



# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10

# CONTENTS



*Fulham Broadway at night*

Introduction .....	3
Role of scrutiny .....	4
Scrutiny in LBHF .....	5
Cleaner and greener scrutiny committee .....	8
Education and children’s services scrutiny committee .....	10
Health & adult social care scrutiny committee.....	12
Three boroughs.....	15
Pan London joint health scrutiny committee .....	16
Housing scrutiny committee.....	17
Local Neighbourhoods scrutiny committee .....	19
Value for money scrutiny committee .....	21
Membership .....	25
Contacts.....	26
Acknowledgements.....	27

# Welcome to the 2009/10 annual report on the operation of overview and scrutiny in Hammersmith & Fulham.

The following pages set out briefly both the local and national context within which scrutiny operates and review the main activities of each of the council's six scrutiny committees during the course of the last municipal year. We also focus on this authority's contribution to the work of the two pan London joint overview and scrutiny committees, which has been reviewing proposals for major reconfigurations in the capital's healthcare services, and the informal 'three boroughs' joint working arrangements with the Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea Health Scrutiny Chairmen.

The report also briefly looks forward to 2010/11 and proposals for the introduction of a streamlined scrutiny structure. The changes are designed to increase member capacity and promote new, more flexible methods of working, including greater use of in depth evidence based reviews of individual topics. This is expected to further enhance the scrutiny function's ability to make a positive contribution to the development and review of policy and services and, at the same time, strengthen its engagement with residents, service users and the council's partner organisations.

We hope that you find the content interesting and informative and welcome your comments and suggestions for improvements.



*Council Tax campaign*



# THE ROLE OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY



*At a festival*

## THE ROLE OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The concept of scrutiny in local authorities was formally introduced by the Local Government Act 2000 in order to balance the establishment of structures which placed executive power in the hands of either an elected Mayor or Leader and a small Cabinet authorised to make decisions both individually and collectively. Scrutiny is, however, about much more than merely holding the executive to account. It provides an opportunity for non executive councillors to bring their own independent expertise to bear on strategy and policy issues, and to work constructively with the executive, local people, community organisations, partner agencies, service users and other customers to develop evidence based recommendations which improve policies and provide effective and responsive services. Increasingly, scrutiny is focusing not just on the work of the council, but all areas of public service which touch the lives of the local community.

**Five core roles can be readily identified;**



This is, however, far from exhaustive. Scrutiny has a wide ranging remit and can also have an important role to play in engaging the public with the decision making process, ensuring corporate priorities are met, providing satisfying and meaningful roles for non-executive councillors, revising the constitution and undertaking area based reviews.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny has identified four key principles that underpin effective scrutiny;

- Effective scrutiny should be a 'critical friend' to executives, external authorities and agencies. It should challenge policy development and decision making in a robust, constructive and purposeful way while developing a partnership with external agencies and authorities.
- Effective scrutiny should reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities. It should ensure an ongoing dialogue with the public and diverse communities where the public voice is heard and responded to. It should have open and transparent processes with public access to information.
- Effective scrutiny should take the lead and own the scrutiny process on behalf of the public. It should be independent from the executive, legitimated by the council and should have adequate public representation and political balance that is representative of the current political groups involved.
- Effective scrutiny should make an impact on the delivery of public services. It should promote community well-being and improve the quality of life, providing co-ordinated and strategic reviews of policy and service performance in line with strategic objectives.

## SCRUTINY IN HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM

The scrutiny function at Hammersmith & Fulham has been undertaken in recent years by six scrutiny committees with cross cutting remits designed to reflect the council's key priorities and objectives. Each of the committees comprises of 9 elected non executive Members. Some committees also co-opt unelected members who can bring a particular expertise or direct knowledge of the service user perspective to assist with their work. Co-optees are usually non voting, although the parent governor and diocesan representatives on the education and children's services scrutiny committee are entitled to vote on education matters.

Meetings are normally held six times per year. The scrutiny committees are empowered to hold inquiries and investigate the available options for future direction in policy development and may appoint advisers and expert witnesses to assist them in this process. They may undertake site visits, conduct public surveys, hold public meetings, commission research and do all other things that they reasonably consider necessary to inform their deliberations. They may ask witnesses to attend to address them on any matter under consideration. The leader, cabinet members and senior officers are under a duty to comply with any request to attend. Reports and recommendations on proposals may be submitted for consideration to the cabinet or council who are obliged to respond, normally within eight weeks.

The committees are normally open to the press and public (although occasionally it may be necessary to meet in private session when dealing with certain confidential information) and members of the public may speak at meetings at the discretion of the chairman. Deputations signed by at least 10 registered electors of the borough may be presented directly to the committees.

## SCRUTINY IN HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM



*Hammersmith house boats*

Performance review and monitoring of council services and functions is at the heart of local scrutiny activity with particular emphasis on examination of the annual budget papers in accordance with the council's emphasis on the delivery of high quality value for money services. All departmental business plans and key PI's are submitted to the relevant scrutiny committees for review which ensures that scrutiny is well placed to contribute to the strategic business planning and performance management processes.

Each committee receives the forward plan (a rolling list of key decisions which the Cabinet is planning to take in the coming four months) at every meeting which assists in the development of work programmes and the identification of forthcoming key executive decisions deserving closer scrutiny and input. At the stage where the cabinet makes firm proposals and a provisional decision the scrutiny committees have powers to call in the decision for review and request the original decision maker to reconsider. Action to implement the decision is suspended during this process. Accountability is further enhanced by the attendance of the relevant cabinet member and senior officers from the appropriate service department – often at director level - at most scrutiny meetings to report on activity and answer questions as they arise. Scrutiny committees also have a wider role in policy development, originating topics of interest and feeding views back to the cabinet and individual cabinet members, officers, external partners and service providers.



## FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

As part of a review of governance arrangements proposals have been developed to modify the scrutiny committee system with effect from the 2010/11 municipal year.

Subject to approval at the annual meeting of the council in May 2010, the six existing scrutiny committees whose activities are recorded in this report are due to be replaced by three select committees sitting underneath a coordinating scrutiny board charged with oversight of corporate policy, scrutiny of key partnerships and development of the scrutiny function.

The functions and powers of the new select committees will remain largely unchanged. The streamlined structure, however, is designed to enhance the capacity of elected members by enabling them, amongst other things, to concentrate on more in depth scrutiny work outside of formal meetings, including time limited task and finish groups established to undertake detailed examination of specific topics, and other related activities such as site visits and training and development. These changes in working practices, in particular the introduction of task and finish groups and greater use of one off 'spotlight' sessions in which an entire meeting is devoted to consideration of a single issue, are expected to enhance the scrutiny function's ability to exercise oversight and help drive improvements in services and policies through the development of informed evidence based recommendations. Greater interaction with partners and service users in the evidence gathering process will also help scrutiny fulfil its remit to promote engagement with the local community. The existence of the scrutiny board should help link the work of the select committee, identifying gaps and avoiding duplication.

If the proposals are agreed officer resources will be refocused in order to ensure that the new arrangements are appropriately supported.

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS



*Fulham Palace exterior*

# CLEANER AND GREENER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



*Councillor Eugenie White*  
CHAIRMAN

## WHAT WE DO

The cleaner and greener scrutiny committee has a remit to scrutinise any aspect of policy and provision related to the local environment and economy, including pursuing the highest standards in the street scene and parks and open spaces, recycling and environmental sustainability and transport.

## OUR ACTIVITIES IN 2009/10

During 2009/10, in five scheduled meetings and one additionally hosted meeting the committee reviewed and commented upon services and policies across a range of its responsibilities. Members examined externally provided services, inviting Thames Water and Transport for London to attend the committee, looked at council provided services, reviewed reports ahead of cabinet approval and scrutinised areas of the council's core business including budgets and the departmental business plans of the residents services and environment departments.

A public meeting was hosted by the committee in September 2009, to which representatives from Thames Water were invited to explain their plans to minimise basement flooding in the borough. The fact that approximately 60 residents attended indicates that flooding continues to be a significant concern locally, and with this in mind, the meeting provided a useful forum for discussion and debate. A number of recommendations were put forward on the need for improved communication with residents on this issue and these were subsequently endorsed by the cleaner and greener scrutiny committee.

Over the past year, the cleaner and greener scrutiny committee has been at the forefront of efforts to introduce customer focused performance indicators for scrutiny monitoring. Cleaner and greener has now agreed a set of performance indicators covering areas ranging from recycling to noise nuisance. These indicators will be reported to the committee on a quarterly basis as part of the work programme, and annually at the June meeting each year. This will enable the committee to identify possible areas of concern and commission reports accordingly. It is also hoped that work undertaken by cleaner and greener will provide a useful template to introduce performance indicators for the other scrutiny committees next year.



Coincident with the council's submission to the 10 year update of the Mayor of London's Transport Policy, a representative of Transport for London attended the January 2010 meeting to address pressing issues of concern to local residents. Most recommendations made were in addition to endorsing the officers' report to the mayors office.

The committee welcomed a report on the introduction of the London Permit Scheme which requires utility companies to apply for a permit from the Council before they can carry out road works in the borough. It is hoped that this will lead to a more coordinated and tightly managed approach to major utility works thus reducing the disruptive impact to local residents and, by association, to local and through traffic in the borough.

The committee was advised upon a future review of the cemeteries service, which will need to address the burial site capacity constraint of only 20 years supply. In addition, cemeteries are an important component of outdoor space in the borough due to minimal per capita outdoors space provision, as well as having an important cultural and historic context. Delays in forthcoming national legislation have prevented the outcome of the review being finalised but it is expected to be brought to committee in 2010/11.

In November there was an item on the outcome of a recent litter bin review, which had identified the need for a rationalisation of both the number and design of bins in the borough. The committee recommended that all councillors should be provided with mapping of bins in their ward so that they can comment on the suitability of current sites.

Following the unusually heavy snow falls and associated disruption in February 2009, the Winter Maintenance Service was reviewed by the committee ahead of the 2009/10 winter. The committee learnt of the internal adjustments that the council had made as a result of departmental restructuring, and the outsourcing of grounds maintenance, and rubbish collection and street cleaning contracts. One of the key successes highlighted was the level of cooperation between Hammersmith & Fulham and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea during the poor weather, an arrangement that has since been formalised for future years. Whilst acknowledged to have been an issue nationally, the committee also called for the authority to ensure that adequate salt levels are in future maintained.

Discussion on current parking projects at the September meeting led to an agreement with officers that councillors will be consulted on the extension of any parking bays in their ward.

During the course of the year, the committee has also scrutinised a number of other issues of importance, including the Local Development Framework: Core Strategy Consultation, the Carbon Management Plan, the borough's pedestrian environment, departmental business plans and budgets, and the SERCO contract after its first year of operation.

The chairman of the committee would like to extend her gratitude to its members for the time they devoted to the careful consideration and scrutiny of issues of concern to the borough's residents.



*Greenfest*

# EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



*Councillor Donald Johnson*  
CHAIRMAN

## WHAT WE DO

The committee is responsible for scrutinising any aspect of policy and provision related to education in the borough and the education budget as well as scrutiny of children's services relating to education and social services. It also has lead responsibility for scrutinising the cabinet member for children's services.

## OUR ACTIVITIES IN 2009/10

The committee met six times during the course of the year, with a full work programme reviewing a broad range of topics. Child protection was at the heart of the committee's activities in view not only of the continued national concern about the emerging issues from the tragic case of Baby Peter, but also last year's recommendation by the committee to revisit the topic. Two meetings were therefore dedicated exclusively to the topic.

