>
7.	<b>Introduce new design for O&amp;S agendas</b>	Aim to be distinctive from Cabinet and other committee agendas	<i>New design could be introduced with item 17</i>	<b>Low</b>
8.	<b>Involving backbenchers more in O&amp;S activity</b>	Policy agreed in 2003/4. Recognised this was constrained by resource availability	<i>Would best be part of wider Member Development initiatives under consideration</i>	<b>Low</b>

## MAJOR REVIEW TOPICS

### **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OSC**



**Cllr Anthony Way**  
*Chairman*

*Cllr Josephine Barrett  
Cllr Frank Filgate  
Cllr Roshan Ghei*

*Cllr John Hensley  
Cllr John Major Vice-Chairman  
Cllr Mary O'Connor*

#### ***Town Centre Partnerships***

27. The Committee reviewed Town Centre Partnerships in Hillingdon following a request made by the Cabinet. The review focussed on the partnerships operating in Hayes and Uxbridge, in particular the key issues affecting their future health and sustainability, as well as arrangements for supporting other localities in the borough. The Committee made an interim report to Cabinet, with recommendations on the funding and continuity of Hayes Town Partnership after March 2005.
28. The Committee received evidence from: the Hayes and Uxbridge Town Centre Managers and Partnership Chairmen; Hillingdon Chamber of Commerce; Hayes and Harlington Community Development Forum; local MPs for Hayes and Harlington and Uxbridge; Hillingdon Youth Council 'Safe Surroundings' project; and Harefield Village Forum. The Committee is in the process of finalising its report. Recommendations include recognition of the benefits that town centre partnerships can bring to regeneration initiatives and to sustainable enterprises, and research into appropriate funding arrangements and management strategies, with options for future development.

#### ***Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy***

28. The Committee decided to adopt 'Regeneration and Economic Development' as one of its major review topics for 2004/05, following on from its review of the Hayes Heston Southall initiative during 2003/04. The Committee wished to continue with work begun the previous year and to link this topic to a number of related initiatives under a common theme of business regeneration and sustainability. The Committee met with the developers of Southall Gas Works site and Hayes Station site and received officers' reports on the



development of the Hillingdon Economic Sustainability Strategy. Comments of the Committee have influenced the content and direction of the final strategy document. The Committee report is in the final stages of completion.

### ***Voluntary Sector***

29. The Committee held two meetings devoted to Voluntary Sector issues. Local groups were invited to and attended the first meeting, and at the second examined Cabinet budget proposals with the help of expert witnesses.

## **CORPORATE SERVICES OSC**



**Cllr Richard Lewis**  
*Chairman*

*Cllr David Bishop Vice-Chairman*  
*Cllr Steve Carey*  
*Cllr Paul Harmsworth*

*Cllr Phoday Jarjussey*  
*Cllr Alf Langley*  
*Cllr Mike Usher*

### ***Anti-Social Behaviour***

30. The Committee agreed to review three elements of how the Council addresses anti-social behaviour in Hillingdon: CCTV, youth services and education provision. The Committee held a full-day seminar as part of the information-gathering section of the review, receiving presentations from Police and Council officers and managers involved in schemes addressing anti-social behaviour. The Committee completed their review in April 2005 and made several recommendations to the Cabinet for improving and advancing the ways in which the Council tackles anti-social behaviour.

### ***Business Continuity***

31. The Committee have examined the resilience of the Council's plans and measures that exist in preparation for civil or natural emergencies. These measures are designed to enable the Council's primary functions to operate following any disruption caused from severe weather, major transportation incidences and even terrorist attacks. The Committee reviewed the practices in operation and identified a number of recommendations about the planning and coordination of business continuity measures and in relation to the security of Council premises. The Committee completed their report in February 2005.

