

**Meeting:** Haringey Strategic Partnership

**Date:** 27 April 2009

**Report Title:** Supporting and Strengthening Links with Overview Scrutiny and Haringey Strategic Partnership

**Report of:** Trevor Cripps, Overview and Scrutiny Manager

**Purpose**

To propose guidelines for supporting and strengthening links with Overview and Scrutiny and Haringey Strategic Partnership.

**Summary**

The new powers granted to scrutiny in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 come into effect on 1 April 2009 and extend the role of scrutiny to relevant partner authorities. Overview and Scrutiny Committees now have the powers to require information from relevant partner authorities and are able to give notice that they must have regard to scrutiny reports and recommendations on local improvement targets specified in the Local Area Agreement. To bring transparency and gain commitment, the guidelines (attached at Appendix 1) detail how Overview and Scrutiny may engage with relevant partner authorities.

**Legal Implications**

Legal Services has been consulted in the preparation of the guidelines and confirm the accuracy in respect of the legislation, which appears in section 3 of the guidelines.

**Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications as a result of the proposals.

**Recommendations**

That the guidelines be discussed and agreed.

**For more information contact:**

Name: Trevor Cripps

Title: Overview and Scrutiny Manager

Tel: 020 8489 6922

Email address: [Trevor.Cripps@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:Trevor.Cripps@haringey.gov.uk)

## **SUPPORTING AND STRENGTHENING LINKS WITH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND HARINGEY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

### **1. The Aim**

To provide a framework within which the work of the Partnership can be scrutinised in a fair, constructive way that adds value to what is being done.

If this document is to serve any useful purpose it is essential that it is flexible and updated in the light of experience to reflect best practice.

### **2. The purpose of Overview and Scrutiny**

To help the Partnership to achieve its objectives by identifying areas where there is not fast enough progress towards achieving excellence and to carry out a scrutiny which identifies what needs to be done to improve the situation.

To be successful scrutiny should not be duplicating work carried out by the partnership but should be providing an independent objective view of what needs to be done to improve the quality and cost effectiveness of services provided to local people.

### **3. Scrutinising local service providers – the new scrutiny powers**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee already has the power to scrutinise matters which affect the authority's area or its inhabitant's wellbeing. Although partner authorities, other than local NHS services, are not currently under a duty to 'co-operate' in such scrutiny exercises, in Haringey they have been willing to do so and attend overview & scrutiny reviews and committee meetings when required.

The new Local Government & Involvement in Health Act 2007, besides tidying up existing legislation, gives Overview and Scrutiny Committees the power to:

- i) require information from relevant partner authorities<sup>1</sup>
- ii) give notice to a relevant partner authority that they must have regard to scrutiny reports and recommendations on any local improvement targets specified in the local area agreement.<sup>2</sup>

It also places a duty on the Council or "Executive" to which a notice is given to respond to Overview and Scrutiny committee recommendations within 2 months<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Section 121 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

<sup>2</sup> Ibid section 122(21C)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid section 122 (21B)

These powers come into effect on 1 April 2009, but the Secretary of State has yet to make regulations about what information partner authorities may or may not have to provide.

#### **4. The way Overview and Scrutiny will operate.**

It must:

- Be fair and open, with all partners and agencies being treated equally.
- Give Service users an opportunity to participate.
- Help the Partnership by scrutinising problem areas - no matter how challenging -and help it to identify sustainable improvement plans.
- Be positive and constructive with the paramount objective of suggesting improvements.
- Contribute to the Comprehensive Area Assessment process.
- Make achievable cost-effective recommendations.
- Monitor the service thereafter to identify the effectiveness of recommendations and whether they have had the desired effect.

#### **5. Choosing Topics for Scrutiny.**

For scrutiny to add value it is essential that the right areas are scrutinised at the appropriate time and contribute to improving services. Scrutiny topics will be chosen having regard to:

- Government policy and new legislation which identifies additional or changed duties or powers.
- The success of the partnership in achieving LAA outcomes and local improvement targets.
- The views on services expressed in the Comprehensive Area Assessment process and other independent assessments, including the annual external audit management letter, residents' surveys, and other assessments of need and provision.
- The views of the Partnership and its themed boards, on those areas where scrutiny involvement would be most beneficial.
- The views of council members and local community, including service users.

A programme of scrutiny work will be drawn up after discussion with the Partnership and its themed boards. Any partner, member of the council or service user may suggest an item for scrutiny. Overview and Scrutiny Committee will have regard to all such suggestions when they decide their work programme.

Whilst an annual scrutiny work programme will be drawn up this will be flexible and can be amended in the light of changing circumstances.

#### **6. Overview and Scrutiny Meetings**

- Any partner may ask for an item to be considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee but must first discuss the matter with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Manager on 0208 489 6922.
- All partners will nominate a named contact who the Overview and Scrutiny Manager or his staff may contact to discuss scrutiny issues including attendance at meetings etc.
- Partners invited to attend an Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting will be given as much notice as possible
- Agenda and Papers for Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Panel meetings will be circulated to all relevant partners at the same time as they are sent to members and at least 5 clear days before the meeting.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Review Panel meetings will, whenever possible, be held in public and at the most convenient and practical venue.

## **7. The Scrutiny Process**

- All relevant partners will be involved in a scrutiny review which affects them.
- Consideration will be given as to the way service users will be involved in more detailed reviews. Depending on the area being reviewed this could be all or part of the local community or service users and/or their families or carers.
- In conjunction with the Partnership, a plan for carrying out individual reviews will be drawn up by the council members on the Panel undertaking the review. At the same time they will consider the possibility of co-opting (non-voting) independent experts, partners and providers of services and users onto the panel.
- All reviews should, where appropriate, cover budget management, achievement of efficiencies and the benefit of investments as well as the underpinning themes in the Comprehensive Area Assessment of sustainability, inequality, people whose circumstance make them vulnerable and value for money.
- All interested parties will be given at least 5 clear working days notice of meetings and the opportunity to read any relevant papers circulated to members.
- It is essential that all reviews are completed as soon as possible but, in any event, in accordance with time scales which enable recommendations to be presented at the appropriate time.

## **8. Scrutiny Reports and Recommendations**

These must:

- Be concise, readable, unambiguous and cogent.
- Explain the reasons for the scrutiny involvement and what it was hoped it would achieve.
- Set out clear, achievable recommendations explaining in each case why they were being made.
- List those who had participated in the review and the documents considered.

## **9. Response to Reports and Recommendations**

Copies of all reports and recommendations will be circulated to all relevant partners immediately they are printed.

Unless otherwise agreed, Haringey's Cabinet must submit the co-ordinated Partnership's response to Overview and Scrutiny Committee within the statutory response time of 2 months.

Any relevant partner may submit a separate response if they do not agree with the Partnerships views, but it is hoped that this will rarely happen as all relevant partners will have been involved in the process.

The appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee may give notice in writing to any relevant partners, to have regard to the report or recommendations in exercising their functions. It is, however, hoped that this power is rarely if ever used.