At the first of these meetings, in June, the committee examined the current position of child protection in the borough, looked at the proposals to the changes to the Children's Trust Board and Local Safeguarding Children's Board and was updated on the Common Assessment Framework. A whole range of issues were discussed, such as the workload of the social workers, training and retention of the staff and the stress experienced with child protection work. As a result of this discussion the committee decided to invite a number of social workers to the September meeting so it could hear first hand of what it was like in a "day in the life" of a social worker. Representatives from the different teams in the complex needs division attended and gave a presentation, speaking on the range of services for children and families they were involved with, from the first point of contact with the contact and assessment team through to the family support and child protection team, adolescent services and the looked after children team. They spoke on the challenges they faced in their every day work and explained the processes from when a referral was made.

An update report on child protection was also considered at the September meeting, which reported on the borough's position following from the previous committee update. After a lengthy discussion on these agenda items, the committee made a number of recommendations, including that the number of case loads for social workers should be examined. In response to concerns about the sharing of travel cards when social workers had to travel to visit their clients, the committee also recommended that this be looked into so that they had access to travel cards where needed. Action from these recommendations resulted in the committee being informed that the social work task force had carried out an exercise on the workload for social workers in the country and it was revealed that Hammersmith & Fulham's workload was average and better than many other authorities at the moment. Additional

resources had been put in place to help this issue and the workload had been and was kept under review. In respect of the sharing of travel cards, the committee were updated that all service managers had been told that oyster cards should be made available for staff if needed. The committee suggested that it visited the social workers at a later date to see if the concerns raised had been addressed, and it would look into the possibility of arranging a visit to the social workers in their work place.

Other reports considered by the committee this year on the child protection theme included a report on the Integrated Children's System (a government recording and information system introduced in 2007, to enable local authorities to manage children's social care cases), a report on the Serious Case Review (SCR) into the death of Baby J, and a report on the increased demand for child protection services following the Baby Peter case.

This year saw the committee considering the review of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2008-2011. The last time the committee looked at the CYPP it recommended that when it looked at it next the borough's UK Youth Parliament members be invited to the meeting to discuss the plan. As a result the two newly elected UK Youth Parliament representatives were invited to the March meeting to give feedback on a session they led on with the Borough Youth Forum on how they wanted to be involved in the development of the CYPP in the future. The committee thanked the young people for attending to give such an insight on how they could be involved in the CYPP. This meeting was kindly hosted by Sacred Heart High School.

The November meeting focused on the schools that had recently received an Ofsted inspections visit. The headteachers and Chairs of Governors of the eight schools were invited to the meeting to discuss their school's report. The meeting gave the schools a chance to meet the committee and to answer any questions about their inspection. It also gave the schools an opportunity to give feedback to the council on how it could improve its service to the schools and a chance to exchange ideas and best practice. A programme of visits to the schools was arranged before the meeting to give the members of the committee an opportunity to see the school in action. The committee congratulated the schools on receiving either a "good" or "outstanding" rating score. The progress report of the Development of Estate Sports report was considered at the December meeting, which was a follow up to the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Review of the Year 2006/07 that was presented to the committee at its meeting held on 11 June 2007, where the committee had recommended that there be a kick start to a programme of estate sports. Shortly after the 2006/07 review was considered, the responsibility for sport was relocated from children's services to residents services as part of the wider council improvement programme. The current report highlighted the large amount of activity that was taking place in the borough. As requested by the chairman, a chart was circulated to the committee showing how the different sports initiatives and organisations interlinked. After a discussion on a number of activities that the committee had not heard about, the committee made a recommendation that the estate based sports sub-group, which had been set up to discuss how estate based sports could be improved, be requested to look into improving communications, so that residents knew about the events available and that a communication strategy briefing be prepared to set out the objectives for estate sports. During the year the committee also received reports on the Revenue Budget and Council Tax 2010-2011, School Performance 2009 and the Children's Services Business Plan.



*Healthy Schools, Fulham*

# HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Councillor Peter Tobias  
CHAIRMAN

## WHAT WE DO

This committee's remit is to scrutinise any aspect of policy and provision relating to health and adult social care services in the borough; including statutory responsibilities in relation to health and also the voluntary and community sector.

It also has lead responsibility for scrutinising the cabinet member for children's services.

On a more informal basis, the committee, through its chairman, undertook a number of health and social care scrutiny initiatives that spill over into neighbouring boroughs, and also London-wide where issues of mutual concern and interest are proactively considered and discussed with stakeholders, commissioners and providers.

## OUR ACTIVITIES IN 2009/2010

In 2009/2010, the committee met on seven occasions to consider and make recommendations on items from its work programme, which it attempts to divide equally between health and adult social care items.

Additionally,

- The chairman continued to attend the informal Joint Three Boroughs meetings (Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster), and other adult social care and health-related meetings within and outside the borough in order to further elevate the committee's scrutiny profile and to ensure aspects of common concern beyond borders were dealt with as efficiently and synergistically as possible.
- On behalf of the eight North West London Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSC), regular meetings were established with the corresponding PCTs, which have now formed the North West London Commissioning Partnership, to undertake strategic commissioning work which spans borough boundaries to commission world class healthcare from acute providers and certain other services.
- The chairman successfully led a bid to the Centre for Public Scrutiny to become one of nine scrutiny development areas as part of the Centre for Public Scrutiny's (CfPS) Reducing Health Inequalities programme. This entails the undertaking of a supported scrutiny review designed to test and develop a resource kit that can be applied across the country to support the scrutiny of health inequality reduction measures. Each successful bid is accompanied by funding and assistance from the CfPS. Our proposal is to look at housing provided through registered social landlords and private landlords in the context of liveability standards as a wider determinant of health.