## **EDUCATION OSC**



**Cllr Peter Ryerson**  
*Chairman*

*Reverend Doug Cave*  
*Cllr Peter Curling Vice- Chairman*  
*Cllr Margaret Grant (until Dec)*

*Cllr Brian Crowe*  
*Cllr Mike Gettleson*  
*Cllr John Hensley*  
*Tony Little*

*Vanessa Thornborough*  
*Cllr Paramjit Sethi*  
*Cllr Andrew Retter (from Dec)*

### ***Health Promotion in Hillingdon***

32. The Committee reviewed the work of Healthy Hillingdon, a health promotion partnership between the Council and Hillingdon Primary Care Trust (PCT). The Committee focused on the work that is undertaken in schools and how the partnership supports and develops its educative programmes for schools – both for children and adults in the lifelong learning schemes.
33. The review included a joint meeting with the Health & Social Care OSC, which was reviewing the partnership arrangements, funding and general health promotion aspects of Healthy Hillingdon. A joint report was composed. The Committees succeeded in securing £100,000 funding that had been withdrawn from Healthy Hillingdon and made recommendations to strengthen the capacity and work of the partnership.

### ***Recruitment and Retention in Education in Hillingdon***

34. The review aimed to identify and address recruitment and retention problems in employing ‘frontline’ staff in Hillingdon’s maintained schools and Adult Education and Youth Services. The Committee received reports on current strategies and priorities for future action from officers of the School Improvement Service, Adult Education Service and the Youth Service. Evidence was received from head teachers from three schools in the Hillingdon Excellence Cluster and representatives from three teaching unions. The Committee report in the final stages of completion and includes recommendations on continuing to increase support for newly qualified teachers and strategies to support schools where recruitment is still very difficult, particularly secondary schools.

## **ENVIRONMENT OSC**



**Cllr Michael Cox**  
*Chairman*

*Cllr Bruce Baker*  
*Cllr Ann Banks*  
*Cllr David Bishop*

*Cllr Anthony Burles*  
*Cllr Janet Duncan Vice-Chairman*  
*Cllr Norman Nunn-Price*

### ***Local Development Framework***

35. The Committee reviewed the development of the Local Development Framework (LDF). The review focussed on a series of briefing notes on four main areas. These included the Hillingdon Design and Accessibility Statement, Public Consultation / Statement of Community Involvement, Supplementary Planning Guidance and Affordable Housing. Evidence was received from officers, current practice in Hillingdon and the impact of the other legislation such as the London Plan. The Committee will present its final report to Cabinet on 9th June 2005. The Committee's recommendations sought to highlight areas of concern and propose a series of enhancements to Cabinet for consideration for when it receives Hillingdon's draft LDF document later in the year.

### ***Planning Performance***

36. The Committee decided that a Working Group should do this review, aiming to assess how the performance of the Planning department may be improved. Nominations for the membership of the Working Group were sought from the Whips Committee. Cabinet requested on 31<sup>st</sup> March that the Working Group also look at the findings of the Audit Commission's report on development control statistics. Overview & Scrutiny Coordinating Committee agreed this addition to the Working Group's terms of reference on 10<sup>th</sup> May. The Working Group will be meeting in the new Council year (2005/6)

## **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE OSC**



**Cllr Catherine Dann**  
*Chairman*

*Cllr Janet Gardner*  
*Cllr Lee Griffin (until Sept.)*  
*Cllr Shirley Harper-O'Neill*  
*Cllr Phoday Jarjussey (from Sept.)*

*Cllr John Major*  
*Cllr Mary O'Connor Vice-Chairman*  
*Cllr Andrew Vernazza*

### ***Health Promotion in Hillingdon***

37. The Committee reviewed the partnership arrangements of Healthy Hillingdon, a health promotion partnership between the Council and Hillingdon Primary Care Trust (PCT). The Committee made two interim reports to Cabinet on the issue of the Council's financial contribution to the partnership, successfully recommending the reinstatement of £100,000 that had been cut from Healthy Hillingdon's budget.
38. During the review the Committee received; presentations from officers; examples of best practice; evidence from a health promotion practitioner from south east London; and questioned the Cabinet Member for Social Services and Health. The Committee's final report, including the comments and recommendations made by the Education OSC who had reviewed the educative side of Healthy Hillingdon's work and contribution, was presented to Cabinet and to the PCT in November 2004. The final report made recommendations aimed at strengthening and formalising aspects of the partnership.

