

# **MINUTES OF MEETING Overview and Scrutiny Committee HELD ON Thursday, 8th June, 2023, 7.00 - 9.00 pm**

## **PRESENT:**

**Councillors: Alexandra Worrell, Simmons-Safo, Pippa Connor (Vice-Chair), Makbule Gunes, Matt White (Chair)**

**ALSO ATTENDING: Yvonne Denny**

### **77. FILMING AT MEETINGS**

The Chair referred Members present to item one on the agenda in respect of filming at the meeting and Members noted the information contained therein.

### **78. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Venassa Naidoo and Lourdes Keever. Apologies for lateness were received from Cllr Simmons Safo.

### **79. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Urgent Business.

The Clerk advised that an old version of the Scrutiny Protocol had been appended to the Membership and Terms of Reference report in error. The most up to date version was tabled at the meeting.

### **80. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

### **81. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS**

None.

### **82. MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

### **83. MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL MEETINGS**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the following Scrutiny Panels were noted and approved, and any recommendations contained within were approved:

- Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel – 27 February 2023
- Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel – 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023
- Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel – 16 March 2023
- Children & Young People’s Scrutiny Panel – 23 March 2023

#### **84. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS - LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

The Committee received a verbal update from Cllr Ahmet, the Leader of the Council, on her priorities for the next municipal year. This was followed by a questions and answer session with the Committee. The Chief Executive, Andy Donald was also present for this agenda item. The Leader set out her priorities which are summarised below:

- The agenda that the administration is pursuing was about shifting the culture of the Council. The Leader characterised the approach as being collaborative, competent, and radical.
- The administration had a string focus on how the Council worked, as well as what the Council did. This was packaged as the Haringey Deal. As part of the Haringey Deal, the administration was looking at getting the basics right.
- There were also key manifesto commitments around climate, housing, and cost of living.
- The Council has pledged to work better with communities and be more engaged. As part of this there have been Cabinet meetings held in the community.
- The Committee was advised that the administration wanted to take every opportunity to make sure that councillors were involved in making changes, such as changes to the website, member enquiries and the housing improvement plan.
- Underpinning all of this was sound financial management.

The Haringey Deal was about how the Council would get things done and some of the key aspects of this were identified as:

- Knowing our communities and the borough profile. There had just been a census and it was acknowledged that things change over time. The Council needed to know who its residents were in order to be responsive to their needs in terms of both access and the services that are being delivered.
- Getting the basics right. The Council had to ensure that it delivered services to the best of its abilities
- Listening and prioritising relationships with residents. The Leader set out that she would like to hear the voices of people and groups that had often been overlooked in the past.
- Getting to a position where the Council shared its power.
- Learning from mistakes.

The Corporate Delivery Plan was described as the ‘what’ and this turned the manifesto into a set of tangible deliverables with dates and names attached to it.

Some of the key aspects of this were around getting the basics right in the back office including HR, Finance, IT Procurement and reducing agency staff.

The Leader set out the key achievements of her administration:

- Cost of living – the Here to Help campaign and the fact that the Council did its utmost to support people as part of the cost-of-living crisis.
- Children’s social care has been rated good by Ofsted. The Leader characterised this as a watershed moment for Haringey and that the Council would be looking to build on this and achieve an outstanding rating going forward.
- The SEND Safety Valve programme.
- Haringey Learns was awarded a good rating by Ofsted.
- Supporting Communities in crisis. The Leader advised that she had personally met with a number of communities across Haringey, who had experienced some form of crisis such as conflict or natural disasters to see how the Council could support them and how the Council could help coordinate with national parliamentarians.
- Broadwater Farm ballot and estate regeneration policy
- Wards Corner Community Plan. The Council was meeting regularly with TfL and the community.
- Award of funding from the Levelling Up fund for the regeneration of the Selby Centre. Haringey was only one of three London boroughs to be awarded funding as part of the fund.
- Wood Green Voices – this was a live example of the Haringey Deal.
- Rising Green youth centre
- LTNs – the introduction and a review process had been established. The Leader commented that the Council was at a point in the cycle where these would be reviewed and that within six months the Council see if they had worked and what could be done differently.
- Flood Management & Prevention work
- Libraries investment plan

