



HILLINGDON  
LONDON

# Overview and Scrutiny in Hillingdon

Annual Report to Council - 2020 / 2021

# Introduction

This has been an extraordinary year for overview and scrutiny in Hillingdon due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Councillors on the committees have adapted well to operating virtually and importantly, have continued to perform their key role of monitoring, and reviewing council and external services in the best interests of Hillingdon residents.

Despite a slightly shorter municipal year of meetings, not commencing formally until September 2020, committees have certainly made up for this time in their work programmes. Reviews undertaken have received excellent witness participation throughout and committees have also re-prioritised their activity to better understand how the pandemic has, and will, impact on areas within their remit, along with what lessons and opportunities seen during the pandemic can bring to the provision of local services in the future.

This annual report provides an opportunity to note the activity and achievements of overview and scrutiny in Hillingdon during the 2020/21 Municipal Year. This is a statutory, vital part of the Council's non-executive governance arrangements.

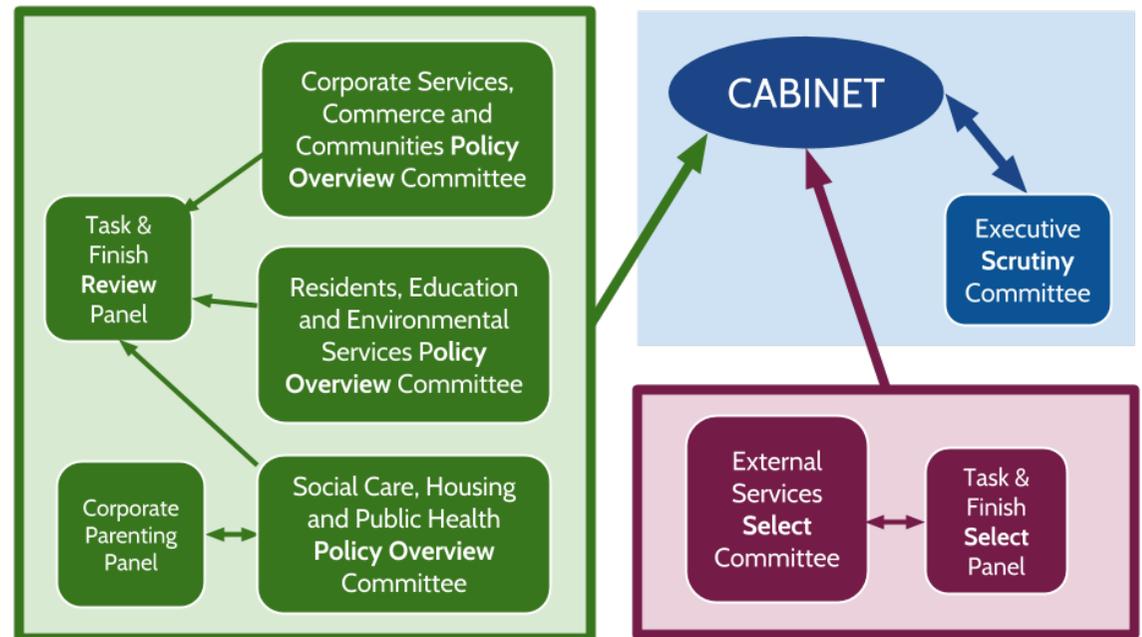
# Overview and scrutiny arrangements 2020/21

Overview and scrutiny in Hillingdon comprise three Policy Overview Committees (POCs) which are responsible for monitoring council services and recommending changes to Cabinet on a range of areas to shape future policy direction. In addition, there is an Executive Scrutiny Committee, which is responsible for post Cabinet and Cabinet Member decision scrutiny and the statutory call-in procedure. The final, yet a key arm of these arrangements, is the External Services Select Committee. This Committee is responsible for holding to account and reviewing those services provided by other public agencies, primarily the local NHS and Police services.

All committees undertake their role through a multi-year work programme of activities which may include single meeting or in-depth policy reviews on specific topics of community and resident importance. These reviews provide the opportunity to directly engage with resident stakeholders, local interest groups and experts to help shape local public services in Hillingdon.

Committees also monitor the performance of local services and can request information and reports on matters of resident interest, often through the valuable insight of local councillors in their wards. Committees provide regular comment on reports to Cabinet for decision and input into Cabinet's annual budget proposals before they are approved by Council each year. These Committees, therefore, play a vital role in ensuring that the Council continues to provide high quality, value-for-money services, putting Hillingdon residents first.

Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Policy Overview Committees can consider 'Councillor Calls For Action' submissions. These powers enable all Councillors to ask for discussions at POCs on issues where local problems have arisen and other methods of resolution have been exhausted. No such Calls for Actions have been requested and thereby considered during 2019/20.



Key corporate parenting responsibilities of Elected Councillors are an integral part within Hillingdon's overview and scrutiny arrangements. The Corporate Parenting Panel actively engages young people in the development of council services with a direct line to the decision-making Cabinet.

Following the publication of Statutory Scrutiny Guidance in 2019, Councillors further reviewed the overview and scrutiny arrangements and adopted a new Protocol on Scrutiny & Cabinet relations. The Statutory Scrutiny Officer can report there has been compliance with this protocol during the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

The Council's overview and scrutiny structure is shown on the right of this page and is part Hillingdon's strong political governance of the Borough. This Annual Report demonstrates the breadth of work undertaken by Elected Councillors engaged in overview and scrutiny during 2020/21. On behalf of the Committee Chairmen, it is commended to Council on 20 May 2021.

# ‘Voluntary Sector Response to Covid-19, Anti-Social Behaviour in Lockdown and Climate Change’

## The work of the Corporate Services, Commerce & Communities Policy Overview Committee



### Councillors:

**Richard Mills (Chairman)**

**Vanessa Hurhangee (Vice-Chairman)**

**Wayne Bridges**

**Nicola Brightman**

**Farhad Choubedar**

**Alan Deville**

**Jazz Dhillon (Opposition Lead)**

**Lindsay Bliss**

**Scott Farley**

**Lead Officer:** *Liz Penny, Democratic Services*

### Our remit

The Committee is responsible for the policy overview role for a broad array of Council services, provided mainly by the Council’s Chief Executive’s Office and Finance Directorate. These include strategic internal functions, such as finance, property, partnerships, human resources, democratic services, legal services, ICT, and economic development. Further responsibilities also include localism, enforcement, community engagement, local commerce and job

creation, equalities, energy use and carbon reduction, public safety, civil protection and community safety.

In 2020, the Committee was given a new monitoring responsibility on the Council’s efforts to tackle climate change.

The Committee has undertaken one in-depth review this year and has also monitored several service areas. This is summarised below.

### REVIEWED: The Voluntary Sector Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

This review investigated the voluntary and community sector’s (VCS) response to the Covid-19 pandemic and enabled the Committee to gain a better understanding of the challenges faced and how the sector was able to work effectively and proactively in collaboration with the Council to meet the needs of residents. It was recognised that a coordinated response was essential to protect the most vulnerable residents in the Borough.