- Members participated in joint workshops, with colleagues from the other North West London Health Scrutiny Committees, led by an expert advisory team from the CfPS to review NHS Commissioning and The Personalisation Agenda.

A selection of highlights from the committee's busy work programme is given below:

The committee learnt of the Integration of the PCT and the council (now designated NHS Hammersmith & Fulham) at senior management level and the consequent benefits and improvements to services that are being delivered to residents, which include:

- The development of the first stages of the Polysystem model of healthcare. NHS Hammersmith & Fulham has been designated by NHS London as an exemplar for the development of a Polysystem, largely due to the work undertaken with the opening of urgent care centres at Hammersmith and Charing Cross Hospitals.
- A number of early win projects including making GP registration easier; making it easier to quit smoking; and improving child oral health services.
- The establishment of a single service for commissioning children's health and social care services.

The committee will continue to consider whether proposals for additions and/or changes in configuration to health and adult social care represent a substantial variation, and to monitor developments in this rapidly changing service.

The chairman invited colleagues from the health scrutiny committees of Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster to attend the October 2009 meeting, which was held at Imperial College, to jointly scrutinise the consultation on Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust's application for NHS foundation trust status. Whilst the health scrutiny chairmen were generally supportive of the trust's application, they made a number of recommendations in their joint response to the formal consultation. These recommendations are monitored at the quarterly informal Three boroughs health scrutiny meetings with managing director, Claire Perry and senior staff.

During the year, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) published its highly critical report of the West London Mental Health Trust (WLMHT), following its investigation, which had been triggered by concerns around WLMHT's response to suicide incidents. Jointly with the London Borough of Hounslow Health Scrutiny Panel, members scrutinised the newly appointed trust chairman and chief executive on the actions taken in response to the report, and at a subsequent meeting, again scrutinised senior managers to ensure that significant progress had been made in addressing the Commission's recommendations. The key areas of concern were:

- The processes which had been put in place to provide a safe environment and protect people from harm, and how learning from incidents had been shared and translated into practice and re-enforced through training.
- The measures which were in place to improve staff recruitment and retention, and staff attendance at mandatory training and refresher courses.



*Sports coaching*



- The actions being taken to involve staff in the operational changes and to embed good governance and a culture of good practise.

In the field of adult social care, the committee scrutinised the adult social care business plan and medium term financial strategy proposals and continued to scrutinise adult social care performance.

The committee was briefed on and considered the programme of work to remodel care and housing-related support for older and disabled people. Members were particularly interested in how the quality of home care would be improved, and the consultation process. In response to the committee's recommendation that the questionnaire in the consultation document was too complicated and should be simplified, the questionnaire was redrafted and sent to all existing service users.

Members' concerns in respect of the quality of home care, were addressed at a subsequent meeting, where there was a single agenda item, 'improving the quality of home care within a changing landscape of personalisation (Supporting Your Choice)', and expert witnesses attended to inform the debate. A number of recommendations were made, and will be reviewed when an update report is brought back to the committee.

The committee received the safeguarding adults committee annual report, and its recommendation that there should be a helpline and the provision in various locations of small cards with this number and the Hammersmith & Fulham website was implemented immediately.

The committee considered a report, which described various aspects of the transition from children's to adults' services for disabled young people from the ages of 13 to 25. A senior manager from HAFAD informed the debate with the organisation's experience of the transition process. Members were particularly concerned about the assessment process and recommended that the disabled children's service considered the self assessment plan developed at Jack Tizzard School.

The committee continued to monitor the work of the Hammersmith & Fulham Local Involvement Network (LINK), a community led network of individuals and third sector groups that will enable people to have a stronger say in how local health and social care services are commissioned and delivered. The chairman has established quarterly meetings with the LINKs steering group to consider how the LINKs and the scrutiny committee can work together strategically and align work programmes. A joint meeting with the Care Quality Commission is being organised.

The committee welcomes the continued attendance at its meetings of Jeff Zitron, chairman, Geoff Alltimes, chief executive, Sarah Whiting, managing director and other senior officers from NHS Hammersmith and Fulham.

## JOINT THREE BOROUGH HEALTH SCRUTINY MEETINGS

The chairman of Hammersmith & Fulham's health and adult social care scrutiny committee participates in this informal joint committee with the Chairmen of the Health Scrutiny Committees of Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster to consider issues of mutual concern and interest, and to share knowledge and best scrutiny practice. The meetings are normally attended by at least one external body.

During the year, the health scrutiny chairmen and supporting officers worked collaboratively on the following key issues:

The OSC chairmen agreed to jointly scrutinise and respond to the formal consultation in respect of the Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust's application for foundation trust status. Whilst generally supportive of the trust's application, they made a number of recommendations in their joint response to the formal consultation.

The OSC chairmen advised the PCTs that there should be informal consultation with all eight North West London Health Scrutiny Committees in respect of specialist neonatal and paediatric surgery services, and organised a review meeting accordingly. The meeting resolved that, subject to ratification by individual health scrutiny committees, formal consultation was not necessary. All eight North West London OSCs subsequently endorsed the recommendations, and Chelsea and Westminster NHS Foundation Trust in collaboration with Great Ormond Street Hospital was selected as the provider of these specialist services.

The committee received and commented on several presentations on the development of the Central London Community Healthcare provider alliance and its application for community foundation trust status.

The Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) hosts attended several meetings to update and receive feedback from the Committee on their work, and specifically collaborative working.

At the last meeting, in April 2010, the Directors of Public Health led a discussion in respect of health inequalities and presented their collaborative work on health inequalities at borough boundaries.

## JOINT THREE BOROUGH HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



*Charing Cross Hospital*

# PAN LONDON JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY



*Hammersmith Park*

## PAN LONDON JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY

The council has played an active role in the joint scrutiny of consultation proposals from NHS London (the capital's strategic health authority) for changes in the way in which health services are delivered, through the formation of two Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees (JHOSC) comprising all 33 London boroughs and a number of London fringe authorities.