The Leader broke down the priorities into categories of competent, collaborative, and radical:

Competent:

- Delivery of the Housing Delivery Plan. This was identified as a top priority.
- Improving resident experience and customer services. Examples of this were the website refresh and updating the digital offer.
- Property improvement. The external investigator and independent review that had been set up. This would contribute to improving governance around property services.
- Civic Centre planning. Work would start on site soon and would be completed by 2025/26.
- Introducing alternative delivery arrangements for leisure services. The Council was trying to get Tottenham Green Leisure Centre back up and running as soon as possible and was also looking at alternative arrangements for the long term.

- Become CQC ready in adult social care.
- Establish an excellent springboard for the next stage in improving children's services.
- Setting up a new performance regime to back up the Corporate Delivery Plan.

Collaborative:

- Establish a climate action unit to work on carbon output, waste, and biodiversity. 2000 trees had been planted and another 1500 would be planted before April 2024.
- 38 new school streets would be introduced.
- Reorganising the Community Safety Partnership, including the follow up to the Casey report on the culture within the Met Police.
- Securing further funding for community health and mental health interventions in Haringey.
- Providing the first culture strategy in Haringey
- Better engagement with businesses.

Radical:

- The Corporate Delivery Plan set out how improvements would be made over a two-year period, but there was also a longer term vision needed to set out how to deliver a fairer and greener borough over a ten year period.
- Placemaking and moving to the delivery element of Wood Green Voices
- Tottenham – A need to engage with Tottenham and bring the community along with Placemaking.
- Understanding how we can work with neighbourhoods and localities so that things don't feel so centralised.

The following arose as part of the Q&A session with the Leader:

- a. The Committee sought assurances around the performance framework and questioned why there was no performance information for the Committee to scrutinise. In response, the Chief Executive advised that he had taken a view that, given that the Council was no longer working to the Borough Plan, there was no point in continuing to measure against the performance framework that sat underneath the Borough Plan. Instead, a new performance framework had been developed as part of the Corporate Delivery Plan. The process of measuring data against that suite of indicators had begun and there was one quarter of data. The first performance report would be available at the end of September. The Chief Executive acknowledged that there was a gap in between one set of performance indicators ending and another set being in place, but emphasised that there had been a strong emphasis on the quality of information that will be available as part of the new framework.
- b. The Committee welcomed the commitments to engagement and hearing from groups that had perhaps not always been part of the conversation. The Chair suggested that large numbers of people felt like they were not being communicated with and commented that a lack of performance data meant it