The VCS was at the forefront of responding to the emerging and changing demands of the Covid-19 pandemic and was well placed to pick up issues on the ground and provide support. The sector was also impacted directly and had to adjust and transform to enable it to

continue to support residents effectively.



At the outset of the pandemic, the Council established the Hillingdon Community Hub in collaboration with Hillingdon 4 All (H4All) - the local consortium which brings together five of the main local charities (AgeUKHHB, Hillingdon Carers Trust, Harlington Hospice, Hillingdon MIND and DASH). The Hub was widely promoted as the place to call in event of urgent need, should residents be required to shield or isolate. Emergency food became one of the main requests and the hub responded quickly with a bespoke paid-for shopping service, and with emergency food parcels, co-ordinated by the Council's Business Assurance Team. The Borough's foodbanks, faith groups and voluntary organisations also helped during the pandemic, distributing food and prescriptions and offering "befriending" calls.

As lockdown requirements changed, the Council worked closely with the two main established foodbanks in Hillingdon - the Hillingdon

Foodbank and the UB7 Foodbank - to support them in taking referrals from the Hub. This allowed the emergency food distribution elements of the Community Hub to be reduced and moved to a more sustainable model.

The review received evidence from a range of expert witnesses including representatives from Hillingdon Foodbank, UB7 Foodbank, Hillingdon MIND, Age UK and the Carers' Trust. The witness sessions were well received by the Committee and provided invaluable information which helped to shape the review, along with the supporting information provided by Council officers. This evidence provided the Committee with insight into the challenges faced during the pandemic and enabled the Committee to gain a more thorough understanding of how the Council had worked effectively in collaboration with the voluntary sector to ensure a coordinated response. The Committee recognised that there would be ongoing challenges in the future, particularly in relation to mental health, and noted the importance of outbound communications to enable all residents to access information about key voluntary sector services available to them.

This review is due to be presented to Cabinet in 2021.

## **MONITORING activity**

### **Annual Complaints Update 2019/20**

The Committee received a comprehensive report on Resident Complaints and Enquiries within its remit, noting the trends and providing appropriate feedback to officers. The Committee was informed that these numbers suggest the complaints procedure continues to work well.

## Update on review into ‘Recruitment in Hillingdon’

The Committee was presented with an update on the implementation of the recommendations approved by Cabinet in the 2017 review into “Recruitment in Hillingdon”.

The Committee heard that, further to the review, the Council was much better at differentiating what it meant to be working for Hillingdon. Professional workers in the business believed Hillingdon offered: accomplishment and achievement, a collective impact, working for a resourceful and progressive Council, a sense of diversity, and a support mechanism through management and an organisational culture that supported professional development.

Members heard that there was now a much better level of candidate response, and the recruitment process was quicker following the implementation of the Committee’s recommendations. The Committee was also informed that the apprenticeship scheme was very successful and provided a pivotal talent pool with over 50% of apprentices staying and starting their professional careers at the Council.

## Budget Review and Cabinet’s Budget Proposals

As a statutory consultee to the Cabinet’s 2021/22 budget proposals published in December, the Committee reviewed and supported the proposals within its remit. The Committee also agreed a co-ordinated response on behalf of the other two Policy Overview Committees to Cabinet. During the year, the Committee also received an update on the 2020/21 budget.

## Alley Gating

Members received an update on the Council’s Alley Gating Scheme noting that, within the Chrysalis programme, around £30k was earmarked each financial year to support alleygating and community safety schemes to enhance public safety. The private alleygating scheme had been introduced about 15 years previously and about 13 schemes had been completed in total. Chrysalis funding contributed up to 90% of the cost of alley gates to successful applicants but responsibility for maintenance and ownership lay with the residents themselves.

Each year gating schemes were implemented on Housing-owned land as part of the Better Neighbourhood Fund. £156k of Better Neighbourhood funding was available each year for improvements on LBH Housing-owned land, to benefit the wider community. For these schemes, keys were held by the Tenancy Management Officer.

With regards to the Chrysalis scheme, the Committee was advised that, over the last 3 years, 23 applications had been received; 19 of which had been approved and 378 households had benefited. In terms of the Better Neighbourhood Fund Data, 14 alleygating schemes had been approved and 311 households had benefited. For private schemes, responsibility for ongoing maintenance lay with the residents themselves. Members observed that it was important that the Council kept accurate records and suggested that officers wrote to lead residents on a yearly basis to ensure contact details were correct and up to date. It was recognised that the matter of absentee landlords was a challenge and it was sometimes difficult to obtain alley gating contributions from households.

## Anti-Social Behaviour in Lockdown

The Committee received an update regarding Anti-Social Behaviour during lockdown. In terms of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Members heard that the ASBET team had been working in partnership with licensing and the police. A team of 4 dedicated officers with delegated powers had been working 12 hour shifts 7 days a week to enforce on the business front and the night-time economy, particularly in terms of breaches of social distancing and businesses not adhering to restrictions. The workload had increased significantly as more people were at home leading to increased noise levels, rubbish accumulation, misuse of communal areas and neighbourhood disputes. Members were pleased that the ASBET team had continued to deliver a service throughout the pandemic.

## Past Review Update: Local Policing Review

The Committee received an update on its Local Policing Review. It was noted that the review recommendations had been approved by Cabinet in July 2019 and, since then, significant progress had been made. The original two police teams had now been amalgamated into one and during the pandemic, work had been done to deliver services more efficiently.

In terms of CCTV, the service had been maintained 24/7 throughout the pandemic. ANPR cameras were in daily use throughout the Borough providing information on fly tipping, suspect vehicles etc. The priority going forward was to ensure the Council had ANPR cameras on all main arterial routes. There was a good flow of information into and out of the CCTV room and the Council had been able to help the police with information on some serious offences.

The Committee heard that there was now only one Partnership Tasking team with one sergeant and 8 constables. Fortnightly tasking

meetings with the sergeant in charge were held and departments such as Licensing, Planning, ASBET, Corporate Fraud and Tenancy Management were invited to attend. The tasking team had been ring-fenced to work exclusively in Hillingdon.

## Hillingdon First Limited

The Committee received a report regarding Hillingdon First Limited which was the Council's wholly owned subsidiary housing development company. The company had been established in April 2018 to deliver high quality housing and generate a sustainable revenue stream for the Council. The Council was the sole shareholder and Cabinet Members on the Shareholder Committee oversaw operations. Key company decisions such as the commencement of projects and approval of the annual Business Plan were presented to the Shareholder Committee, alongside updates on performance and matters arising as necessary. Hillingdon First Ltd employed no staff directly and operated by buying in relevant support services as required – mainly from the Council.