### ***The National Service Framework for Older People***

39. The Committee focused on two aspects of the National Service Framework for Older People: intermediate care and the treatment and prevention of falls. The Committee received reports on how the Department of Health's milestones under the NSF had been met and what actions were being taken to improve the care provided for older people. The Committee's recommendations supported the ongoing pilot project in the Falls Service and the developments in intermediate care.

## **HOUSING OSC**



**Cllr Keith Burrows**  
*Chairman*

*Cllr Josephine Barrett*  
*Cllr Margaret Grant (until*

*Cllr Janet Gardner*  
*Cllr David Horne*

*Cllr Mike Usher*  
*Cllr Elaine Webb*

### **Supporting People**

40. The Committee reviewed the Supporting People Strategy. The review focused on the management and the development of the Supporting People 5 year Strategy in Hillingdon. Evidence was received from officers, current practice in Hillingdon, comparisons with practice within the West London sub-region and best practice arising from Audit Commission Inspections. The Committee also considered the outcome of consultation with stakeholders as reflected in the draft Hillingdon and West London Supporting People strategies. The Committee presented its final report to Cabinet on 31st March 2005. The Committee's recommendations sought to support the Council and its partners in the shared objective of delivering cost effective, sustainable Supporting People services that meet the needs of vulnerable people.

### **Choice-Based Lettings**

41. The Committee reviewed the Council's Choice-Based Lettings scheme. The review focused on several aspects. Firstly, the Committee considered whether the Council should continue to use the Locata scheme as a provider of Choice-Based Lettings in Hillingdon beyond February 2005. Secondly, the review included a full examination of the biddings process with special interest being paid to the availability, supply and access for those bidders with disabilities. Evidence was received from officers, best practice information and a number of local organizations and community groups representing bidders with disabilities and those from the black and minority ethnic communities.
42. The Committee presented a interim report to Cabinet on 10th February 2005. The recommendations agreed that Hillingdon Council should continue its Membership of the Locata Choice-Based Lettings scheme beyond February 2005 and also included a variety of improvements to Locata to address the needs of bidders with disabilities and those from the black and minority ethnic communities.

## **SCRUTINISING DECISION-MAKING AND SERVICE DELIVERY**

43. The following paragraphs highlight some of the OSCs' work scrutinising decision-making and service delivery. A fuller account is at Appendix 2.

### ***COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OSC***

44. The Committee received the draft Annual Performance Plan (June 2004) and the Voluntary Sector Leasing Policy (July 2004). The Committee also considered the Cabinet decision on Postal Services (Sept. 2004), the proposal to set up a Working Group was not taken on by the Committee.

### ***CORPORATE SERVICES OSC***

45. The Committee have continued to monitor the Council's budgetary and audit processes. In reviewing the budget setting process last year, the Committee recommended changes to the involvement of OSCs in the budget-setting process. A training event was held for members of the Corporate Services OSC and the Chairmen of the other OSCs.
46. The Committee commented on a draft version of the Council's Racial Harassment Strategy and the Council Plan. The Committee received a Call-In on the organisational review of the Council on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2004. The issue was not referred back to Cabinet. The Committee received quarterly updates on the implementation of internal audit recommendations and on the Council's risk management, as well as monthly budget monitoring reports.