The council was represented by Councillor Peter Tobias on both JHOSCs, with Councillors Rory Vaughan, Belinda Donovan and Robert Iggulden attending three meetings on his behalf.

The initial consultation on the principles of Healthcare for London concluded in 2008, to be followed by a second JHOSC to respond to the specific proposals of Healthcare for London 'Shaping Health Services Together – Consultation on Developing New, High-Quality Major Trauma and Stroke Services in London.'

The latter JHOSC met on seven occasions to receive evidence from expert witnesses and on one further occasion to receive the response of the Joint Committee of PCTs (JCPCT) to the JHOSC report on the consultation proposals. The JHOSC's recommendations and comments were taken very seriously by the JCPCT, and they stressed that the JHOSC's contributions had been extremely useful in helping to formulate its own final recommendations. Among the multitude of comments and recommendations, the JHOSC raised two particular concerns:

- that there should be no deterioration in services available during the period of transition as changes were made; and
- that the whole care pathway (rather than just the acute end) should be addressed.

The JCPCTs updated on progress in respect of the four trauma networks, which are to be based around The Royal London Hospital, Kings College Hospital, St. George's Hospital and St. Mary's Hospital (scheduled for 2012) and the plans for rolling out eight Hyper-acute Stroke Units (HASUs) together with their attached networks of Stroke Units (SUs) across London.

The eight HASUs are to be sited at Charing Cross, Kings College, Northwick Park, St. George's, Queens, The Princess Royal University, The Royal London and University College Hospitals. In response to remarks by Councillor Tobias in respect of the potential relocation of the HASU from Charing Cross to St. Mary's Hospital, when the major trauma unit is up and running at St. Mary's Hospital, the JCPCT confirmed the clear intention for the decision-making to be led by local commissioners, with full consultation as part of the process.



## WHAT WE DO

The housing scrutiny committee is responsible for scrutinising any aspect of policy and provision relating to housing in the borough and has lead responsibility for scrutinising the cabinet member for housing.

## OUR MAIN ACTIVITIES IN 2009/10

The committee met on six occasions over the course of the year, scrutinising the work both of Hammersmith and Fulham Homes (H&F Homes), the arms length management organisation which deals with the day to day management of the housing stock and tenancies, and the council itself in areas such as housing management services, homelessness prevention and home ownership initiatives.

The committee received input from the cabinet member for housing, the director of community services and other senior officers from both the council and H&F Homes and members of the public, as well as several expert witnesses. The committee conducted examinations of the revenue budget proposals and housing revenue account budget strategy as well as the community services department's business plan and reviewed performance against key indicators. It also looked at a wide range of different service areas on an ad hoc basis and some of the highlights of this work are set out below.

Tenant and leaseholder safety formed a central part of the committee's work programme during the course of the year. The committee continued to monitor H&F Homes performance in respect of gas safety appliance checks and, having undertaken a detailed review of the position in the housing stock the previous year, now also examined the gas safety check procedures in place for properties used as temporary accommodation. The committee also reviewed the progress of H&F Homes and the Private Sector Housing Service in taking action to minimise the risk to residents from faulty appliances. It found that both H&F Homes and the council were taking all reasonable steps to mitigate risk, ensuring that those gas appliances for which there was a responsibility were safe and offering assistance to leaseholders, such as access to a competitively priced gas servicing package with a private contractor, even though there was no statutory liability for the appliances. The committee emphasised the importance of communications with leaseholders to raise awareness of the importance of regular gas checks by a registered technician and remind them of their responsibilities as a landlord when sub-letting.

The committee also reviewed the circumstances surrounding the suspected gas explosion at Riverside Gardens in August 2009 and the immediate response by H&F Homes, receiving evidence from the independent safety consultant who had undertaken the technical investigation into the incident. Members were pleased to establish that no fault could be ascribed to H&F Homes for the cause of the explosion and congratulated both officers and the emergency services on their response in the immediate aftermath. The committee did, however, express considerable

# HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



*Councillor Andrew Johnson*  
CHAIRMAN



*Edward Woods Estate*

concern at National Grid's lack of cooperation with the independent investigation and emphasised that a clear message needed to be conveyed to tenants that any tampering with gas or electrical equipment after installation, or installation by unqualified persons, could be dangerous both to themselves and others and would not be tolerated.

In the light of the tragic Lakenal House fire in Camberwell the committee also took the opportunity to review the arrangements in place to manage the risk of fire in the Council's housing stock and the activity designed to address fires safety issues in hostels, temporary accommodation and private sector housing. Members took evidence from Steve Lumb, Borough Commander, and Nick Comery, Regulatory Fire Safety Team Leader from the London Fire service as well as the Hammersmith & Fulham Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations (HAFFTRA). The Committee supported the prioritisation measures in place to manage the risk, and the focus on statutory duties, but asked to be kept informed of the rolling programme of fire safety risk assessments on the council's 71 tower blocks.

Members also undertook a detailed examination of the council's powers, policies and performance in respect of nuisance and dangerous dogs on housing estates and considered options for control through tenancy arrangements. The committee benchmarked the council's dog control services against those of comparable neighbouring authorities and heard from a range of witnesses including officers from Wandsworth Council, which had introduced an innovative micro chipping scheme for all dogs in council properties, the Metropolitan Police's Status Dogs Unit and the cabinet member for crime and street scene as well as H&F Homes and community safety officers. The committee recognised that a multi-agency approach had already made considerable progress in response to the growing problem of dangerous dogs but recommended that H&F Homes should give consideration to the possibility of requiring the registration of all dogs in council properties through a chipping scheme.