The Committee was informed that the first project undertaken by Hillingdon First Ltd was underway – the construction for open market sale of 31 flats on the site adjacent to South Ruislip Library on Victoria Road, The project was nearing completion and a pre-tax profit of circa £1m was expected. A second smaller development consisting of five houses at St Helen's Close, Cowley had been worked up within the business plan and a design and build contractor was currently being appointed. The scheme would launch by spring 2022. Surplus Council-owned sites previously used for Council services were currently being used for development, though 3<sup>rd</sup> party land was not being purchased. The Committee was advised that, to date, Hillingdon First Ltd had remained focused on safe in-borough residential development schemes as there was a lower level of risk. The Council was not materially reliant on this business to deliver core services. In

future, affordable housing would be delivered on larger developments and it was anticipated that the Council would have first refusal on affordable units. It was confirmed that Hillingdon First Ltd was not averse to the idea of developing units for rental which could offer a longer-term investment.

## **Safety of Council-Owned Properties and Buildings**

A confidential update on the Safety of Council-Owned Properties and Buildings was provided to the Committee detailing the safety and security measures in place in the Council's 120 corporate buildings.

## **Performance Monitoring and Data**

The Committee received a report on the tracking of performance and provision of insight data in the Council, examples of the data provided and how data were used to shape operational delivery and the strategic development of services.

Members heard that the Council routinely gathered a range of data across all directorates. The purpose of this data collection was to ensure services were being delivered efficiently to meet residents' needs. There was also a requirement to plan for the future development of services. The Council had at its disposal a variety of mechanisms to gather, process and analyse the data using spreadsheets, bespoke databases and data mining software.

The Committee was advised that a census would be completed on 21 March 2021 - this would provide a fresh data set and would demonstrate how things had changed since 2011. Greater London Authority data also provided a useful and more up-to-date insight into the demographic profile of the Borough.

## **Climate Change Action Plan**

The Council's draft Climate Change Action Plan was presented as part of the wider public consultation exercise. Members were invited to comment prior to it going back to Cabinet in July 2021. The plan aimed to inspire residents to reduce their omissions and supported objectives such as air quality, fuel poverty and preventing flooding.

Members heard that the Council aimed to be carbon neutral by 2030. It planned to achieve clean energy via the use of wind turbines, solar energy and energy supplied by the local and national grid. The use of fossil fuel would be reduced in the future. The aim would be to purchase green energy when possible and, if not achievable, to consider carbon offsetting. The Council had committed to the first climate change strategy and had introduced several activities to reduce its carbon footprint including the installation of lower energy LED street lighting, more efficient boilers and the purchase of green energy. It was anticipated that the residual figure to offset carbon would be reduced significantly over the next 5-8 years and, if the Council continued to purchase green energy, would be relatively low by 2030. Approximately 50 hybrid / electric vehicles had been purchased in 2020 and more would be purchased in 2021.

It was confirmed that the draft plan would be subject to a public consultation period – an online survey would be released on 29 March 2021 and webinars were planned together with direct emailing to interested parties. It was hoped that residents would be engaged and involved in shaping the plan.

## **Prevent**

An update on current activity in relation to delivering the Council's responsibilities under the Prevent Duty was received. Members heard that the Council had a responsibility to work towards the aims of its

Prevent Duty and safeguard those being drawn to extremism. Channel was the multi-agency process for the management of cases relating to vulnerability to radicalisation and support of terrorism. The local authority acted as Chair of the Channel panel and multi-agency meetings were held on a regular basis to identify and offer positive support to those at risk.

Training for staff and partner agencies was key and it was confirmed that the Council had delivered training to more than 5000 staff across the Borough from within the Council, education, health, voluntary and other settings.

The Council worked with local partners to better understand the picture in relation to radicalisation which was constantly changing. An understanding of the online space and how it was being used to spread extremist material and messaging was of vital importance. Workshops had been delivered in schools with pupils discussing topics relating to promoting equality and diversity, challenging discrimination and tackling hate. A training package and Prevent training day would also be organised for Elected Members.

## **Past Review Update: Homophobic, Biphobic & Transphobic Bullying Review**

The Committee received an update on the recommendations approved by Cabinet in June 2019. Members were informed that progress was being made in respect of all the recommendations though some of the actions had been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Schools had generally embraced the recommended action points and progress would be monitored going forward. Schools were being encouraged to join the “Stonewall Champions Programme”. A fuller update would be provided at a later future date.

# 'Public health, autism and wellbeing'

## The work of the Social Care, Housing & Public Health Policy Overview Committee



### Councillors:

**Philip Corthorne (Chairman)** (from 14 January 2021)

**Ian Edwards (Chairman)** (to 14 January 2021)

**Heena Makwana (Vice-Chairman)**

**Judith Cooper**

**Alan Deville**

**Becky Haggar**

**Paula Rodrigues**

**Steve Tuckwell**

**Tony Eginton (Opposition Lead)**

**Janet Gardner**

**Lead Officer:** *Steve Clarke, Democratic Services*

### Our remit

The Social Care, Housing & Public Health Policy Overview Committee is responsible for undertaking the policy overview role in relation to the Council's Adult Social Care, Social Care Services for Children, Young People and Children with Special Needs, Adoption and Fostering, Homelessness and Housing Needs, Asylum Seekers and Public Health responsibilities.

In addition to monitoring performance, considering the Budget and receiving several overview reports on Social Care, Housing and Public Health matters, the Committee continued its in-depth review into making the Council's public facing services more autism friendly.

The Committee has seen changes in chairmanship over the last municipal year, with Councillor Philip Corthorne taking the position most recently in January 2021. The previous chairman during the year was Councillor Ian Edwards, now Leader of the Council.

### **CHAMPIONING: Corporate Parenting - Children First**

Corporate Parenting is a significant responsibility for the Committee, and for all our Elected Members who are all 'Corporate Parents'. Therefore, all Members have a duty to safeguard the best interests of our Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers.

The Corporate Parenting Panel, established by the Committee in March 2019, provides for greater integration of Corporate Parenting within the Council's governance arrangements. The Panel is scheduled to meet six times per year; however, the COVID-19 pandemic has limited the 2020/21 municipal year to four meetings, which took place virtually.

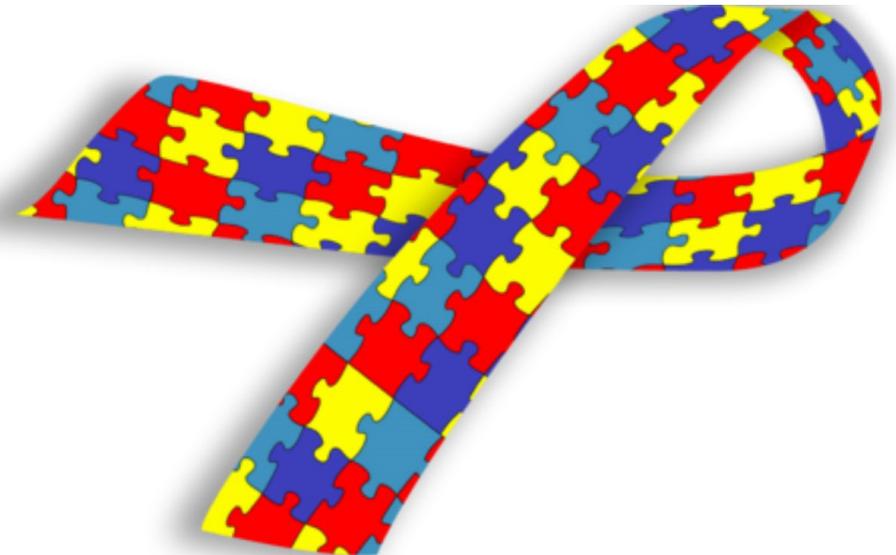
The purpose of the Corporate Parenting Panel is to champion Corporate Parenting across the Council by directly engaging with our Looked After Children and Care Leavers, and directly involving them in the democratic and decision-making process, working alongside them to monitor services and improve outcomes.