### ***EDUCATION OSC***

47. The Committee called the Cabinet Member for Social Services and Health to give evidence in their review of Health Promotion in Hillingdon. The Committee sent a minor amendment to the Local Education Authority Strategy and Partnerships Cabinet report (July 2004). The amendment was not supported by Cabinet. The Committee also considered the following Forward Plan items (in February 2005):
- Schools of the future
  - Hillingdon Arts Strategy
  - Hillingdon Adult Education Service Adult Learning Re-Inspection and Options Appraisal.
  - Hillingdon Plus: A Strategy for Developing Extended Schools in Hillingdon.

48. The Committee sent comments on the latter report to Cabinet which were supported and incorporated into the Cabinet's decisions.

### ***ENVIRONMENT OSC***

49. The Committee considered the Forward Plan reports Best Value Review of the Street Scene (Sept. 2004), Local Implementation Plan (Dec. 2004) and the Borough Transport Strategy (Dec. 2004). The Committee received one call-in; Cabinet's decision on the Household Recycling Service for mixed recyclables. The recommendations referred back to Cabinet were supported in part in the final decision.
50. The Committee also receives a quarterly report on risk management and key performance indicators.

### ***HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE OSC***

51. The Committee called in a Cabinet decision on the Modernisation of Learning Disability Services, which prompted a revised final decision from Cabinet.
52. The Committee received quarterly reports on Social Services provision and on Vulnerable and Looked After Children, as requested by the Committee, as well as an Internal Audit report into an allegation of fraud and a Forward Plan item 'Domestic Violence Review' from the Housing Department.

### ***HOUSING OSC***

53. The Committee received one call-in on Hillingdon Homes Probationary Tenancies, which was not referred back to the Cabinet Member.
54. The Committee reviewed the Housing Accommodation Strategy Forward Plan item and quarterly reports on key performance indicators and risk management.



## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BUDGET

55. A budget of £10,000 was agreed for Overview and Scrutiny Committees to spend in support of their research and other activity. This money is controlled by the Head of Scrutiny and Member Services, who submits regular reports to the Coordinating Committee. The Committee's role is to advise on overall direction and priorities.
56. Over half of this budget was spent in 2004/5. Details are in Table 2 below.

**TABLE 2: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BUDGET 2004/5**

Item	£
Community Partnerships & Economic Development OSC – Economic Regeneration review; Southall Gas Works site development meeting	90.00
Scrutiny Member training (Bromley; 3 Members) – Development of Overview & Scrutiny	75.00
IDeA Chairman Training (Warwick - February 2005; 2 Members)	1,175.00
Accommodation costs (Training course, Warwick)	103.40
Budget Scrutiny Training (IPF - November 10 <sup>th</sup> 2004; 18 Members)	1,293.38
Joining the Democratic Health Network	2,610.00
<b>Total Expenditure to date</b>	<b>5,346.78</b>
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>10,000</b>
<b>Residual at 4<sup>th</sup> April 2004</b>	<b>4,653.22</b>

## **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT**

57. Members of the Coordinating Committee and the Corporate Services OSC took part in training on Budget Scrutiny. Individual Members have also attended Overview and Scrutiny meetings at neighbouring authorities.
58. The Overview & Scrutiny Team created and launched a 'Overview & Scrutiny Toolkit', an information resource for Members including advice and guidance for best practice in Overview & Scrutiny.

**ASSESSMENT TOOL**

**PART ONE: SELECTION CRITERIA**

**(a) Possible reasons for scrutiny**

1. Strong public interest
2. Government pressure
3. Included in Hillingdon Improvement Programme  
e.g. performance standards poor/below target
4. Inspection report recommendation

**(b) Scope for making an impact**

1. Area within Council's control/influence
2. High impact on residents
3. Expertise available on which to draw
4. Good practice available elsewhere

**Topics that score highest should have priority for consideration**

## **PART TWO: BACKGROUND SUMMARY INFORMATION**

To be provided by Group Director

### **Intended scope**

- scale of Council programme
- trends in spending, staff etc
- performance data
- service plan objectives

### **Suggested structure**

Introduction

Core purpose

Key data

- number of customers
- Council spend
- staff involved

Delivering the service

- range of services
- structure of organisation
- other key support
  - internal
  - external

