
Meeting	Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date	11th June 2012
Subject	Task and Finish Group Updates
Report of	Scrutiny Office
Summary	This report provides an update on the progress of the current Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups.

Officer Contributors	Melissa James, Scrutiny Officer
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	All
Enclosures	None
For decision by	Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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1.1 That the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the progress of the current Task and Finish Groups as set out in sections 9.1 to 9.7 of this report.

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 Annual Council, 19 May 2009, Agenda Item 13.2.1, Report of the Special (Constitution Review) Committee, Overview and Scrutiny: New Arrangements
- 2.2 Policy & Performance Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 2 June 2010, Agenda Item 7 (Overview & Scrutiny Appointments)
- 2.3 Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 8th March 2012, Agenda Item 10 (Any other Item the Chairman Decides are Urgent)
- 2.4 Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 18th April 2012, Agenda Item 14 (Task and Finish Group Appointments)

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Panels and Task and Finish Groups must ensure that the work of Scrutiny is reflective of the Council's priorities.
- 3.2 The three priority outcomes set out in the 2012/13 Corporate Plan are: –
 - Better services with less money
 - Sharing opportunities, sharing responsibilities
 - A successful London suburb

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 A failure to monitor the Council's key priorities and improvement initiatives may result in reduced service quality and lower customer satisfaction. Failure to address issues of public concern through the overview and scrutiny process may also result in reputational damage to the Council.

5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 5.1 Under the Equality Act 2010 ("the Act"), the council and all other organisations exercising public functions on its behalf must have due regard to the need to: a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; b) advance equality of opportunity between those with a protected characteristic and those without; and c) promote good relations between those with a protected characteristic and those without. The 'protected characteristics' referred to are: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy; maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. The duty to eliminate discrimination also extends to marriage and civil partnership.

- 5.2 In addition to the Terms of Reference of the Committee, and in so far as relating to matters within its remit, the role of the Committee is to perform the Overview and Scrutiny role in relation to:
- The Council's leadership role in relation to diversity and inclusiveness; and
 - The fulfilment of the Council's duties as employer including recruitment and retention, personnel, pensions and payroll services, staff development, equalities and health and safety.
- 5.3 Task and Finish Groups will need to take into account equalities considerations throughout the lifecycle of the review and through the ongoing monitoring, via the Scrutiny Office, by implementation of accepted recommendations.

6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance & Value for Money, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 6.1 Task and Finish Group reviews must take into consideration value for money considerations when conducting their work, including the costs and benefits (both financial and non-financial) associated with any recommendations made by the Group. The costs associated with administering the task and finish group reviews will be met within existing resources in the governance service.

7. LEGAL ISSUES

- 7.1 None in the context of this report.
- 7.2 Any legal considerations as they relate to individual Task and Finish Group reviews will be addressed at the commencement and throughout the review process.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

- 8.1 The scope of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees is contained within Part 2, Article 6 of the Council's Constitution.
- 8.2 The Terms of Reference of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees are set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (Part 4 of the Constitution).
- 8.3 Item 7 and 8 of Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference states that:

"The role of the Committee is to

"appoint scrutiny panels and Task and Finish Groups needed to facilitate the overview and scrutiny function" and to

“coordinate and monitor the work of scrutiny panels and Task and Finish Groups, including considering reports and recommendations and referring to the relevant decision making body.”

9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 9.1 At the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 18th April 2012, the Committee considered a list of potential topics for Task and Finish Group reviews.
- 9.2 The Committee were requested to establish and appoint three Task and Finish Groups at any one time and to indicate their preference for the order in which these groups should commence their work.
- 9.3 The Committee agreed that the following task and finish groups as set out below be established and appointed.

Task and Finish Group	Summary of Proposal
Children's Centres	In-depth analysis of the role of Children's Centres and their contribution to delivering the Council's Early Intervention Strategy and supporting the Safer Families Project.
The effectiveness of Task and Finish Groups	Examine the effectiveness of the Task and Finish Group reviews completed since May 2009. Review to consider effectiveness of: holding the Executive to account; success in developing policy and/or driving service improvements; and an evaluation of the impact of recommendations.
Road Safety	Examine the safety of Barnet's roads, including accident statistics and potential cost effective road safety improvements

- 9.4 The Committee agreed that any review recommended to go forward would be subject to an initial feasibility study to identify key issues and questions to be explored and to assess areas where scrutiny could have the greatest impact /potential for change. Following this evaluation, Members of the Task and Finish Group would make a decision whether to proceed with their review or seek alternative ways of investigating their issue (i.e. requesting Committee reports at a Scrutiny meeting, raising a Member's item, or liaison/ referral to external partners depending on the issue).

- 9.5 The Committee agreed that the Task and Finish Groups not established at this meeting would be placed on the long list of topic proposals to be considered for the next wave of Task and Finish Groups to be established in July 2012.
- 9.6 The Committee are requested to note that feasibility studies are currently being undertaken for the agreed task and finish groups and task and finish group meetings will take place to discuss initial findings and potential outcomes.
- 9.7 Officers from the Scrutiny Office will provide a verbal update to the Committee on the progress of the three currently convened Task and Finish Groups at the meeting.
- 9.8 A further update on the progress of the Task and Finish Groups will be provided at the next committee meeting in July 2012

10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 None

**Legal – PJ
Finance-JH**