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MEETING	DATE	ITEM
VALUE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	29 MAY 2011	

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## **REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**SUBJECT: ANNUAL REPORT, 2011/12**

### **SUMMARY**

This report is the annual report of the Committee, summarising the Committee's activities during its year of operation ended May 2012.

It is planned for this report to stand as a public record of achievement for the year and enable Members and others to have a record of the Committee's performance.

There are no direct equalities or environmental implications attached to this covering report. Any financial implications & risks from reviews and work undertaken will be advised as part of the specific reviews.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. That the Committee note the 2011/12 Annual Report and authorise the Chairman to agree the final version for Council.
2. That the Committee agree the report be referred to full Council.

**Staff Contact:** Taiwo Adeoye  
Committee Officer

**Telephone:** 01708 433079

**Cheryl Coppell**  
Chief Executive

**Background Papers** - None



**Havering**  
LONDON BOROUGH

# VALUE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29 May 2012

# REPORT

**Subject Heading:**

Annual Report 2011/2012

**CMT Lead:**

Ian Burns  
Acting Assistant Chief Executive  
01708 432442

**Report Author and contact details:**

Taiwo Adeoye  
Committee Officer  
01708 433079  
taiwo.adeoye@havering.gov.uk

**Policy context:**

Under the Council's Constitution, each Overview and Scrutiny Committee is required to submit an annual report of its activities to full Council.

**Financial summary:**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

<b>SUMMARY</b>
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This report is the annual report of the Committee, summarising the Committee's activities during the past Council year.

It is planned for this report to stand as a public record of achievement for the year and enable members and others to note the Committee's performance.

There are no direct equalities or environmental implications attached to this covering report. Any financial implications from reviews and work undertaken will be advised as part of the specific reviews.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Committee note the 2011/2012 Annual Report and authorise the Chairman to agree the final version for Council.
2. That the Committee agree the report be referred to full Council.

## REPORT DETAILS

During the year under review, the Committee met on four occasions and dealt with the following issues:

### **1. COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee agreed that the following items would be placed on its work programme for the year.

1. Council Tax Collection
2. Voluntary Sector Grants distribution mechanism

### **2. CUSTOMER SERVICES UPDATE (COMPLAINTS SYSTEM & STATISTICS)**

At its meeting in July 2011, the Committee received two presentations from the Head of Customer Services on statistics figures for Corporate Complaints and Members Enquires.

The presentation informed the Committee that between 1 June 2010 and 31 May 2011, the total number of complaints logged on the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system was 776. The presentation also highlighted that 624 responses were completed within the 10 working days timescale.

The presentation identified service failure and quality of service as the two major reasons for complaints. The statistics also informed Members that the service with the most complaints was Streetcare.

### **3. PRESENTATION ON NON DOMESTIC RATES (NNDR) PARTNERSHIP**

At the request of the Committee, Members received a presentation that provided an overview on the Non Domestic Rates Partnership Programme that was in place in conjunction with London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.

The presentation highlighted the drivers for change that were identified by both Councils.

The NNDR programme achievements from the objectives of the partnership included:

- The project itself was under spent by £20-30K
- The savings over the three years to date totalled £282K with Havering accruing £147K. :
- A resilient value for money service had been firmly established
- It had been proven that the model can work

The presentation also informed the Committee that performance on collection was identified as an area for improvement by the programme.

### **4. REPORT ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION - ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

At its meeting on 11 October the Committee received a report that set out how Access to Information is administered.

The report identified the Access to Information team and the way the team works in regard to Access to Information (including an explanation of Freedom of Information and related legislation).

The presentation detailed the team's performance in responding to Freedom of Information requests in the period from January 2009 to August 2011.

The Committee was informed that members of the public cannot be charged for any additional work further to the initial fees unless the work takes over 18 hours to be completed by law.

### **5. VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANTS 2010/11**

At its July meeting, the Committee requested information on the total amount of grant awarded to the community and voluntary sector as part of their work programme. The information for 2010/11 was compiled and reported to the Committee.

The overall distribution of grants to the voluntary sector was as shown in the table below:

## Total voluntary sector grants\*, 2010/11

Organisation	Amount (£)
Core funding	255,313.00
Community Engagement Team - Regeneration, Policy & Planning	52,357.85
Community Safety Team - Legal & Democratic	51,000.00
Culture & Leisure	520,397.00
Children & Young People	15,000.00
Children's Services	1,452,887.00
Social Care & Learning*	3,698,169.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,045,123.85</b>

*\*This includes both grants and contracted services.*

### 6. PRESENTATION DEALING WITH SERVICE REQUESTS/COMPLAINTS

At the request of the Committee, a presentation on the CRM system since going live was requested. The presentation detailed the services that had gone live on the system.

The presentation informed Members of how a resident's request can escalate to a complaint if matter was not resolved within the set timescale.

The Committee agreed to receive a regular update on this area even though they were aware that some issues can be categorised as seasonal.

The Committee also agreed to receive further updates on services that are yet to go live on the new CRM system (with projected dates for their commencement).

### 7. CRM REQUESTS AND COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

The Committee received an update on Corporate Complaints and Members Enquiries - two sets of information that related to Corporate Performance Indicators 2011/12. Members proposed that the performance indicators be included in the Members' pack for quarter one 2011/12.