Budget

- sources of funding
- grants sought/obtained
- pressures ahead

Leader's Statement

Community Plan

Hillingdon Improvement Programme

Best Value Programme

Statutory, professional & policy context

ICT strategy

HR strategy

Performance monitoring

- how done
- main indicators

Service Plan

- objectives
- action plan

## APPENDIX 2

### SCRUTINISING DECISION-MAKING AND SERVICE DELIVERY

#### **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Comments on Cabinet Forward Plan items	8/7/04	<p><b>Hillingdon Compact</b> <i>Outcome</i> :Endorsed report – CPED had contributed to development of the Compact</p> <p><b>Voluntary Sector Leasing Policy FIN 156</b> <i>Outcome</i>: Committee requested information on the current status of the Shops Policy</p>
Cabinet decisions called in	-	-
Budget Monitoring	-	This OSC does not monitor departmental budgets.
Budget Setting Scrutiny	13/01/05	<p><b>Voluntary Sector Grants:</b> <i>Outcome</i>: Recommendations to Cabinet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- With reference to the groups that gave evidence to the Committee (HAVS, Hillingdon Carers, Home-Start Hillingdon), that Cabinet reconsider the level of grant offered and agree to substantially part-fund all three organisations. This approach would enable them to seek equivalent match funding elsewhere, and, with respect to Home-Start Hillingdon, would enable that organisation to remain in business.</li> <li>- That Cabinet look again at the Council's policy of not meeting the costs of projects where funding from an external trust had ceased, or come to the end of the funding term.</li> <li>- That Cabinet increase the overall budget available for grants to the Voluntary Sector.</li> </ul> <p>Cabinet agreed to "take into account the views of the Partnerships and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Homestart, Hillingdon Carers and HAVS when making decisions on the allocations."</p>
Service Plans	-	-
Best Value Reviews, Audit, Inspection Reports & Performance Reports	17/6/04	<p><b>Annual Performance Plan</b> <i>Outcome</i>: Committee complimented the authors of the report</p>

**CORPORATE SERVICES  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Comments on Cabinet Forward Plan items	-	-
Cabinet decisions called in	06/07/04	<b>Organisational review of the Council</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Decided not to refer decision back to Cabinet.
Budget Monitoring	(monthly)	<b>Finance update reports</b> <i>Outcome:</i> For Information, no comments to Cabinet.
Budget Setting Scrutiny	13/01/05	<b>Medium Term Financial Forecast report for Chief Executive's Office</b> <i>Outcome:</i> recommended Cabinet to include in the final budget: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Multi-agency anti-social behaviour team (including legal support)</li> <li>- Remedial work with 14-17 year olds at risk of or involved in anti-social or criminal behaviour</li> </ul>
	13/01/05	<b>Medium Term Financial Forecast report for Finance &amp; Property Services.</b> <i>Outcome:</i> recommended Cabinet to include in the final budget: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additional posts to strengthen financial management</li> <li>- Additional posts to strengthen Internal Audit provision</li> </ul>
	08/02/05	<b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny response to budget consultation:</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Sent collected O&S comments to Cabinet.
Service Plans	13/01/05	<b>Chief Executive's Office Service Plan</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Noted
	13/01/05	<b>Finance &amp; Property Service Plan.</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Noted
Best Value Reviews, Audit, Inspection Reports and Performance Reports	06/07/04	<b>Internal Audit Annual Report 2003/4:</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Noted.
	02/09/04	<b>Implementation of Internal Audit recommendations</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Noted
	16/11/04	
	08/02/05	