The Panel has reviewed a wide range of topics over the last year, including annual reports from Independent Reviewing Officers; the LAC Health Team; the Virtual School; and the Fostering and Adoption Service. The Panel has heard presentations from young people in relation to needs, services and feedback from the Care Leavers Conference; the Kids in Care Awards (KICA) 2020; and a summary 'Quiz of the Year'. These have been well received by the Panel as they have enabled direct engagement with young people, who have also co-chaired Panel meetings. The Committee Chairman and Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care attended the most recent Panel meeting, keeping them up to date on the work of the Panel. The Panel's work programme has been tailored to include thematic topics, such as Safeguarding, and Health & Education. An overarching theme of the last year has been the COVID-19 pandemic, and the ways this has impacted on service delivery, and on young people themselves.

The Corporate Parenting Panel is chaired by Councillor Nick Denys and includes Councillor Tony Eginton and Councillor Heena Makwana. The Panel includes young people, service officers, fostering, nursing and virtual school representatives.

## **REVIEWED: Making the Council more Autism-friendly**

Towards the end of 2019, the Committee commenced its review on what opportunities may exist to create a more autism-friendly service experience for residents. The aim of the review was to consider how the Council could improve its public facing services to support residents with autism and to make practical, feasible and supportive recommendations to promote inclusion when accessing our universal services. The review was put on hold during the pandemic and continued from September 2020.



The Committee decided to take a more hands on approach to the review and were keen to meet with different organisations and departments that all contribute to the Council's services in relation to autism. The Committee welcomed a wide range of invited representatives from groups such as Hillingdon Autistic Care and Support and Hillingdon Parent Carer Forum. In addition to scrutinising

the Council's own departments and heads of service, Members conducted site visits to Eastcote and Uxbridge libraries to see the services available to residents with autism and met with representatives from the Centre for ADHD and Autism Support.

It is of the utmost importance that the Council, and its public services, remain accessible and approachable for all residents. By adopting a variety of scrutiny techniques, the Committee offered a set of supportive recommendations to Cabinet. The Committee noted opportunities for the Council to improve in terms of ease of access to services generally and creating a more autism friendly experience but were pleased to note progress, including the appointment of Advanced Social Work Practitioners with a focus on Autism, and on officer training and development.

The findings and recommendations arising from the review were approved by Cabinet on 22 April 2021 to be taken forward.

## **REVIEWING: Assisted Living Technologies**

At the meeting on 13 April 2021, the Committee agreed to pursue a major review into Assisted Living Technologies. Hillingdon currently has a variety of Assistive Living Technologies in place which enables residents to remain within their own home or a supported setting and retain their independence. The technology used is aimed at supporting residents in daily life and providing peace of mind for them, their families and carers.

The Committee's decision to conduct a review into Assistive Living Technologies was made even more pertinent against a backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic due to its focus on a proportion of the Borough's most vulnerable residents. The review will formally commence at the beginning of the 2021/22 municipal year.

## **MONITORING: public health and the wellbeing of vulnerable residents**

### **Covid-19**

Prior to the 2020/21 municipal year, the Committee received an important update from the Council's Director of Public Health regarding coronavirus and the latest position and advice from Public Health England at the time. The nationwide lockdown led to a hiatus in the Committee's activity from March through to September 2020. Against the ever-changing backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Committee embraced new and adaptive means of scrutiny as meetings moved online.

In October 2020 the Committee received a report on the Covid-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan. The plan set out how the Council is working with residents, businesses and partner organisations to prevent and control the spread of the Covid-19 virus in what was, and still is, a very fast-moving national environment.

### **Carers' Strategy**

The Committee received an update on the implementation of the 2018/21 Carers Strategy and the detailed action plan. Members welcomed this opportunity to ask officers questions on the local services provided, including areas working well and challenges. The Committee resolved that reporting on the delivery of the strategy should be annual and precede the annual progress report to Cabinet.

## **Universal Credit - a previous review**

The Committee received an update on the position regarding Universal Credit in Hillingdon following the review in 2019 which covered the impacts, risks and local partnership response. Members used this opportunity to see what changes had been made since the reviews and noted that recommendations had been implemented.

## **Safeguarding and Mental Health Services**

Each year, the Committee receives the Hillingdon Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report and Safeguarding Adult Board Annual Report providing comments on them to the Cabinet. These reports provided detail on the work undertaken by each Board and evidence about the standard to which the agencies responsible for safeguarding children and adults had performed. The Committee reviewed the reports, questioned officers about performance and submitted useful comments to the Cabinet.

## **Semi Independent Living**

The Committee received an overview of semi-independent living arrangements for young people aged 16 – 25 years commissioned by the London Borough of Hillingdon's Children and Young People's Social Care service. The Committee was able to question officers and was pleased to hear about the Young Inspectors programme and its proactive approach.

## **Voids Management**

Housing related topics have been a significant area of activity for the Committee. The Committee were provided with an understanding of the void property management process, the contributions made by various service teams, the interfaces in the 'end to end process' and

performance associated with this core landlord function. The Committee commended officers on their work and highlighted the need to make the most of the Council's housing stock and the importance of this work area.

## **Update on the Council's Housing Stock and Zero Carbon Commitment**

A presentation was delivered to Members with a focus on housing energy and the activities being undertaken to reduce carbon emissions within the Council's housing stock. In January 2020, the London Borough of Hillingdon declared a climate emergency which led to the impending development of a Climate Action Strategy issued for consultation by Cabinet in March 2021. Members were given an overview of fuel poverty in London, it was highlighted that Hillingdon had lower fuel poverty levels than all neighbouring boroughs and from 2010 to 2018, the proportion of fuel poor households had decreased from 11.2% to 10.1%.

## **Online Housing Benefits Applications**

Members received an update on the Housing Benefits and Council Tax Reduction online application processes and services. As was a common theme throughout the year, the Committee were also updated with matters in relation to the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on service delivery and capacity.

## **Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping**

An update on the Council's Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019/24 was received warmly by the Committee. The Council's current five-year strategy went live in 2019 and was primarily based on six priority workstreams. Individually, the

workstreams highlighted key areas of up-stream homelessness prevention, access to affordable housing options and the importance of partnership working. The six priority areas showed the Council's intention to lead change and support the Borough's most vulnerable residents.