The Committee agreed to review the list of Corporate Performance Indicators and suggest any further indicators that Members would consider for inclusion in the proposed Performance Indicators Members' pack.

### 8. HAVERING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

As part of the Committee's work programme, the Committee received a presentation on the status of the Havering Strategic Partnership (HSP).

The presentation informed the Committee that following a review of the HSP, the partners were of the view that the success of partnership working in Havering over the last decade had meant that it was now embedded throughout everything they did. They also recognised that there were a few services that were not delivered in partnership with other agencies.

The Committee was informed that the 'sub-groups' of the HSP, including the Community Safety Partnership, were now well established partnerships in their own right. It was felt that since the Local Area Agreement had been abolished, the HSP Board's role had diminished and it was felt to be adding little value to strengthening partnership working.

The Leader had therefore written to HSP board members to inform them that all board meetings scheduled for 2011/12 were to be cancelled. The Council remained committed to the Havering Strategic Partnership however, and planned to hold an annual HSP conference, so that all partners from across the HSP will have the opportunity to come together and discuss the challenges and opportunities facing Havering over the coming year, as well as showcasing examples of best practice in partnership working in Havering.

## **9. BUSINESS RATE RELIEF**

At its meeting in October 2011, a Member was of the opinion that many small businesses were either not aware of what they could claim in terms of business rate relief or that the appropriate information was not getting through to them.

The Committee therefore received a presentation on Small Business Rate Relief and how it was administered in Havering. The presentation detailed that the Small Business Rates Relief was available where the sole or main property occupied had a rateable value of less than £25,500 in Greater London. A business had to apply to the Council and confirm that they met the conditions for the relief.

The presentation also informed the Committee that the Localism Act 2011 would result in the following changes:

- Proposal to bring changes into force in time for the 2012/13 financial year (full details were awaited).
- Removal of the legal requirement for ratepayers to submit an application in order to claim Small Business Rate Relief.
- Previous legislation would be amended to remove the single occupancy criteria for ratepayers to have their bills calculated using the small business multiplier in 2012-13 and onwards.

The Committee **noted** the presentation.

## 10. COMPLETED TOPIC GROUP – LONDON COUNCILS

At its meeting on 25 November 2010, the Committee requested that a topic group be established to examine the Council's membership of the Local Government Association (LGA), London Councils and any other similar bodies which the Council currently is a member of. The following objectives were agreed and following two meetings the Topic Group conclude its review.

- To investigate the value for money of remaining a member of London Councils in this difficult financial climate
- To investigate whether the role played by London Councils could be provided by the GLA, removing the need for London Councils as an additional body
- To make a recommendation to Cabinet as to whether the Committee feels LB Havering should remain a Member of London Councils or not going forward

During the year, the Committee completed its topic group work considering if it was still advantageous to the Council to remain a member of London Councils, the Local Government Association and any similar bodies.

The topic group interviewed the Leader of the Council who felt strongly that such memberships represented good value for money for the Council and that they should continue to be taken up. The topic group also agreed to modify its scope in order to only consider the Council's membership of London Councils at this stage.

In light of the evidence received from the Leader, the topic group reached the conclusion that the Council should remain as a member of London Councils and presented a report to this effect to the full Committee at its meeting on 7 July 2011. The topic group therefore concluded its work at this point.

Following the submission from the Leader, the Topic Group members present overwhelmingly agreed that the Council maintain its membership of London Councils.

The Group agreed that an update report be presented to the Committee in order for this topic to be closed.

The Topic Group agreed that the scope of the review was only to consider Havering's membership of London Councils and no other bodies at this stage.

That Committee **noted** the report and **agreed** that the review be closed.

## **11. TOPIC GROUP - UPDATE**

1. Council Tax Collection -The Committee discussed the scope for the Council Tax Collection Topic Group. A member offered to share some suggested terms of reference with members of the Committee via email.
2. Voluntary Sector Grants distribution mechanism - The Committee was informed that the service was currently undertaking a review of voluntary sector funding and the development of a new voluntary sector strategy for Havering. That this was part of the Cabinet Member for Culture, Towns and Communities' Community Action project.

That the piece of work would make recommendations to Cabinet in due course. The Corporate Policy & Community Manager was of the opinion that it might be more appropriate and reduce duplication of effort if to allow Cabinet to consider the recommendations the Value Overview and Scrutiny Committee then scrutinised the issue at that point.

## **12. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS RELEVANT TO VALUE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY – QUARTERLY UPDATES**

The Committee agreed unanimously that it should receive a quarterly report from officers summarising the key performance indicators relevant to the Committee's areas of work. Productive scrutiny of these performance indicators was undertaken by the Committee during the year and this process will continue during the new municipal year.

**Staff Contact:** Taiwo Adeoye  
Committee Officer

**Telephone:** 01708 433079

**Background Papers** – None.



**The following comments have been submitted by members of staff:**

**Financial implications and risks:**

Narrative Report Only – not applicable.

**Human Resources implications and risks:**

Narrative Report Only – not applicable.

**Legal implications and risks:**

Narrative Report Only – not applicable.

**Equalities and Social Inclusion Implications and Risks:**

Narrative Report Only – not applicable.