## **EDUCATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Comments on Cabinet Forward Plan items	09/02/05	<p><b>Hillingdon Plus: A Strategy for Developing Extended Schools in Hillingdon</b>  <i>Outcome:</i> Recommendation to Cabinet:  That in the process of determining a strategy for extended schools in Hillingdon, Cabinet be aware of the inherent risks in relation to maintaining funding in future years and that there may be additional costs arising with respect to travel, insurance, additional responsibility for the site, maintenance / wear and tear of the building, etc</p> <p>Cabinet supported this recommendation.</p>
Cabinet decisions called in	-	-
Budget Monitoring	-	-
Budget Setting Scrutiny	26/01/05	<p><b>Medium Term Financial Forecast for Education, Youth &amp; Leisure</b>  <i>Outcome:</i> The Committee expressed concern that the statement "Reductions in services to vulnerable children and young people such as LINK Counselling and curriculum and policy work in schools across the borough would occur" implied that these services would be cut.  Officers gave an assurance that services to vulnerable children would be protected; the Committee therefore recommended that this proposal be re-worded to make this explicit.</p> <p>Recommended that Cabinet approve the £1m proposed increase in schools budgets beyond the passporting minimum, to comply with the Leader's Statement aspiration that budgets for schools match the level of the Formula Spending Share (FSS).  The Cabinet support this proposal.</p>
Service Plans	6/7/04	<p><b>Hillingdon LEA Strategic Priorities 2004/09</b>  <i>Outcome:</i> Committee endorsed the strategy, subject to the addition of a specific reference to promoting extended schools. The Cabinet did not support this recommendation.</p>
	26/01/05	<p><b>Considered EYL service plan</b>  <i>Outcome:</i> Noted</p>
Best Value Reviews, Audit, Inspection Reports and Performance Reports	-	-

**ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Comments on Cabinet Forward Plan items	23/09/04	<p><b>Best Value Review of Street Scene</b>  <i>Outcome:</i> 2 of the 3 recommendations made were agreed by Cabinet:            Cabinet Agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- That the Council publicise the Code of Practice it adopted in March 2002</li> <li>- To prioritise and phase in the introduction of the £1.359M investment</li> </ul> <p>Cabinet rejected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- That the Best Value Review incorporate guidance from the Government Department for the Environment, Fisheries and Rural Affairs</li> </ul>
	27/08/04	<p><b>Household recycling</b>  <i>Outcome:</i> Cabinet agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- That the signage by recycling bins be improved and that these bins be emptied more regularly to reduce fly-tipping</li> </ul> <p>Cabinet rejected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- That a greater proportion of the £160,000 be used for recycling, to include the provision of 'self service' recycling bins at the Civic Amenity sites</li> </ul>
	09/12/04	<p><b>Local implementation plan</b>  <i>Outcome:</i> Noted</p>
	09/12/04	<p><b>Borough transport strategy</b>  <i>Outcome:</i> Noted</p>



Cabinet decisions called in	27/8/04	<p><b>Household Recycling Service for Mixed Recyclables</b> Reconsider Cabinet decision 12/8/04 <i>Outcome:</i> it was agreed to refer the decision back to the Cabinet with the following recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All Councillors be asked to explore the options for bottle bank sites within their wards and work closely with Residents Associations to explain the benefits of them.</li> <li>2. That the £160,000 revenue funding identified for 2004/05 not be returned to the General Fund and be ring fenced to the Waste Division. Options suggested for this money included increasing the number of bottle banks in the Borough and management support</li> <li>3. That solutions should be actively sought to optimise local disposal of waste.</li> <li>4. That the Council actively seek to increase the use of recycled goods for example in the construction of roads and pavements, in line with the Mayor of London's recommendations.</li> <li>5. That the Action Plan agreed by Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2004 be affirmed.</li> </ol> <p>Cabinet agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. That the Cabinet notes that the Action Plan is eminently sensible and was made after adequate examination of the deferral of glass recycling and will provide a value for money service in moving towards a more comprehensive weekly recycling service.</li> <li>b. That the Cabinet Member for Environment presents a report to Cabinet detailing the proposed use of the current year saving of £160,000, including the provision of additional bottle banks.</li> <li>c. That the Cabinet Member for Environment writes to all Members of the Council reminding them of the benefits of recycling and working where appropriate with Residents Associations asking them to explore the options for bottle banks within their wards.</li> <li>d. That Cabinet notes the benefits of local disposal of waste both in recycling as in the recent approval of using a local composting facility and when examining alternatives to landfill for household waste.</li> <li>e. That officers are requested to work with the Cabinet Assistant for the Environment to produce a report on his initiative for the use of recycled goods, not restricted to roads and pavements.</li> <li>f. That the decisions of the Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2004 are endorsed.</li> </ol>
Budget Monitoring	19/10/04 11/01/05 19/04/05	<p><b>Budget report – capital quarterly</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Noted</p>

