



Hello and a warm welcome to the first edition of Scrutiny Matters! We want to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves and also tell you some more about the work of Scrutiny officers and Members in Hounslow. By focusing on issues that are important to you as Hounslow residents and council tax payers we are working hard to make a

positive contribution to the lives of all those working, living and visiting the borough.

To find out more about what scrutiny is and how it works in Hounslow you can visit the Council's website at

<http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/scrutiny.htm>

Read on to meet the Scrutiny team and find out about some of our recent work.

Who's who in the Scrutiny Team

Sunita Sharma (Head of Scrutiny and Performance)

Nadia Awan (PA to Head of Scrutiny & Performance)

Alan Weaver (Scrutiny Officer)

Jonathan Hill-Brown (Scrutiny Officer)

Deepa Patel (Scrutiny Officer)

Ben Osifo (Scrutiny Officer)

What's happening in Hounslow.....

Driving up the Council's Performance

The Council is working in partnership with KPMG to carry out a Performance Improvement Programme. The programme will ensure we become more efficient in the way we work, reduce costs to you as taxpayers and provide the best possible services to our local community.

The first phase of the programme (July 07 – September 07) looked at our current work practices so that a list of savings options could be produced. The second phase of the programme which is now underway, will develop plans to implement the new ways of working as well as identify staff and Councillors contribution to implement the changes.

Scrutiny are working closely with the KPMG team, all Our Councillors and Council officers to ensure that the challenging objectives of the programme are met.

Reading the warning signs....

Scrutiny have been instrumental in helping to focus the authority's attention on areas where performance needs improving. Key areas we are currently looking into include our Customer Services help desk waiting times. Previous scrutiny work in particular areas has resulted in some really good results including an agreement from the executive to upgrade road marking across the borough.

Reducing teenage pregnancy in the borough

A lot of research has been undertaken into the consequences of teenage pregnancy for young mothers, their children and the wider community. Hounslow Council is committed to making a significant reduction to the rate of teenage pregnancy in the borough by 2010.

The Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel identified teenage pregnancy as a key priority in their work programme and carried out a review on the subject earlier this year. The review considered the causes for the rise in teenage pregnancy levels and also looked at ways in which teenage conceptions could be reduced.

The review included a table of 24 recommendations which focused around how teenage pregnancy services should be delivered to better support young mothers and the role of education in reducing the rate of conceptions. Many of the recommendations have been accepted, and an action plan with time specific actions has been put in place.

The Children and Young People's Plan 2007-2010

The Children and Young People's Plan 2007-2010 was adopted by the Council earlier this year.

It transforms how the council and its partners work to deliver better outcomes for children and young people. The feedback that was taken from local children and young people, as well as parents, carers and professionals ensures that the views of young people in Hounslow, are at the heart of decisions that affect their lives.

The Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel considered the Plan and recommended the need to ensure that all the factors affecting the lives of

children and young people were included, in particular they raised the issue of overcrowding and the effect this has on families. This recommendation has been accepted and is reflected in the final plan.

You can view the full plan at

<http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeoplesplan>

Council Letting Scheme

Locata is the Council's lettings scheme, which allows tenants to apply for vacant properties in Hounslow and neighbouring boroughs who are part of the Locata scheme.

Locata is an issue that figures quite highly in all our correspondence and due to some of the concerns that have been raised, the Clients and Partnerships Scrutiny Panel are undertaking a scrutiny review on Locata. Amongst other things, the review will look at issues of transparency around housing allocation, access for our vulnerable residents and how the whole process is communicated to our residents.

A public meeting was held on the 17th September to allow residents to raise their concerns. Residents have been extremely pro-active on this issue and organised a public march and petition with several hundred signatures from residents who are unhappy with the way the current system works.

We are in the process of creating a dedicated web page on the Hounslow internet so you can keep up to date with what's going on. The scrutiny review will be published in March of next year.

Developments Across London

Transforming London's Health Services

There are currently some exciting changes underway to transform London's health services. Professor Ara Darzi's report "Healthcare for London: A Framework for Action" sets out a vision for future healthcare in our capital so that all of us as Londoners have access to improved health care services throughout our lives.

Because London's health services are often delivered across council boundaries, a Joint Committee of Primary Care Trust's (JCPCT's) in London has been set up to respond to the consultation on the report. The JCPCT's have

requested that a Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee is appointed to work alongside it and scrutinise the models of care in the Darzi review, decide whether the consultation process is adequate and examine the JCPCT's response to the consultation.

This is the first time that joint scrutiny on such a large scale i.e. across 32 London authorities will be taking place. Hounslow has nominated Cllr Jon Hardy (Chair of the Adults Health and Social Care Panel) to represent the borough on the panel. The consultation period will begin in November.

If you would like more information on the changes outlined in Darzi's review, please visit the Healthcare for London website at <http://www.healthcareforlondon.nhs.uk/>.

National Developments

Local Involvement Network (Link) - Make Your Voice Heard

The way in which you can be involved in shaping your local health and care services is changing. Each local authority has been required by the Department of Health to set up a Local Involvement Network (LINK).

Link's will be a diverse network of people, organisations and groups who will help you as Hounslow residents tell the Council and the NHS about your health and social care needs and give you the opportunity to express your views on the services provided. Link's will be operative from April 2008. Until then we are working closely with our health commissioning managers to ensure we find a suitable host to run the LINK and also raise awareness amongst all our communities in the borough about how they can get involved.

Keep an eye out on the Council's website for the dedicated LINK pages which are coming soon and will keep you updated on what's going on.

To find out more, contact us:

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