

Introduction to Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission

REMIT

The Commission's remit has a largely internal focus, covering finance and resources, law and democracy, customer and corporate support services. It also has a key role in scrutiny of the budget.

The remit covers services such as finance, ICT, human resources, and legal services. Evidence is often sought from other boroughs to help us examine how effectively the Council is run, and ensure that the public is getting value for money from services.

<i>Title</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Links</i>
Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission	Finance and Resources, Legal, HR and Regulatory Services, LBH Support Services (including functional aspects of Chief Executive's Directorate) and Corporate policies.	<i>Council:</i> Legal, HR and Regulatory Services, Finance and Resources. <i>Partnerships:</i> Team Hackney Board, matters relating to Economic Development Partnership

Key Partners and Local Organisations

Hackney Council directorates:

[Finance and Resources](#) - responsible for sound financial management of the Council, ICT and facilities management

[Legal, Human Resources and Regulatory Services](#) - responsible for HR, all legal, electoral, governance and registration services across the authority.

[Chief Executive's Directorate](#) - covering central policy and performance, partnerships, and communications

WORK OF THE COMMISSION

Scrutiny of the Council's Budget

The bulk of the scrutiny of the Council's budget and financial planning is done by this Commission.

Twice yearly the Commission scrutinises the *Medium Term Planning* report and regularly questions reports on the *Overall Financial Position* of the Council. It also provides input on a regular basis on the *budget planning cycle* and questions the Cabinet Member for Finance. This includes examining savings proposals that come forward, monitoring financial forecasts, and holding the council to account for delivering its agreed budget and savings.

Reviews

The remainder of the time is taken up with reviews and the Commission usually carries out one major review and one shorter review each year.

Once review reports are agreed they are sent to Cabinet for an 'Executive Response' and this goes on the Cabinet Agenda. Some scrutiny reports and their responses are also debated at Full Council. Six months after a review the Commission requests updates on the implementation of the recommendations from the relevant officers.

Recent Reviews

Recent work has included:

ICT - This was a review of use of ICT to find out how the Council can better deliver services in future, and what the implications are for both residents and staff. The final report will be agreed at the next meeting.

London Living Wage – This was a review of the impact of the London Living Wage on the Council as an employer, as an employer of agency staff, and an employer of contractors providing services on behalf of the Council. The Cabinet Response is awaited.

Council governance - There are lots of ways for residents to get their views heard on a public platform, but not many people do. This was an inquiry into how effective the various council meetings are in supporting residents to get their views heard. Reported July 2013.

Links to reports of previous reviews

Over the past years the Commission has carried out reviews on the following:

[Performance Management 12/13](#)

[Customer Service 11/12](#)

[Fees & Charges 11/12](#)

[Debt Collection 10/11](#)

[Elections 10/11](#)

[Mayoral Model Review 09/10 \(PDF, 365KB\)](#)

[HR Recruitment and Retention Report 08/09 \(PDF, 330KB\)](#)

[Team Hackney 07/08 \(PDF, 200KB\)](#)

[ICT Review 06/07 \(PDF, 948KB\)](#)

[Procurement Review 06/07 \(PDF, 688KB\)](#)

One-off items

The commission also devotes a substantial amount of time each year to scrutinising the Council's finances and its budget process. This includes examining the implications of Government announcements, monitoring local financial forecasts, and holding the council to account for delivering its agreed budget and savings.

Some recent examples include:

- Analysis of the annual Local Government Finance Settlement in [January 2014](#)
- The Housing Revenue Account business plan in [January 2014](#)
- Monitoring the Council's preparation for the introduction of Welfare Reform in [December 2013](#)
- A survey of which general fund savings had been delivered since there agreement over the last 3 years, in [November 2013](#)
- Implications of the Comprehensive Spending Review in [September 2013](#)
- A report of the Council's financial outturn for 2012/13 in [September 2013](#)
- Monitoring the Council's Medium-Term Planning Forecast and Overall Financial Position on a regular basis

Examples of a Recent Outcome

The Commission was instrumental in instigating the change from Neighbourhood Committee to Ward Forums. The introduction of Ward forums was aimed at providing a more local platform for discussion between Councillors and residents for issues affecting the local area. Close monitoring and scrutiny of budget proposals put forward by Corporate Directors were challenged and ensured deliverables were realistic.

LIFECYCLE OF A REVIEW – A BRIEF GUIDE

The schematic below shows the processes involved in the completion of a typical scrutiny review.