	03/11/04	<b>Revenue budget monitoring &amp; forecasting 2004/5</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Noted
<b>Budget Setting Scrutiny</b>	01/02/05	<b>Considered MTFE for Environment and Consumer Protection group.</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Recommended to Cabinet that four Planning Officer posts are required. Cabinet did not support this recommendation.
<b>Service Plans</b>	01/02/05	<b>Considered Environment and Consumer Protection Group Service Plan</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Noted
<b>Best Value Reviews, Audit, Inspection Reports and Performance Reports</b>	23/09/04 29/03/05 18/11/04	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Noted

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

<p>Comments on Cabinet Forward Plan items</p>	<p>02/11/04  02/11/04</p>	<p><b>Domestic Violence Review</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Commented in support of review and gave recommendations to review</p> <p><b>Wanless Report</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Commented in support of review</p>
<p>Cabinet decisions called in</p>	<p>19/05/04  13/12/04</p>	<p><b>Modernisation of Learning Disability Services</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Revised report recommendations for Cabinet to consider. Cabinet did not change its decision.</p> <p><b>Modernisation of Learning Disability Services</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Referred two recommendations to Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- That the decision to close Bourne Lodge be rescinded and that the assessments of the needs of the residents be completed and appropriate packages of care be provided before any alternative use of Bourne Lodge is decided upon.</li> <li>- That the parents/carers are fully involved in the ongoing process and that regular reports of progress are made to the Health &amp; Social Care Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee.</li> </ul> <p>Cabinet agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- That Cabinet now decides that no final decision as to the future of Bourne lodge is to be made until the following has been provided for all the service users: [1] the completion of specialist assessments including risk assessments; [2] the identification and implementation of appropriate care packages. Cabinet agrees that a report will be brought back before it for a final decision to be made in relation to the future of Bourne Lodge.</li> <li>- Cabinet endorses Recommendation (b) from the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the parents/carers of the residents continue to be kept fully informed in the ongoing process and that regular reports of progress are made to this Committee and also to the Cabinet Member for Social Services and Health.</li> </ul>
<p>Budget Monitoring</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>-</p>
<p>Budget Setting Scrutiny</p>	<p>30/11/04</p>	<p><b>Budget &amp; Service Planning – Social Services, 2005/6-07/8</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Noted</p>

	11/01/05	<b>Medium Term Financial Forecast for Social Services</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Recommended to Cabinet that the Council should pursue representations to central government for payment for those services supplied by this Council's Social Services at, and as a consequence of, Heathrow.
<b>Service Plans</b>	23/06/04	<b>Social Services Group Plan –</b> <i>Outcome:</i> OSC to receive quarterly updates on levels of provision.
	02/11/04 08/02/05	<b>Quarterly Update on Vulnerable Children</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Noted
	30/11/04	<b>Update on Social Services provision</b>
	11/01/05	<b>Social Services Group Plan</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Noted
<b>Best Value Reviews, Audit, Inspection Reports and Performance Reports</b>	24/08/04	<b>PCT Star-rating –</b> <i>Outcome:</i> OSC called Chief Executives of the PCT and the Hillingdon Hospital NHS Trust to next meeting.
	28/09/04	<b>Attendance of Chief Executives of the PCT &amp; the Hospital Trust</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Questioned attendees about local services. OSC to receive progress report on PCT's Performance Improvement Plan and Development Plan in March 05
	02/11/04	<b>Internal Audit Fraud Investigation (x2)</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Noted

