

People Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee Annual Report 2023/2024

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to give this short introduction to the summary of the Sub-Committee's work during the 2023-2024 municipal year. Details are given below of elements of the Sub-Committee's work this year.

Before I do so, I would like to place on record my thanks to the other members of the Sub-Committee and all the Council officers who have supported work of the Sub-Committee during the course of this municipal year.

I commend this Annual Report and am pleased to submit it to Full Council.

REMIT AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

The Sub-Committee is charged with providing scrutiny for a total nineteen policy and service areas which sit within the responsibility of the local authority. Among this expansive range of policy and service areas include Social Care (Adults and Children), Public Health and the Public Protection Service.

Detailed below is a complete list of the policy and service areas for which the People Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee has the primary responsibility for scrutiny and oversight:

- Drug, Alcohol & sexual Services
- Health & Wellbeing
- Health Overview & Scrutiny
- Adult Care
- Learning and Physical Disabilities
- Employment & Skills
- Education
- Child Protection
- Youth Services
- Fostering & Adoption Services
- Education Traded Services
- Early Years Services
- Looked after Children
- Media
- Communications
- Advertising

- Corporate Events
- Bereavement & Registration Services
- Crime & Disorder

The Members who served on the People Overview & Scrutiny Sub-Committee during the year were:

Councillor Jason Frost (Chairman)	Councillor Jackie McArdle
Councillor Frankie Walker (Vice-Chairman)	Councillor Julie Wilkes
Councillor Christine Smith	Councillor Bryan Vincent
Councillor Joshua Chapman	Councillor Laurance Garrard
Councillor Ray Best	Councillor Pat Brown

REVIEW OF ACTIVITY 2022/23 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Adult and Children Services Complaints and Compliments

The Sub-Committee scrutinised the complaints lodged against, and the compliments received by Adults and Children's Social Care Services.

Members questioned officers over the number of and nature of the complaints and how they could be reduced in the next quarter and next year. This included a review of any requisite action plan to address any apparent failures of policy and/or procedure on the part of the Council or other related organisation.

Policing numbers and incidents

At the invitation of the Sub-Committee, the newly appointed Chief Superintendent for Havering was called to give a report to members on the current operational strength of the Metropolitan Police Service in the Borough, and the proportion of officers drawn from minority groups. This report was well received by members, who followed up with questions on the Met's recruitment activity and retention rates.

This was followed by a further report on the Police's strategy on Violence Against Women and Girls. Officers from the Council's own Public Protection Service also contributed to this item. This was followed by a period of insightful discussion.

Wennington Fires

One of the major items of the year was on the 2022 Wennington Fires which affected many residents. In response to this the Sub-Committee convened a special meeting dedicated solely to this issue.

Presenting to members were senior officers from the London Fire Brigade who gave an in-depth report as to the cause of the fires and the preventative measures taken at the time and what could be used going forward.

Council officers then proceeded to provide details on the Council's emergency response procedures and outlined what steps were being taken by the local authority to support those residents that had been directed affected or impacted by the fires, as well as those who were now categorised as displaced.

Healthwatch Havering

The Sub-Committee was pleased to receive summary reports on the activities undertaken by Healthwatch partners during the course of the municipal year. This included surveys on the patient experience of the London Ambulance Service and the outcomes of Enter & View Visits that had taken place in a number of nursing homes following the COVID-19 pandemic.

NHS North East London & Public Health

Coming before members were a number of reports on a broad range of health-related matters. Items requested by the Sub-Committee included youth and minority group engagement in primary care provision, MMR vaccination uptake and the operational performance of local phlebotomy services.

Council Decisions

- *Autism Support*
Officers were invited to present details on the proposed end of the contract with the Sycamore Trust. This organisation was a provider of dedicated autism support across all age groups.
- *Home to School Transport*
Another of the key issues raised with the Sub-Committee was relating to the Home to School Transport Policy consultation. Members noted the responses to the outcomes and received details on the proposed changes to the policy and lessons learnt following the consultation.

Topic Groups

Adult SEND Topic Group

The topic group consisted of 2 Councillors (Wise & McArdle) and 1 co-optee and met on 9 occasions. The Group set out to scrutinise key areas such as (but not limited to):

- Current access routes to education and employment
- Quality assurance progress
- Signposting for 16-25 year olds for provisions and employment opportunities

The Topic group met with various stakeholders and presented 2 key findings to the Committee at the September meeting. Those findings were; 1) There was a lack of quality assurance guidelines and frameworks in place for adult SEND provisions, however there was a working group between NEL boroughs to implement a standard across London and, 2) It was found that the majority of provisions were not aimed at adults over 25 years old with a lack of progressions for them from internships to fully paid employment. The Group suggested a specialist Supported Employment Adviser to be put in post but it was explained this would have to be costed before being agreed to.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

None – narrative report only.

Legal implications and risks:

None – narrative report only.

Human Resources implications and risks:

None – narrative report only.

Equalities implications and risks:

While the work of the Sub-Committee can impact on all members of the community, there are no implications arising from this specific report which is a narrative of the Board's work over the past year.

Environmental and Climate Change Implications and Risks

None – narrative report only.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.