The Covid-19 pandemic had emphasised the importance of having an accessible and responsive service for residents. In response to the Government's 'Everyone In' scheme, over 250 rough sleepers had come through the Council's service since April 2020 and a highly successful new rough sleeper hostel was opened within an extremely tight timeframe in March 2020. It was highlighted that, in the Government's annual rough sleeper report, published in February 2021, Hillingdon was highlighted as the Borough with the largest drop in rough sleepers in England over the past year.

### **Budget Review and Cabinet's Budget Proposals**

As a statutory consultee to the Cabinet's 2021/22 budget proposals, published in December 2020, the Committee reviewed the proposals within its remit and submitted comments to the Corporate Services, Commerce and Communities Policy Overview Committee. During the

year, the Committee also received an update on the 2020/21 budget planning report.

### **Annual Complaints Update 2019/20**

The Committee received a comprehensive report on Resident Complaints and Enquiries within its remit, noting the trends and providing appropriate feedback to officers.

# ‘Adult learning, schools and local environment’

## The work of the Residents, Education & Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee



### Councillors:

**Wayne Bridges (Chairman)**

John Morgan (Vice-Chairman)

Allan Kauffman

Alan Chapman

Devi Radia

Paula Rodrigues

Colleen Sullivan

Jan Sweeting (Opposition Lead)

Stuart Mathers

**Tony Little (Co-opted Education representative)**

**Lead Officer:** *Neil Fraser, Democratic Services*

### REVIEWING: Hillingdon’s Adult and Community Learning Service

During 2020/21, the Committee has undertaken a review of Hillingdon’s Adult and Community Learning Service.

The Hillingdon Adult and Community Learning (HACL) service provides courses for adults in Hillingdon, externally funded by the Education and Skills Funding Service (ESFA) and the GLA following the delegation of funds to the London Mayor from August 2019. Historically, approximately 3000 learners have taken courses a year, resulting in approximately 5000 enrolments, the vast majority of whom are Hillingdon residents.

While courses aim to be as accessible as possible to residents, the current pandemic and periodic lockdowns have meant that some residents have been unable to attend classes in person. The move to virtual meetings using remote meeting technology has also proved difficult for some learners, through a combination of lack of IT skills or lack of availability of the requisite IT equipment at home.

The Committee has been cognizant of the unique circumstances of the pandemic, and so the review has explored additional opportunities to assess the current service offering and ensure the courses provided

### Our remit

This Committee is responsible for the policy overview role for a diverse range of Council services central to residents’ quality of life. Our remit extends to education, highways, transport, footpaths, green spaces, planning, heritage, waste and recycling, sport and leisure, environmental health, and beyond. The Committee has undertaken a major review this year into Hillingdon’s Adult and Community Learning Service. It has also monitored several critical service areas.

are responsive to newly identified or emerging requirements in a post-Covid world, including increased working arrangements with other Council departments and external partners and other local authorities.

The review has also considered the recommendations resulting from Ofsted's inspection in December 2019 and the actions being taken to address these concerns. In addition, the Committee has obtained feedback from learners and service providers, to ensure the service offering is agile and responsive to changing learner needs.

The Committee's review remains a work in progress, and the final report, with recommendations, will be submitted to Cabinet for consideration in the coming months.

## **REVIEWED: Littering and Fly-Tipping in Hillingdon**



The Committee approved the final report into its review of littering and fly-tipping within Hillingdon, which was submitted for endorsement at the Cabinet meeting held on 22 October 2020. Cabinet endorsed all recommendations, which included actions to promote waste services to landlords, tenants, volunteers and young people, increased programmes of roadside beautification, strengthened relationships with partners such as Keep Britain Tidy, hard hitting communications campaigns (including details of fines and prosecutions for offenders), and how the Council can embrace national changes resulting from the 2020 Environment Bill.

## **MONITORING: education & key environmental services**

### **School Places**

The Committee receives quarterly updates on the provision of school places to pupils. This enables Members to also review headline pupil projections at both primary and secondary levels, aligned with the Council's School Expansion Programme. Members noted that, in previous years, the Council had successfully offered every child a school place and understood that work was underway regarding places for September 2021.

### **Educational attainment of our young people**

An annual report is presented each year to Members detailing trends in the academic standards of pupils within the Borough. The Committee noted the efforts of schools and officers for continuing to support learning and well-being through what has been a challenging time. However, Members did note that challenges remained,

particularly around school performance, and the Committee asked that Hillingdon looks at best practice delivered by other councils, some of whom have higher levels of deprivation, so that Hillingdon's position compared to other London boroughs and statistical neighbours can be improved. The Committee's views were presented to Cabinet when it considered the final report.

## Changes to the Elective Home Education Policy

The Committee gave its feedback on a report detailing proposed changes to the Council's Elective Home Education Policy, to update the policy in line with the Department for Education's latest guidance and to better support parents within Hillingdon.

Proposed changes included revisions to the layout of the policy, information on dedicated social care involvement and support, and the introduction of a flowchart detailing procedure. The proposed changes had been submitted for consultation with stakeholders but at the time of the report, no responses had been received.

Members noted that there had been a 43% increase in the number of children being home educated within the Borough, likely due to parents choosing to keep children at home rather than send them to school during the pandemic.

Members made several suggestions for further revisions to the policy, including:

- Ensuring that language used within the policy was gender neutral and easy to understand,
- Provide for alternative ways parents can discuss their choice to home educate their child without involving the school's head teacher,
- Contact signposting, particularly within the introduction,
- Links to relevant background information for parents.

These suggestions were considered and taken on board by Cabinet in the final policy approved.

## Schools Admissions Criteria

The Committee received a report detailing proposed minor changes to the school admissions criteria, comprising:

- a.) the removal of nodal point criteria for Deanesfield Primary School;
- b.) a higher priority for children of staff working at a school versus children living nearby;
- c.) a change of the terms detailing medical or psychological conditions, from 'psychological' to 'social', to enable consistency with terms set out in the School Admission Code 2014; and
- d.) a reduction in the Planned Admissions Number (PAN) for Ruislip Gardens Primary School.

It was confirmed that, if approved, the proposed amendments would be implemented in September 2022. Of the three responses to the consultation received so far, all were in favour of the proposed changes, bar one who was opposed the change to staff children/distance criteria.

## Community Infrastructure Levy Reporting

The Committee received a report detailing the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), a charge which allowed the Council to raise funds from developers undertaking new building projects, and which supported the financing of infrastructure costs across the Borough.

In line with regulatory requirements, a detailed annual report on CIL total income and expenditure is required to be published on the

Council's website by 31 December each year, in respect of the previous financial year.

CIL monies were confirmed to be distinct from S106 monies, in that they were not site specific and could be used for wider improvements across the Borough. The neighbourhood proportion of CIL spend (minimum 15%) were spent through the Council's Chrysalis programme, driven by requests from residents and/or Ward Councillors.

Detail of the projects CIL supported were set out within the report.

## **Statement of Licensing Policy Consultation**

The Committee received a report detailing proposed changes to the Statement of Licensing Policy. The Council is required to update its policy every 5 years, with the current policy due for updating in 2021. As part of this review, the Licensing Team consulted the Committee on the new draft policy before its consideration by Cabinet and adoption by full Council. Proposed changes are designed to provide clarity and consistency, and include updates to partnership working, immigration, modern day slavery, mobile internet sales, promotion of equality, and more.