The committee continued to closely monitor the performance of H&F Homes. Members considered the findings of the Audit Commission inspection of the ALMO undertaken in June 2009, welcoming the assessment of a two star 'good' service with excellent prospects for improvement. The committee also scrutinised changes to the arrangements for caretaking and estate cleaning throughout the council owned housing stock and feedback from Officers and HAFFTRA on the success of the pilot area in North Fulham and South Hammersmith. Close attention was paid throughout the year to the levels of staff sickness absence within H&F Homes and the measures being taken to address long term sickness absence.

The committee also focused on those retained housing services provided by the council. Members reviewed and commented upon the housing options strategy, which set out how the council, in conjunction with public and voluntary sector agencies, intended to identify and provide more housing options and opportunities for those in need of help to find housing, as well as the supplementary strategy to support tenants living in temporary accommodation. The committee also considered and noted the findings of the Local Government Ombudsman concerning a failure to provide a pregnant homeless woman with adequate advice and assistance in 2008, together with details of the subsequent action taken by the council. Finally, the committee also gave consideration to the Mayor of London's vision for housing in the capital as embodied in the draft London Housing Strategy, receiving a presentation from the Head of Housing and Homelessness at the Greater London Authority.

## WHAT WE DO

The local neighbourhoods scrutiny committee has a remit to examine any aspect of policy and provision relating to quality of life, including policing, community safety, tackling antisocial behaviour, licensing and gambling, employment, cultural services, registration and adult education.

It also acts as the council's "crime and disorder committee" for the purposes of the Police and Justice Act 2006 and has lead responsibility for scrutinising the cabinet member for crime and street scene. The committee provides an opportunity for local residents to bring forward key concerns regarding their local neighbourhood.

## OUR MAIN ACTIVITIES IN 2009/10

In its six meetings during the course of last year, the Committee focused strongly on local issues and neighbourhood amenities. Fulfilling its remit to air key concerns raised by local residents, it considered a number of very localised topics in some depth.

One issue of concern to residents in North End was the long term eyesore of a large, derelict building at 80 North End Road. The committee received and requested update reports from enforcement and legal officers and was able to support the officers in their efforts to resolve the problem. Another area of concern involved the various highways and planning issues arising from the conflicting usage of Carnwath Road by both residents and large commercial vehicles.

# LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Councillor Caroline Ffiske  
CHAIRMAN



A number of residents representing both residents' organisations and local businesses contributed positively to the discussion. Residents also expressed keen support for the extension of Regulation 7, which prohibits the display of Estate Agents' Boards in certain designated areas.

A very useful exchange of information took place at the meeting in March, when the committee considered the sufficiency of public access to Fulham Pools. Representatives from Virgin Active, which operates the pools on the council's behalf, attended the meeting and heard for themselves the concerns that local people had about the limits on access. A number of recommendations and actions resulted from the meeting and it is likely that many of the issues will now be addressed. Another local amenity to receive scrutiny was the newly installed Playbuilder play equipment in Normand Park, part of a programme to furnish a further 11 sites with the same type of equipment.

Following amendments to the 2006 Police and Justice Act, Local Authorities now have a statutory duty to scrutinise the Crime and Disorder Partnership (CDRP) in their area. The committee heard a presentation on their new powers and on the structure and work of the CDRP, and resolved to hold at least one, dedicated meeting each year in order to scrutinise it.

The committee also reviewed the draft London Safety Plan; the proposed Gambling Policy; the adult learning & skills service's annual report; the adoption of a cumulative impact policy for licensed premises in Fulham; parking projects in the north of the borough and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act.



*Local area advertising*

## WHAT WE DO:

The committee's remit is any aspect of the council's strategic policy formulation, corporate budget (setting and monitoring), performance management, human resources, organisational development, residents' services functions and the council's strategic partnerships.

It also has lead responsibility for scrutinising the Leader, the cabinet member for strategy and cabinet member for residents services.

## OUR ACTIVITIES IN 2009/2010

In 2009/2010, the committee met on six occasions to consider items from its work programme, which covers a wide remit. A selection of key items examined during the course of the year is provided below:

In June 2009, the committee met at Fulham Palace and had a brief tour of the buildings, during which some of the issues affecting the management of the Palace were highlighted, including a range of marketing initiatives to increase revenue potential consistent with conserving its environment. The initiatives included: marketing of the function rooms to increase bookings; expansion of the café to improve turnover; and negotiations with English Heritage where equipment such as marquees are required for filming in the grounds.

In September 2009, Councillor Edward Lister, Leader, London Borough of Wandsworth attended the meeting to present Wandsworth's value for money initiatives, which included cumulative savings and capital receipts, realised by continuous rationalisation of property portfolios and home sales programmes. Significant savings had been achieved in white collar areas and unacceptable levels of sickness had been addressed.

The Deputy Chief Executive, Local Government Association (LGA) and the Corporate Director, London Councils attended a meeting to report on subscriptions paid to London Councils and the LGA. The LGA promotes the interests of English and Welsh local authorities, lobbying and campaigning on behalf of its members, whilst London Councils, the local government association for the 32 London Boroughs plus the City of London lobbies on behalf of London councils, as well as providing a range of services.

# VALUE FOR MONEY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



*Councillor Harry Phibbs*  
CHAIRMAN



*Brass Band, Hammersmith*

## **Revenue budget and council tax**

In response to the committee's recommendation, work is ongoing to present the council's budget and departmental financial information in more detail to facilitate greater understanding by members and the public: greater transparency of how taxpayers money is spent; and in a format easier to compare with other local authorities.

## **Learning and development**

The committee received a report on current training activities, including financial data; and future direction of learning and development activity, and made the following recommendations:

- That a culture where there is no presumption of training be developed.
- That there should be no training which is not directly linked to increasing productivity.
- That managers develop the skill sets to measure the link between training and productivity.

The committee also received a report on member development activities, and how member development will be delivered in the future.