- was difficult to measure or evidence how well the Council was doing in relation to particular policy area.
- c. The Chair questioned how the Council was communicating with residents around LTNs, given the volume of correspondence members received on this issue. In response, the Leader acknowledged that there was a perception that people were not being listened to and that there were strong views on both sides of the LTN debate. The Leader suggested that hearing whether people liked or hated LTNs was not particularly helpful. Instead she would like to hear about why people thought they were not working and how improvements could be made. The Leader also emphasised that all Councillors should be adopting the value of collaborating and that it was not just the responsibility of the Cabinet to do this.
  - d. The Committee sought assurances around whether there would be specific scrutiny of the housing service, following it being brought in-house. In response, the Leader advised that a Housing Improvement Board had been established, chaired by the Chief Executive and that tenant engagement would be a key facet of the scrutiny process going forward. The Chief Executive commented that the scrutiny arrangements needed to be better than what was in place under HfH, given the issues that had come to light following it being transferred back in-house. Resident engagement was crucial and work was underway to set up a resident voices board.
  - e. The Committee commented that the independent review commissioned by the Council highlighted serious concerns around fire safety and it was queried whether the Council had the resources required to tackle scale of the housing improvement issues. In response, the Chief Executive advised that he would always like more resources for housing but that the situation was fairly commonplace across local government in terms of long term under-investment in housing stock. The Chief Executive advised that Council had gone and secured extra resources in this area and that key issues around fire safety and electricity/gas testing were being progressed.
  - f. The Chief Executive highlighted that only 70% of homes met the Decent Homes standard and that it had been agreed with the regulator that getting this much closer to the 95% target would involve a five-year timeframe.
  - g. The Committee raised concerns about delays in getting responses to Member Enquiries and sought reassurances about how this would be addressed moving forward. In response, the Chief Executive acknowledged that there was a lot of work to be done to improve performance in this area. The Committee was advised that changes to how Member Enquiries were answered had been implemented, so that all Member Enquiries would be signed off by an Assistant Director. This was a temporary measure aimed at improving the quality of responses. The Council had also implemented a new caseload IT system and it was anticipated that this would help prevent slippages and things falling in between the gaps.
  - h. The Committee sought assurances about co-production and questioned how the Council could manage expectations on this, particularly in terms of the limitations of what the authority could do in terms of local versus national policy on. In response the Leader acknowledged that there was a tension between having a clear vision as an authority but also wanting to seek the views of its

residents. The Leader set out that ultimately her administration was elected to implement its manifesto commitments and that this is what the administration would be doing. The Chief Executive commented that there was a big difference between consultation and engagement, and co-production. From his perspective, the Chief Executive had been talking to staff and giving them a clear political direction in respect co-production.

- i. In terms of using census data etcetera to better understand our communities, the Committee was advised that the council had adopted a default approach of asking how it could support these communities. In respect of some of the communities who had a challenging situation in their home country, this could often be as simple as facilitating somewhere for these people to meet.
- j. In respect of a question about the importance of engaging with new communities, the Leader set out that this was a priority for her and that the challenge was to ensure that the engagement was meaningful.
- k. In relation to a questions about free school meals, the Committee was advised that there was a lot of work going on in this area and that the Council was looking to roll-out the expansion for September. The Chief Executive advised that families would still have to apply (rather than be automatically registered) as take-up of Free School Meals was used to determine a number of other areas of government assistance, and so it was important that people signed up. It was noted that the GLA were estimating that take-up would be 90% of the people who were eligible
- l. In relation to a questions about his concerns and what kept him awake at night, the Chief Executive set out that some of the key areas were around the findings of the Casey report, housing, resident engagement and customer experience, and the long-term inequalities and funding levels around health that existed in the borough. The Leader added that ensuring there was fit for purpose leisure facility in the east of the borough was also a key local priority.
- m. The Committee expressed general concern about the findings of the Casey report, particularly in the context of the history of relations between the police and wider community in Tottenham. The Committee sought clarification about what could be being done around disproportionate stop and search rates and the effect this had on community relations. In response, the Leader advised that she operated on a London wide-level and regularly met with the Leaders of other London councils, who were also deeply concerned by the findings of the Casey report. The Leader acknowledged feelings of a lack of progress in this area by the community and set out that she would like to see root and branch change within the Met police. The Chief Executive advised that he and the Leader met with Louise Casey following the publication of the report and that she advised that local authorities were key drivers for holding the police to account. The Chief Executive also advised that he met regularly with the Borough Commander for Haringey and that changes were being made. The Director of Children's Services had been doing a lot of work on Stop & Search and challenging the police to set out what improvements in this area meant on a local level. The Chief Executive and Leader would continue to challenge at a London wide level.