## **Enforcement of Parking Management Schemes**

The Committee received a report detailing the enforcement of parking management schemes within Hillingdon, which included detail on the decriminalisation of parking enforcement in London in 1994 and the powers granted to local authorities to enforce parking, granted by the Road Traffic Act 1991.

The Committee was apprised of the process by which offenders re ticketed, as well as the appeals process open to residents and motorists.

Parking outside schools was highlighted as a particular concern, and the Committee was advised that the Council operated automated cameras deployed at all schools with school zig zags. Parking Civil Enforcement Officers are visiting schools on a rota basis, with patrols increased at certain schools where there are reported issues.

CCTV was confirmed to be used to monitor parking offences, with 131 total cameras used to monitor areas such as bus lanes, bus stop and banned turns.

## **Flooding**

The Committee welcomed a report detailing the Council's roles and responsibilities as a Lead Local Flood Authority, its required actions during a major flood event, and lessons learned from recent flood events.

Members made a number of suggestions for officers to consider, including new processes for notifying Ward Councillors of flood events, increased collaboration with Councillor's when drafting the service's annual report, and how Ward Councillors could notify officers of problem areas at imminent risk of flooding.

## **Planning for Canals and Towpaths**

The Committee received an update on the planning policies governing canals and towpaths.

It was highlighted that the matter was topical, as canals and towpaths had become popular recreational spots during the Covid-19 pandemic. Planning officers had worked closely with the Canal and River Trust charity, who were very active in the protection of the waterways and were often engaged with as part of planning consultations. The boundary threshold for applications to make financial contributions for the canal improvement was 150m from the canal edge, though the Council was receiving contributions from developments that were beyond this threshold, but whose development would impact the area. Examples were highlighted within the report. Local polices and polices set out within the new London Plan encouraged the use of waterways, e.g. transportation of building materials by boat, to help reduce pollution and address climate change.

### **Tree Planting within Hillingdon**

The Committee was updated on Tree Planting within the Borough. Members were advised that while there was no set target for planting, the service attempted to plant on a 1:1 basis at a minimum. It was confirmed that Hillingdon had planted 6,250 trees over the preceding 12 months and had removed 215.

Regarding planting on highways, they were recognised as hostile environments for trees to grow, and the service was therefore looking at alternate sites for planting. However, highways would continue to be looked at as potential locations, particularly if deemed suitable for trees to act as traffic calming measures. The Committee noted the Borough's award of Tree Cities of the World status and highlighted this as a considerable achievement.

### **Update on previous reviews: Air Quality**

The Committee regularly monitors the implementation of recommendations resulting from past reviews. On the review into Air Quality commissioned in 2017/18, the Committee received a report detailing the Council's actions to address Air Quality following the previous review. The report detailed how the Committee's recommendations had been built into the Council's Air Quality Action Plan, as well as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Recent information received from the GLA had shown that before Covid-19, air quality was improving, thanks to the instigation of ultra-low emission zones, though during the periodic lockdowns air quality had been seen to have improved dramatically. For example, of the 455 schools within London located within defined polluted areas in 2019, only 14 were now in such areas. The Committee was advised that a new Climate Action Officer had been employed to review and deliver strategies relating to pollution and air quality.

### **Budget Review and Cabinet's Budget Proposals**

As a statutory consultee to the Cabinet's 2021/22 budget proposals published in December, the Committee reviewed the proposals within its remit and submitted comments to the Corporate Services, Commerce and Communities Policy Overview Committee. During the year, the Committee also received an update on the 2020/21 budget.

### **Annual Complaints Update 2019/20**

The Committee received a comprehensive report on Resident Complaints and Enquiries within its remit, noting the trends and providing appropriate feedback to officers.

# 'decision-making scrutiny'

## The work of the Executive Scrutiny Committee



### Councillors:

**Keith Burrows (Chairman)** (from 14 January 2021)

**Henry Higgins (Chairman)** (to 14 January 2021)

**John Riley (Vice-Chairman to 14 January 2021)**

**Wayne Bridges (Vice-Chairman from 14 January 2021)**

**Simon Arnold**

**Philip Corthorne (Member from 14 January 2021)**

**Nick Denys**

**Peter Curling (Opposition Lead)**

**Peter Money**

**Kerri Prince**

**Mr Anthony Little** - *Roman Catholic Diocesan representative (on education matters)*

**Lead Officer:** *Mark Braddock, Democratic Services*

### Scrutiny of decision-making

A period of 5 working days must elapse before any formal executive decision taken by the Cabinet or Cabinet Member can be implemented by officers. The Executive Scrutiny Committee's primary role is, therefore, to scrutinise such decisions that have been taken but have not yet been implemented. This acts as the statutory 'checks & balances' upon the executive.

This action is widely known as the 'call-in' power. If the Executive Scrutiny Committee considers any of such decisions to be deficient, they may refer the decision back to the Cabinet or Cabinet Member(s) for further consideration. The Committee may make use of a set of criteria to guide them in this process. For Cabinet decisions, the Committee meets immediately after the conclusion of meetings of the Cabinet to enable Members to review the decisions just taken and, if agreed by a majority of Members present, give consideration to the potential for the call-in of a particular decision made.

**During 2020/21, there were no valid call-ins of any Cabinet, Cabinet Member decisions or other key executive decisions.**

The Chairman of the Executive Scrutiny Committee has a key constitutional prerogative of being able to decide to waive the 'call-in' power where a decision is deemed urgent by the Cabinet or Cabinet Member and any delay would prejudice the Council's or the public's

interest or could lead to an [increased] risk of damage to people or property, in accordance with the Council's Constitution. Such decisions are carefully considered and when approved by the Chairman, this enables on an exceptional basis for such decisions to be implemented with immediate effect so the Council can be responsive, primarily to safeguard residents' best interests. These are otherwise known as 'urgency' or 'special urgency' decisions through the formal executive decision-making process depending on the necessity of the matter in question.

During 2020/21, both chairmen have carefully considered and agreed to the waiver of the call-in power for a small number of decisions. Such

actions, which are taken on an exceptional basis, have ensured the Council can deliver critical services and works to safeguard residents.

The Chairman also plays a constitutional role in being notified of any future key decisions, primarily to the Cabinet, where it has been impracticable to give sufficient notice of a decision in the Forward Plan and provides the necessary permissions for these to be considered.

To assist in their wider deliberations, the Committee often request clarification on several matters within individual Cabinet reports, which are responded to by officers either at or after the meeting.

