
Meeting	Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date	7 th February 2013
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	Anita Vukomanovic, Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	All
Enclosures	None
For decision by	Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Contact for further information: Anita Vukomanovic, anita.vukomanovic@barnet.gov.uk,
Tel: 020 8359 7034

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the progress of the Task and Finish Groups that are currently underway.**
- 1.2 That the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee defer the start of the Children's Centres Task and Finish Group.**

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 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 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 consider proposed topics for task and finish groups reviews, then establish and appoint three Groups to commence their work as soon as resources became available. At the meeting, the Committee agreed that the following reviews should progress:

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.
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

- 9.3 There are currently three active Task and Finish Groups / Overview and Scrutiny Panels. Updates for each group are given below:

9.4 Effectiveness of Task and Finish Groups:

- 9.4.1 At a meeting of the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 April 2012, the Committee resolved that a politically proportioned Task and Finish Group be convened on the Effectiveness of Task and Finish Groups. The Members of this group were: Cllr. Brian Salinger (Chairman), Cllr. Sury Khatri, Cllr. Reuben Thompstone, Cllr. Alison Moore and Cllr. Alan Schneiderman.
- 9.4.2 The group held their initial meeting on 28 June 2012. The outline remit of the group was to consider the impact and effectiveness of reviews completed since May 2009. In accordance with established best practice, the TFG undertook a series of evidence gathering sessions.

- 9.4.3 On 16th July 2012, the Group received evidence from the Research and Information Manager at the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS). The Group also received evidence from the Cllr. Braun, the Chairman of the previous Health and Social Care Integration TFG.
- 9.4.4 On the 18th July 2012, the Group met with the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive in order to question how the political and managerial leadership of the authority viewed TFGs.
- 9.4.5 The final report was drafted and sent to Members of the Task and Finish Group on 2 November 2012. A draft version of the report is now with the Chairman of the Group for comment and sign off. The final report of the Group will be presented to a future meeting of this Committee.

9.5 Road Safety:

- 9.5.1 At a meeting of the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 April 2012, the Committee resolved that a politically proportioned Task and Finish Group be convened. The Members of the Road Safety Task and Finish Group are: Cllr. Brian Coleman (Chairman), Cllr. Geof Cooke, Cllr. Andreas and Tambourides.
- 9.5.2 In line with the protocols agreed with Members and following the best practice guidelines for good scrutiny, the scrutiny office undertook an initial feasibility study to assess whether road safety was an appropriate topic to take forward as a TFG. Following consideration of the information contained within the briefing, Members determined to proceed with a review.
- 9.5.3 The Road Safety Task and Finish Group held an initial meeting on 5 July 2012 to consider the feasibility study and discuss the remit and scope of the Road Safety Review. Further meetings of the group have been delayed due to a combination of factors including a need to prioritise resources towards the main scrutiny committee work programmes in particular the scrutiny process surrounding the NSCSO procurement.
- 9.5.4 The next meeting of the Group is currently being arranged with representatives from Transport for London and the Metropolitan Police being canvassed for their availability.
- 9.5.5 Members have been supplied with all briefings requested at the initial meeting including:
- Statistics and Data Relating to Traffic Accidents in Barnet;
 - School Travel Plans and Road Safety Education Briefing;
 - Submissions from the Association of British Drivers and London Cycle Campaign, Barnet;
 - Shared Space Briefing;
 - Mobile Phone Use Briefing;

- Older Drivers Briefing;
- Mayors Transport Strategy Proposals to Improve Safety and Security;
- TfL Casualties 2011 Factsheet;
- Dept for Transport Infrastructure and Cyclist Safety Briefing; and
- Haringey 20mph Speed Limit Scrutiny Review.

9.5.6 CommUNITY Barnet have also been engaged to provide submissions from community groups with regard to the views of the boroughs older residents on road safety measures.

9.5.7 It is anticipated that the Group will reconvene their review in the coming weeks subject to member and stakeholder availability.

Education Strategy:

9.6.1 At a meeting of the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 20th November 2012, the Committee resolved that a politically proportioned Overview and Scrutiny Panel be convened to consider an Education Strategy for Barnet.

9.6.2 An initial meeting Panel took place on Monday 21 January 2013. Cllr. John Marshall was elected as the Chairman of the Group. The other Group Members are: Cllr Brian Salinger, Cllr Lisa Rutter, Cllr Brian Gordon, Ross Cllr Houston and Cllr Anne Hutton.

9.6.3 The Panel were provided with a briefing from the Children's Service which outlined the work streams which would feed into the development of an Education Strategy for Barnet. The Children's Service also delivered a presentation to the Panel on the local and national context in relation to education and local authorities' relationships with schools in the new landscape.

9.6.4 The Panel agreed to receive submissions from head teachers and the Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families at their meeting on 28th January 2013. Future meetings of the Panel will hear evidence from parent governors and expert witnesses in education.

9.6.5 The Panel agreed to focus on how elected Members can act as champions for children and young people in Barnet, and how they will be best placed to do that in evolving educational landscape.

9.6.6 It is anticipated that the work of this Group will be completed by the end of February 2013 to enable the findings to feed into the Education Strategy for Barnet which will be considered by the Cabinet in due course.

9.7 Children's Centres

- 9.7.1 On 18 April 2012, the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved to convene a Task and Finish Group on Children's Centres. This decision was reaffirmed at the Meeting of the Business Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 20 November 2012.
- 9.7.2 The Members that have been appointed to this group are: Cllr Catherine Salinger, Cllr Brian Gordon, Cllr John Marshall, Cllr Andreas Ioannidis and Cllr Pauline Coakley Webb.
- 9.7.3 In seeking to expedite this review on behalf of Members, the Overview and Scrutiny Team have been in correspondence with the Children's Service in order to discuss how a Task and Finish Group on this subject could be taken forward. The Children's Service have reported that they have commissioned an external review of Children's Centres which will consider:
1. What impact do children's centres in Barnet have on the journey of children and families in the short and long term?;
 2. To what extent do children's centres effectively offer value for money in terms of efficiently delivering services?; and
 3. How can Barnet's children's centres best offer value for money services which achieve the greatest impact to children and families?
- 9.7.4 Hemsall Consultancies Ltd have been commissioned to carry out this review. A draft of the report is due to be received by the Children's Service on 12 March 2013, and the final report is due on 12 May 2013.
- 9.7.5 The Children's Service have emphasised that this external review is a factual report which will provide the service with a basis to review children's centres and early years provision and develop future plans. Following a discussion with the Children's Service regarding the review and how Scrutiny Members will be best placed to scrutinise children's centres and inform service provision going forward, Officers are proposing that commencement of the Task and Finish Group review be deferred until April 2013. This will enable the Task and Finish Group to consider the findings of an external evaluation and then engage with relevant stakeholders (e.g. parents, children's centre staff, relevant Cabinet Members and officers) to inform future service provision.
- 9.7.6 An officer from the Children's Service has been invited to the meeting to respond to questions from the Committee on the ongoing review.

10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 None