## **HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Comments on Cabinet Forward Plan items	15/6/04	<b>Housing Accommodation Strategy</b> <i>Outcome:</i> "Although there was a majority agreement to cease the Homeless from Home policy with immediate effect there was opposition to this from some members of the committee"
Cabinet decisions called in	23/02/05	<b>Housing Probationary Tenancies</b> (Cabinet Member decision) <i>Outcome:</i> Not referred back to decision-maker
Budget Monitoring	28/7/04 15/02/05	<b>Budget Report – HRA, General Fund, Capital</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Noted
Budget Setting Scrutiny	16/11/04  20/01/05	<b>Budget &amp; service planning for Housing Services 2005/6-07/8</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Noted  <b>Medium Term Financial Forecast for Housing</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Endorsed Priority 1 proposals – (i) the provision of low cost intermediate housing for key workers and – (ii) a Borough-wide assessment of houses in multiple occupation and to support the Priority 2 and 3 proposals should additional funding be made available especially Supporting People on which the Committee had concerns about lack of sufficient funding  Cabinet did not support the provision of low cost intermediate housing for key workers but did support a growth in funding for the Supporting People reviews.
Service Plans	20/01/05	<b>Housing Service Plan</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Noted
Best Value Reviews, Audit, Inspection Reports and Performance Reports	15/6/04 21/9/04  15/6/04 21/9/04 08/03/05  28/7/04  28/7/04 20/01/05  21/9/04 14/12/04  08/03/05	<b>Hillingdon Homes Performance Quarterly</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Noted  <b>Housing Performance Indicators</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Noted  <b>Monitoring Choice Based Lettings</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Noted  <b>Risk Management Quarterly</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Noted  <b>Internal Audit Report on SX3 System Security</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Noted  <b>Key Performance Indicators: Quarterly.</b> <i>Outcome:</i> Noted

	21/10/05	<p><b>Private Sector Housing: Best Value Review</b></p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> Recommended to Cabinet that it commission a report, for those statutory areas that the review identified as being under-resourced. To bring that report to Cabinet within a reasonable timescale with recommendations. (It was noted that these areas could have an adverse effect on the CPA (Comprehensive Performance Assessment) scoring for Housing.)</p> <p>That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the lack of resources in Hillingdon's Empty Homes section compared to other four star Authorities. That the Cabinet consider as a matter of urgency, a report on the current level of resources and effectiveness of this service.</p> <p><b>Cabinet decision:</b> It was noted that the Cabinet Member and officers would meet with the Party Leads on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to discuss priority areas for a review of resources and the effectiveness of the Empty Homes Section.</p>
--	----------	--

### AUDIT COMMISSION REVIEW (2003) RECOMMENDATIONS

For the development of the Overview & Scrutiny function in Hillingdon the Audit Commission recommended the following actions:

- encouraging Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs) to take more of the initiative in setting Work Programme priorities and to spend more time focusing on major reviews and less considering items being dealt with as part of the Cabinet's agenda
- making more use of project management techniques to ensure reviews are completed and, when completed, assessing the way reviews have been conducted
- devising procedures for tackling cross-cutting issues; the Domestic Violence Working Party is an example of this
- involving OSCs in Best Value Reviews at key points when their input will be most valuable
- taking systematic account of audit and inspection work and performance information in Work Programme planning
- using external support more widely
- in preparing to question witnesses, devoting time to planning the scope of the discussion
- redefining the role of the Coordinating Committee to provide more proactive leadership – see next paragraph
- involving Members more in detailed research and drafting, and backbenchers in overview and scrutiny activity generally, with officer and development support.

The Action Plan to implement these changes has been completed.