

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON HOUSING, ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE - 12 JULY 2006

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

PARTNERSHIPS AND THE ROLE OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

This report outlines the role of the Housing, Environmental Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee in scrutinising the partnerships which fall within its remit. Members are invited to consider how they wish to approach this role in their annual scrutiny work programme.

FOR DECISION

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Members will be aware that the new remit of the Committee includes reference to

“responsibility for the overview and scrutiny of health partnerships where adult care is a significant partner in terms of service delivery or management accountability;”

as well as

“the scrutiny of any partnerships associated with the delivery of housing, environmental health and adult social care services.”

1.2 There are three partnerships that work to improve housing and commission housing related support: the Supporting People Commissioning Body; the West London Housing Partnership; and the Dalgarno Neighbourhood Management Alliance.

1.3 Besides this, the Joint Health Partnership Board and its associated subsidiary partnerships also fall within the Committee’s remit.

Appendix A depicts these partnerships.

2.0 The need for overview and scrutiny

2.1. Effective scrutiny of partnerships is important because

- The Council increasingly plans, commissions and provides services through a range of partnership bodies – either to comply with statutory requirement or conditions of Government grant funding, or because the Council is likely to achieve better outcomes for local people by working with others than it could alone.
- The Council has ambitions to strengthen its partnerships so that they match our reputation for service excellence. This means making sure our partnerships are demonstrably well-managed and successful in improving quality of life for local residents.
- The principles of transparency, openness and accountability apply as much to public sector partnerships as to public sector bodies. These partnerships take significant decisions about financial, operational and/or strategic issues that are designed to improve public services and quality of life in the local area. It is therefore important that partnerships are held to account at a local level for the decisions they take, and for their performance.

3.0 How could scrutiny of partnerships work in practice?

3.1. Scrutiny of partnerships can be viewed as dealing with two aspects of partnership activity: how well a partnership works, and what it achieves. Under the first of these the Committee could consider issues such as:

- the rationale for the partnership
- its governance arrangements
- its performance management
- its financial and risk management
- how well it communicates with and responds to the public

3.2. Under the second, the Committee would examine how good a partnership is at achieving its main goals. These two aspects could be looked at in separate meetings.

3.3. There is significant overlap with the remit of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Chairmen of these two OSCs may wish to agree a programme of joint scrutiny where relevant. To prevent unbalancing committee agendas Members may consider

adopting a less intensive approach to scrutinising the Joint Health Partnership Board's subsidiary partnerships.

- 3.4. This approach would not preclude the Committee from examining any of the partnerships within its remit, if a significant issue in relation to any of them cropped up during the year.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1. The OSC is invited to consider how it might wish to scrutinise the partnerships falling within its remit and decide on the level of activity it wishes to include in the next annual programme.

FOR DECISION

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Public background papers used in preparation of this report:

None.

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