## **Managing sickness absence**

This report provided an update on the strategies applied during the current rolling 12 month period to ensure the ongoing effective management of sickness absence. The committee noted that sickness levels had decreased to 8.2 days per employee at the end of August 2009, compared with 9.2 days per employee at the end of September 2008, and requested that comparative data with neighbouring boroughs be included in future reports.

## **The committee also considered a wide range of shorter 'bite size' reports, which included the following items:**

### **Council owned cemeteries: potential for sale of properties**

The committee recommended that officers should give higher priority to the sale of the lodges, which were on the edge of the four cemeteries, in readiness for an improvement in market conditions.

## **Energy management**

This report informed of the energy initiatives to achieve the council's five year target to save 10% of energy use for its top ten buildings. At the instigation of the committee, action was subsequently taken in respect of Sands End Laundry where the outdoor light had been left on for some considerable time.

## **h&f Direct – A year on**

The committee congratulated officers on the successful amalgamation of eight separate services, and endorsed the approach of encouraging residents to undertake more transactions on line.

## **National survey/media and reputation survey**

The committee congratulated officers on the results of the surveys. The National Place had focused on resident perceptions of the area and local public services and the media and reputation survey provided information on resident satisfaction and perceptions, while examining the effectiveness of council communications.

## **Payment of council tax by direct debit**

This report outlined the possible options for encouraging residents to move to payment by direct debit, including the London-wide draw. The committee recommended the option for charging residents for credit card payments.

## **h&f bridge partnership (hfbp) performance annual report**

The committee received the annual report and noted the efficiency savings achieved in the third year of the contract between the council and its strategic partner Agilisys, efficiency savings, and that HFBP was on track to achieve further savings. The committee recommended that:

- That the support of the website at Fulham Palace be discussed with the director of residents' services.
- That the planning system be discussed with the director of Environment.

## **Trade union facility time: review of arrangements**

This report set out the current position in respect of facility time for trade union officials who had formal time off to perform their role. Discussions were currently underway with the unions on a further review of facility time. The committee recommended that consideration be given to either charging trade unions for the collection of subscriptions, or requiring trade unions to collect the subscriptions.

## **Re-ablement**

This report, which outlined how re-ablement could help people remain in their own homes and use resources optimally. The committee was reassured that whilst re-ablement will bring about service improvements and efficiency savings, re-ablement officers do not work to financial targets, and would refer an individual who would not achieve independence to another service.



*Local restaurant*



*Shepherd's Bush at night*

### **Grounds maintenance contract**

This report provided an update on the grounds maintenance contract with Quadron Services, which had been operating since May 2008, and the opportunities for exploring new ways to cut costs further. The services had been market tested, and had resulted in savings of £141,000 per annum for the Council. Additionally, the specification was of a much higher quality than the specification which had been in place for the council's direct service organisation.

### **Audit commission report on schools budgets**

The committee received a presentation on the Audit Commission report 'Valuable Lessons Improving Efficiency in Schools', highlighting the favourable performance of Hammersmith & Fulham against the key findings.

### **Health and safety management**

This report outlined the council's arrangements for managing health and safety and the checks in place to ensure that spending was proportionate in terms of meeting statutory requirements. The policy was based on sensible risk management and would be supported by departmental policies.

### **Events and activities in Hammersmith & Fulham council venues**

This report set out the type and level of activity and the revenue generated at Hammersmith & Fulham Council venues.

### **Public lavatories**

The committee received a report in respect of the public conveniences in the borough, and on the London Borough of Richmond scheme for public use of toilets in local businesses, and recommended that:

1. The option of providing a scheme similar to the London Borough of Richmond be considered.
2. The contract for advertising on Automatic Public Conveniences (APCs) be re-negotiated.
3. The charge for the APC on Shepherd's Bush Green be re-considered.



## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2009/10

### **Cleaner and greener**

Councillors Eugenie White (chairman), Wesley Harcourt (vice-chairman), Gill Dickenson, Belinda Donovan, Gavin Donovan, Rachel Ford, Lisa Homan, Jane Law, Alexandra Robson

### **Education and children's services**

Councillors Donald Johnson (chairman)(Councillor Helen Binmore until October 2009), Reg McLaughlin (vice-chairman), Helen Binmore, Oliver Craig (Councillor Sarah Gore until October 2009), Gill Dickenson, Lisa Nandy, Harry Phibbs, Minnie Scott Russell, Alexandra Robson

### **Co-opted members (voting):**

London Diocesan Board of Schools representative – Mrs Eleanor Allen  
Westminster Diocese Education Service – to be nominated  
Mrs Fiona Cook – parent governor representative  
Mrs Sue Fennimore – parent governor representative

### **Co-opted member (non-voting)**

Mr Michael Pettavel - head teacher representative

### **Health and adult social care**

Councillors Peter Tobias (chairman), Rory Vaughan (vice-chairman), Belinda Donovan, Caroline Ffiske, Robert Iggulden, Reg McLaughlin, Dame Sally Powell, Minnie Scott-Russell, Eugenie White

### **Co-optees members (non-voting):**

Maria Brenton - Hammersmith and Fulham Action on Disability (HAFAD)  
Martin Laws  
Pauline Hutchison  
Patrick Ryan - Hestia Housing and Support

### **Housing**

Councillors Andrew Johnson (chairman), Lisa Nandy (vice-chairman), Adronie Alford, Jean Campbell, Michael Cartwright, Gavin Donovan, Lucy Gugen, Robert Iggulden, Harry Phibbs

### **Local neighbourhoods**

Councillors Caroline Ffiske (chairman), Lisa Homan (vice-chairman), Adronie Alford, Aidan Burley, Jean Campbell, Steve Hamilton, Jane Law, Ed Owen, Peter Tobias

### **Value for money**

Councillors Harry Phibbs (chairman), Stephen Cowan (vice-chairman), Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler, Rachel Ford, Steve Hamilton, Donald Johnson, Ali de Lisle, Mercy Umeh, Rory Vaughan

## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2009/2010



*Council officer with resident*

# CONTACTS



*Hammersmith Bridge*

## CONTACTS

We would welcome your comments on this report. We would also be pleased to answer any questions that you may have about the scrutiny function at Hammersmith & Fulham or to receive suggestions for improvement in the way we work and ideas for service area reviews.