# ‘NHS accountability, Safer Hillingdon Partnership, Crossrail, Hillingdon Hospital Redevelopment, Mount Vernon Cancer Centre, Post Office services’

## The work of the External Services Select Committee



### Councillors:

**Nick Denys (Chairman)** (from 14 January 2021 and Vice-Chairman to 14 January 2021)

**John Riley (Chairman)** (to 14 January 2021)

**Devi Radia (Vice Chairman: from 14 January 2021-20)**

**Simon Arnold**

**Ray Graham (14 January 2021-20 May 2021)**

**Vanessa Hurhangee**

**Stuart Mathers (Opposition Lead)**

**Ali Milani**

**June Nelson**

**Lead Officer:** *Nikki O'Halloran, Democratic Services*

The External Services Select Committee has a broad remit to scrutinise all non-Hillingdon Council organisations whose actions affect Hillingdon residents. This means monitoring those bodies outside the Council that provide public services to Hillingdon residents. The Committee scrutinises the performance of these bodies and undertakes in-depth reviews and witness sessions on topics that most effect the lives of Hillingdon residents. The Committee also undertakes the health scrutiny role as required by the Health & Social Care Act 2001 and acts as the Crime and Disorder Committee as defined in the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009.

Although the formal meetings of the Committee were cancelled in June and July 2020 due to the pandemic, Members were regularly provided with information about any ongoing developments and projects. When meetings returned virtually in September 2021, Members were able to resume their formal scrutiny of external agencies. The Committee would like to thank all those who engaged

during this difficult time. Even though COVID created a lot of extra pressures on those being scrutinised, it was pleasing that the external agencies still wanted to participate in our investigations, seeing the value of using the Committee to be transparent with and accountable to our local community.

The Committee held witness sessions on the following topics during the last year:

### **Hillingdon Hospital Trust Regulatory Performance: The road to improvement**

The CQC inspected Hillingdon Hospital in August 2020 (and returned in September 2020) in response to concerns around infection, prevention and control at the hospital. The CQC rated Hillingdon Hospital overall as 'Inadequate'. This came on top of CQC inspections in 2015 and 2018 that both concluded that the Trust was underperforming and required improvement. This repeated failure in regulatory assessments concerned the Committee, which questioned the Trust as to why the failures kept on happening and what the path to better performance of the Trust is.

Following the inspection, THH is required to respond to areas of concern that have been identified, develop an action plan to address them and make improvements. The CQC will then follow up on any action it tells the Trust to take which may be by contacting the Trust or visiting the service to carry out a focused inspection. The Committee would welcome feedback from the CQC on the Trust's plans for improved performance, as we want to see regulatory approval for the direction the Trust is moving in.

The Committee held an evidence session with the newly appointed Chief Executive of the Trust to discuss why the Trust kept on failing regulatory tests and what strategic and practical plans were in place

to improve performance. We recognise that the Trust is a large and complex organisation, so it may be unrealistic to expect to gain an adequate rating if the Trust were inspected again during the next year. Instead our challenge to the leadership of the Trust is to evidence to us during the next year how better regulatory results will be achieved soon.



### **Policing in Hillingdon: Safer Partnership Performance**

As part of our powers under the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009, the Committee held an evidence session with the local police leadership to discuss safety in Hillingdon. The last twelve months have been an unusual time with regard to crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) with reductions in most categories of crime. There has been an 11% decrease in the number of notifiable offences and a considerable reduction in the number of robberies and burglaries. Although there has been a reduction in violent offences overall, there have been increases in some areas. ASB cases have included a large number of COVID-related instances. Reports of domestic abuse have increased slightly on the previous year which was thought to be as a result of COVID.

The Committee raised concerns that the creation of the West Area BCU (covering Ealing, Hounslow and Hillingdon) would result in fewer police officers in Hillingdon. The police assured us that this was not the case, though given the nature of the shared arrangements, it was not possible to specify numbers for each borough. This is an area the Committee will continue to monitor over the next year.

An area that interests the Committee is how communities have been engaged in creating safer neighbourhoods. The police currently operate a model that flows communication from Neighbourhood Watch Schemes to Ward Panels, ending up at the bi-monthly meetings of the Safer Neighbourhood Board. The Committee suggested that this system be reviewed, to get a better understanding as to how effective it is at utilising local people to create safer neighbourhoods. There have been good levels of public subscription to the OWL service. It is thought that there are about 1,800 across the Borough. There has been some concern in the previous year about the availability to support the services but the Committee was pleased to hear that MOPAC has now agreed to fund the initiative going forward. The Committee felt that the OWL service could be better used to disseminate crime prevention messages and to circulate other relevant safety messages. Over the next year, the Committee will be seeking evidence as to what action is being taken to improve the use of local communities in preventing crime.

The repeated changes in legislation around COVID and the announcement of these changes before the legislation had actually been written had caused some challenges. That said, most residents had been compliant with the restrictions. Issues with non-compliance had been no greater in Hillingdon than anywhere else which had not been reflected in the higher than average infection rate in the Borough. There had been an issue with unlicensed music events (UMEs) over the summer which might have contributed towards this. Where people had been caught for non-compliance, the police approach had tended

to be to engage and explain rather than enforce. That said, a number of fines had been issued.

### **Hillingdon Hospital Redevelopment: delivering modern health care for residents**

The current Hillingdon Hospital is an old building with parts of the estate built in the 1930s as emergency wartime accommodation. Some of the older wards have become unsafe and have been closed to protect patients and staff. 81% of the hospital building will require major repair or replacement soon. This is the impetus that is pushing for a full redevelopment of Hillingdon Hospital to happen as soon as is possible.

At a national level, investment in new hospitals is run by the New Hospital Programme team (“the team”), jointly based at the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England. This year, the team has allocated Hillingdon Hospital one of eight available places in the New Hospital Programme. A team at the Hillingdon Hospital Trust is working to deliver a rebuilt hospital that will provide the same range of services that are currently available at the hospital, but in a high quality, 21st century state of the art building. In designing this, the Trust will continue to work with system partners to improve the integration of care across Hillingdon.

The Committee held an evidence session with the team at the Trust in charge of securing, designing and delivering the new hospital building. Members learnt that the redevelopment of the Hospital is not just about getting a better building. A new Clinical Services Strategy will link existing health and care workstreams in the hospital and increasingly within the framework of Hillingdon Health and Care Partners. The plan is for the strategy to lead to a more joined up health and social care system within the Borough so that more high quality and safe care will be provided outside of a hospital setting, whilst

improving the quality of emergency and elective hospital care for those who need it. Proactive, preventative care will be delivered by the Hillingdon neighbourhood teams: embedding population health information to support proactive management of physical and mental health and wellbeing, reducing variation in outcomes and access.

The next stage will be to publicly consult on the plans for the new redevelopment. The Committee is supportive of the redevelopment process so far. During the next year, the Committee will assess the more detailed plans and give its view as to whether they meet the demands of our local population, and that the new building will be environmentally sustainable and future-proofed against changing ways of delivering health care.

### **Mount Vernon Cancer Centre Review: Improving cancer care for our residents**

The NHS in the East of England and in North London is working together to review the services at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre (MVCC). MVCC is run by East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust and delivered from Mount Vernon Hospital which is managed by The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (THH). It is a standalone cancer centre and primarily serves a population of over 2 million people in Hertfordshire, South Bedfordshire, North West London and Berkshire. The patient pathways involve a large number of other hospitals and arrangements with several other NHS trusts.

