



Westminster Scrutiny Commission

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Title:	Effectiveness of P&S
Report of:	Member Services Manager
Wards Involved:	All
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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report updates the Commission on the progress of Policy & Scrutiny Committees in advance of the third round of Committees taking place in November. This includes a report on the current task groups, training and budget, alongside an appendix with all of the work programmes of P&S Committees.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

- What are the future concerns, going forward, in relation to the activities of Policy & Scrutiny?
- Does the Commission have any envisaged outcomes by the end of the municipal year?
- Are there any gaps in the work programmes of each of the Committees which can be covered by the Westminster Scrutiny Commission?

3. Current Activity

- 3.1 A table is provided below, to document the current activity and officer support within the Policy & Scrutiny function at Westminster.

Committee	Sub-P&S Task Groups	Support / Link Officer
Adult Services & Health (Mark Ewbank)	Sex Worker Task Group	Laura Johnson x1805
Children & Community Services (Mark Ewbank)	Young Person's Scrutiny Panel	Mark Ewbank x2636
Environment (Mark Ewbank)	Highways & Transportation Task Group	Mark Ewbank x2636
	Waste Disposal Task Group	Laura Johnson x1805
Housing, Finance and Customer Services (Mark Ewbank)	Budget and Performance Task Group	Mark Ewbank x2636

3.2 Sex Worker Task Group

In June 2012, the Adult Services & Health Policy & Scrutiny Committee won their bid to become an inclusion health scrutiny development area working around reducing health inequalities for Sex Workers. This award provides Westminster with a unique opportunity to support the development of good practice for overview and scrutiny that will inform the national Inclusion Health programme. The task group is composed of **Cllr Ian Rowley** (Chairman), Cllr Paul Dimoldenberg, Cllr Ruth Bush, Cllr Richard Beddoe, Cllr Robert Rigby and Cllr Sarah Richardson. The group met for the first time on Thursday 26th July 2012 and as of November, their focus for the Department of Health project, is on violence towards sex workers.

3.3 Young Person's Scrutiny Panel

In September 2010, Westminster's first Young People's Scrutiny Panel was established to allow young people in the borough the opportunity to scrutinise local issues that matter to them and influence the council's decision making process.

In October 2012, a number of young people have chosen to investigate the issue of access to mental health services for children and young people. **Cllr Sheila D'Souza** is the lead scrutiny Member on a parallel project and both intend to report to the Children and Community Services Policy & Scrutiny Committee on the 11th February. The Panel meets every two weeks to question and talk to key officers and representatives.

3.4 Highways & Transportation Task Group

The Highways and Transportation (Contract Re-Let) Task Group is considering the re-let of the Highways and Transportation service contract(s). The existing Highways and Transportation service contracts expire on the 31 March 2014. A six month mobilisation and demobilisation period between contracts is required, which means that the new contract(s) needs to be let by October 2013. Due to the time constraints placed upon Westminster, a decision on the procurement route will be made in the near future and further decisions on the contract packaging, scope, and service levels will be necessary by the end of 2012. Due to high profile work undertaken by this service and its impact upon Westminster and the national economy, it is important that the future strategy is developed in conjunction with members and key stakeholders. The Chairman and Committee have thus agreed that a councillor task group be established to help advise on the development of this contract, in a similar way to the work P&S previously undertook on the tendering process for the waste and cleansing contract. The group includes Cllr Cox, Cllr McKie, Cllr Bradley and **Cllr Connell**.

3.5 Waste Disposal Strategy Task Group

Prior to commencing any formal procurement process the council is required to set out its long-term objectives for waste ('Waste Management Strategy') for approval by the Mayor of London. A report which came to the Environment P&S Committee last month examines the Mayor's regional strategies and policies alongside other key macro environmental influences that will have a significant impact on the design of the council's waste strategy, and ultimately its procurement strategy for new waste treatment and disposal services. It also considers potential contract packaging options and the preferred duration of the contract(s) to be awarded.

The Chairman and Environment P&S Committee have thus agreed that a P&S task group be established to help advise on the development of this contract. The Task Group would be aiming to provide advice and guidance to officers on the development of a new waste strategy, including how Westminster can most effectively engage residents, businesses and other stakeholders in contributing to the design of a new waste strategy. The group includes Cllr Hyams, **Cllr Connell**, Cllr Cox and Cllr Mukerji.

3.6 Budget and Performance Task Group

The Budget and Performance Task Group is a standing group which meets each year in late January to scrutinise the budget envelopes for the following financial year. Its role is high profile and it considers, on behalf of all the P&S Committees, the Budget Options, Draft Business Plans and Estimates at the appropriate stages in the business planning cycle and to submit recommendations/comments to the Cabinet and/or Cabinet Members. **Cllr Brahams** (Chairman) will be focusing attention on Capital Expenditure and the Council's income-generating activities. The group includes Cllr Chalkley, Cllr Rigby and Cllr Dimoldenberg.

4. Training

- 4.1 Westminster is part of the **London Scrutiny Network**, and as such is able to send delegates to London Scrutiny Network training events for Members. The last event was hosted at Westminster City Hall (see Appendix A) and received 55 Members from across London, who heard from Meg Hillier MP and Caroline Pidgeon AM, alongside taking part in workshops on the scrutiny of shared services, scrutiny of commissioning and engaging the public. Please see the programme attached as Appendix A. **Cllr Barrie Taylor** attended from Westminster. Cllr Angela Harvey was also an attendee at LSN events.

5. Budget

- 5.1 The Policy & Scrutiny function possesses a small budget through which to fund:
- Commissioned research (or supporting in-house research)
 - Site-visits which involve a cost
 - Expenses for External Expert Witnesses (who travel from outside London)
 - Refreshments for events
 - Event hosting (i.e. Roundtable debates / seminars / conferences)
 - Resident engagement (i.e. NHS Public Meeting)
 - Communications (i.e. hard publications or mailshots)
- 5.2 There was a budget underspend in 2011/2012.

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Mark Ewbank x2636
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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix A: Effective Scrutiny in a Brave New World

Appendix B: Work Programmes of all Policy & Scrutiny Committees