**Please contact Gary Marson, principal committee coordinator**

Tel: 020 8753 2278, email: [gary.marson@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:gary.marson@lbhf.gov.uk)

### **Our postal address is**

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### **Specific contacts for each of the committees are set out below;**

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**Housing;** Gary Marson, details as above

**Local neighbourhoods;** Gary Marson, details as above

**Value for money;** Sue Perrin, details as above

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## MORE INFORMATION

More information about overview and scrutiny at Hammersmith & Fulham can be found at [www.lbhf.gov.uk/CouncilandDemocracy](http://www.lbhf.gov.uk/CouncilandDemocracy)

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We extend our thanks to the following external guests and expert witnesses who have given evidence to Scrutiny Committees during the course of 2009/10.

### **Health and adult social care scrutiny Committee**

**Bryan Naylor**, Chairman,  
H&F LINK and Older People's Consultative Forum  
**Jill Hampton**, Hammersmith United Charities  
**Mahdi Nezami**, Service User  
**Wendy Perez**, Service User  
**Jane Wilmott**, Chair of HAFAD  
**Libby Eastly and Trevor Gates**, Care UK  
**Bernadette Walsh**, Supporta  
**Councillor Christopher Buckmaster**,  
Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea  
**Councillor Dr Iain Hanham**,  
Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea  
**Councillor Jan Prendergast**, City of Westminster  
**Councillor John Howliston**,  
London Borough of Hounslow  
**Rea Mattocks**, Co-opted Member,  
London Borough of Hounslow  
**Richard Day**,  
Deputy Director/Youth Services Manager, HAFAD  
**Michael Scott**,  
Chief Executive, NW London Commissioning Partnership  
**Ian Kent**, Deputy Chief Executive,  
**Helen Mangan & Dr Mike Phelan**,  
West London Mental Health Trust  
**Local Involvement Network**  
Various members and the co-ordinator  
Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust;  
**Lord Tugendhat** - Chairman of the Trust  
**Professor Stephen Smith** - Chief Executive  
**Claire Perry** - Managing Director  
**Tony Graff** - Chief Financial Officer  
**Professor David Taube** - Medical Director, Clinical Services  
**Dr Gill Gaskin** - Director, Medicine Clinical Practice Group  
**Anne Mottram** - Director of Clinical Governance

### **Housing scrutiny committee;**

**David Cowie**, Managing Director, Belvedere Safety Limited  
**Steve Lumb**, Borough Commander, London Fire Brigade  
**Nick Comery**, Regulatory Fire Services Team Leader,  
London Fire Brigade  
**Kevin Veness**, HAFFTRA  
**Alan Benson**, Head of Housing & Homelessness,  
Greater London Authority  
**Mark Callis**, Head of Dog Control Unit,  
Wandsworth Borough Council  
**Ian Stewart**, Head of Estate Management Services, Wandsworth  
Borough Council  
**Sergant Ian McParland**, Metropolitan Police Status Dogs Unit

### **Value for money scrutiny committee;**

**Councillor Edward Lister**,  
Leader London Borough of Wandsworth  
**Alan Titheridge**,  
Partnership Director, H&F Bridge Partnership  
**Jo Miller**, Deputy Chief Executive,  
**Local Government Association**  
**Dick Sorabji**, Corporate Director, Services, London Councils

### **Education and childrens services scrutiny committee;**

**Mrs Laura Lund**, Headteacher, Brackenbury Primary School  
**Mr Chris Allen**, Chair of Governors,  
Brackenbury Primary School  
**Miss Sally Coates**, Headteacher, Burlington Danes Academy  
**Ms Cathy Welsh**, Headteacher, Jack Tizard School  
**Ms Claire Shields**,  
Chairwoman of Governors, Jack Tizard School  
**Ms Sarah Melman**, Deputy Headteacher, Jack Tizard School  
**Mr Calum Fairley**,  
Headteacher, Lena Gardens Primary School  
**Ms Susan Jeffreys**,  
Chair of Governors, Lena Gardens Primary School  
**Ms Cathy Doogan**, Headteacher,  
The Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School  
**Mr David McFadden**,  
Headteacher, The London Oratory School  
**Julia Simmons and Naomi Krietman**  
UK Youth Parliament, H&F Representatives

### **Cleaner & greener scrutiny committee**

**Will Sachiti**, Clever Bins  
**Alex Williams**,  
Head of Borough Partnerships, Transport for London  
**Frances Ward**, OfWAT  
**Andy Slaughter MP**  
**Thames Water;**  
**Bob Collington**, Director, Wastewater Services  
**Peter Antolik**, Director, Strategy & Regulation  
**Mel Karam**, Asset Management Director  
**Victor Freaney**, Head of Stakeholder Engagement  
**Pete Saunders**, Regulatory Performance Manager  
**Kyle Robins**, Asset Management Consultant  
**Sian Thomas**, Project Manager, Thames Tunnel  
**Andrew Hagger**, Network and Process Modelling Manager

### **Local neighbourhoods scrutiny committee**

**David Wyatt**, Head of Information Management,  
London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority  
**Glen Heidke**, National Swim Manager, Virgin Active  
**Robbie O'Donnell**, General Manager, Fulham Pools  
**Dr Anthony Jelley**,  
Broomhouse Dock Residents' Association  
**Brendan Bird**, PRARA (Peterborough Rd Area RA)  
**Ann Rosenburg**, PRARA  
**Richard Harrison**, Volume 3

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