The review team have recommended the full relocation of the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre to the Watford Hospital site, with enhanced local access to services where possible. The main reasons for moving from the Mount Vernon site were:

1. Many of the buildings are not in a good state of repair, and concerns have been raised in relation to the long-term clinical sustainability of the Cancer Centre.

2. Limited support facilities on site (for example intensive care and access to medical input from non-cancer specialties).
3. Some newer treatments and research trials have high levels of toxicity. Without services such as high dependency or intensive care, patients will not have access to the latest treatments.
4. Haematological malignancy cannot be treated at MVCC.
5. As people live longer, more people with cancer are also living with other illnesses or conditions which require treatment alongside their cancer treatment. This cannot be done at MVCC.

The Watford Hospital would be able to provide all the different levels of care that are needed to fulfil the modern way which cancer can be treated. It is also relatively central for the geographical area it serves, only being a 10-minute drive away from the Mount Vernon site. Hillingdon residents would be offered a choice between Watford and Hammersmith Hospital for their main cancer treatment, allowing them to pick the location most convenient for them.

Following feedback, some areas have been identified where patients would benefit from certain services provided closer to home. For example:

1. Enhanced networked chemotherapy services, including having such a facility at Hillingdon Hospital.
2. Consideration of mobile options
3. Exploration of opportunities for homecare and other innovation.
4. Opportunities for improvements to local access for blood tests and other simple interventions.

The Committee is supportive of the proposals to improve the cancer services that our residents receive, though Members wish to have more details as to how the change in where services are delivered from will affect people's access to help. MVCC will be publishing more

detailed plans during the next municipal year for consultation, as soon as they have confirmed the funding arrangements so they are confident as to what can be delivered.

### **Quality Matters: State of Local Health Services**

Each year, there is a statutory requirement for all providers of NHS healthcare services to produce a Quality Account: an annual report to the public about the quality of services delivered and submitted to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care by 30 June each year. As well as Hillingdon Hospital Trust and the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre the Committee scrutinises the work of the North West London CCG, Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust, Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Foundation Trust and London Ambulance Service. Providers are asked to consider three aspects of quality – patient experience, safety and clinical effectiveness - and have a legal duty to send their Quality Account to the overview and scrutiny committee (OSC) in the local authority area in which the provider has a registered office.

Hillingdon's External Services Select Committee reviews these reports annually and provides a statement indicating whether Members believe that the report is a fair reflection of the healthcare services provided. This statement is then included verbatim in the final published version of the report. The deadline for Trusts to submit their 2019/2020 Quality Account reports was extended to allow for the impact of the pandemic on the priorities of health services.

### **Post Offices: Part of the heart of our communities**

The Committee held an evidence session on the role of post offices in providing services to local communities. Post offices had been deemed to be an essential service during the pandemic and, in the most recent period of lockdown, 99% of post offices had remained

open for business. However, a small number had been affected by the pandemic resulting in temporary closures and reduced hours, potentially at short notice following staff shortages. Trade levels had been mixed with some post offices seeing an increase in transactions as more people had been sending parcels and mail, especially over the Christmas period when they had been unable to visit in person. However, income from travel insurance and foreign currency had not been good following COVID-related restrictions on travel.

In the last year, Post Office Limited (PO) had been supporting its post masters to ensure that they were able to provide essential services to the community. They provided them with PPE and perspex screens and had set up a hardship fund. They had also provided them with posters to remind customers to wear face coverings, keep 2m apart and regularly wash their hands. Post masters in Hillingdon had worked hard to ensure the continued provision of post office services in the Borough and they had done a good job. 26 post offices had remained open across Hillingdon, although some of them may have been disrupted by the need for actions such as deep cleans.

The Committee is concerned that post office services are still not available in the Heathrow Villages area. Over the last twelve months, the focus of the PO has been on providing support for existing post offices and guaranteeing remuneration for post masters. As there is currently no funding available for new post offices, the PO is exploring the development of a lower cost model for the future. The Committee has asked for an update on the viability of providing a post office in the Heathrow Villages area and to be kept informed of any developments around post office provision in the Borough.

## **The upgrade of Hayes & Harlington and West Drayton stations: Stations fit for Crossrail**

The Committee held an evidence session with Great Western Rail (GWR) to discuss the frustration in relation to the works being slower than anticipated at Hayes & Harlington and West Drayton stations. GWR reported that, despite the pandemic, progress was being made at these two stations and the structure at Hayes & Harlington was now starting to take shape and was on track for completion in the early autumn of 2021. Lift shafts and footbridges had been installed and, although it had taken a while, progress had been made. GWR reported that the redeveloped West Drayton station was now starting to take shape: the footbridges had been installed and the cladding would be undertaken shortly. Although it had taken a while, National Rail continues to work closely with MTREL (who have responsibility for Crossrail) and the work is expected to be completed by the autumn of 2021.

The Committee wanted to know about what action was being taken to ensure that the stations were safe places. It was reported that MTREL worked jointly with British Transport Police to keep passengers safe and met on a weekly basis in joint taskforce meetings. Travel Safe Officers and Land Sheriffs have been appointed to work with partners and the i-Safety application was available to all staff on their tablets to enable them to easily report low level crimes. The Land Sheriffs had been a joint initiative which had helped to reduce crime at West Drayton station by 45% and by 64% at Hayes & Harlington station. Whilst it was recognised that some of this improvement would be as a result of the pandemic, a proportion would also be as a result of local improvements to the way of working.

The Committee requested that GWR and MTREL prioritised communications with local groups and took on-board their feedback as the stations were redeveloped.

# *‘involving residents and the community’*

## **Stakeholder and witness engagement is central to overview and scrutiny in Hillingdon**

Councillors on Policy Overview, Scrutiny and Select Committees actively seek to involve residents, interest groups, experts, private and public organisations in the policy reviews and scrutiny activity their respective Committees undertake. Strong witness testimony has provided, and continues to provide, added verifiable value to the Committee's findings presented ultimately to the Cabinet for approval. 2020/21 was no exception, with the following external witnesses engaging in this important aspect of Hillingdon's democratic process:

- Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust
- Hayes Town Business Forum
- Hayes Town Partnership
- Healthwatch Hillingdon
- Hillingdon Clinical Commissioning Group
- Hillingdon Health and Care Partners
- Hillingdon Local Medical Committee
- London Ambulance Service NHS Trust
- Metropolitan Police Service (West Area Basic Command Unit)
- MTR Elizabeth Line
- Network Rail
- NHS England / NHS Improvement
- North West London Integrated Care System
- Post Office Limited
- Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Foundation Trust
- The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- West London Cancer Alliance
- Hillingdon Parent Carer Forum
- Hillingdon Autistic Care and Support
- Adult Learners
- London Borough of Ealing - Adult Education Service Manager
- London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham - Adult Education Service Manager
- Hillingdon Foodbank
- UB7 Foodbank
- Hillingdon Mind
- Age UK, Hillingdon, Harrow & Brent
- Carers Trust Hillingdon