- n. The Committee raised concerns about the police pulling resources from dealing with cases under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act. In response, the Chief Executive advised that this came as a surprise to everyone and that it went to the heart of wider concerns about health inequalities in the borough. The Council was engaging with health colleagues on this issue.
- o. In relation to a question about ensuring there were adequate resources for SEND and providing Education, Health & Care Plans equitably, it was acknowledged that system for SEND was broken, but that the Council was working to support more people locally within school settings. The Chief Executive also acknowledged that there was a concerning correlation between being better off financially and having an EHCPs.
- p. The Chair of the Adults panel commented that the forthcoming new mental health provision at Highgate east hospital would facilitate improved local access and ability to act quickly and diagnose someone who was in crisis.
- q. In response to concerns raised by a co-opted members of the Committee about a sewage leak in her property, the Chief Executive apologised and agreed to pick up the issue with relevant officers in the morning. **(Action)**.

## **RESOLVED**

Noted.

## **85. PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK UPDATE**

The Committee received a report which provided an update on the new performance framework that had been developed as part of the Corporate Delivery Plan. The Corporate Delivery Plan sets out what the Council would deliver over the next 18 months and was agreed by Cabinet in January 2023. The Committee was advised that the first performance report available to OSC would be in September 2023 and that updates from there on would be every 6 months. The report was introduced by Claire McCarthy AD Strategy, Communications and Collaboration as set out in the additional reports pack at page 1. The following arose as part of the discussion of this item:

- a. The Committee sought clarification over the fact that the first round of updates was done in April but that the Committee would not be receiving a report until September. In response, officers advised that the first reporting round was done largely as a test of the system, Monday.com, and the process of services self-reporting their data on to that system. As a result of that first round there would be some learning points incorporated for future rounds. The Committee would receive the first set of performance data in September. Officers advised that work had been undertaken to ensure that there was additional quality control in place and that the information received was valuable.
- b. The Chair acknowledged the explanation given by officers, but expressed a degree of frustration that there was no performance information available to the Committee to scrutinise today. The Chair commented that performance was a key area of focus for scrutiny and he looked forward to being able to review it.

- Officers agreed to supply a performance report for the October OSC meeting. **(Action: Clerk).**
- c. The Chair noted that, in the timetable included in the report, the following report was scheduled for April and asked whether the timeframe could be tweaked so that the performance information could be received for the March OSC meeting instead. Officers agreed to consider whether a report could be produced for March or whether an alternative could be put in place, such as producing interim reports. **(Action: Claire McCarthy).**
  - d. The Committee agreed that they would like to establish quarterly performance briefings with the chairs of each scrutiny panel on finance, risk and performance. The main Committee would receive 6-monthly performance updates at its regular meetings. It was agreed that service level officers should also be present for these meetings to ensure that operational questions could be answered.
  - e. The Scrutiny officers agreed to have a conversation with officers outside of the meeting about establishing the performance reporting framework for Scrutiny. **(Action: Scrutiny Officer).**

## **RESOLVED**

Noted.

## **86. MEMBERSHIP & TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee considered a report which set out the Membership of OSC and the four scrutiny panels, along with their respective terms of reference.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Committee:

- I. Noted the terms of reference (attached at Appendix A of the report), Protocol (attached at Appendix B of the report) for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its Panels, and the Protocol for non-voting co-opted Members on Scrutiny Panels (attached at Appendix C of the report);
- II. Agreed a change of name for the Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel to Climate, Community Wellbeing and Culture Scrutiny Panel; and
- III. Agreed to establish the following Scrutiny Panels for 2023/24: - Adults and Health; - Children and Young People; - Climate, Community Wellbeing and Culture; and - Housing, Planning and Development;
- IV. Approved the remits and membership for each Scrutiny Panel for 2023/24 (Appendix D of the report); and
- V. Appoint Cllrs Connor and White as Haringey representatives to the North Central London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2023/24

## **87. OSC WORK PROGRAMME**



The Committee considered a report which set out the process for developing a work programme for the year. The report was introduced by Dominic O'Brien, Scrutiny Officer.

The Committee noted the upcoming meeting dates in relation to the Scrutiny Review on violence against women and girls.

The Committee put forward the following suggestions for possible future agenda items:

- What the future service provision offer around leisure might look like.
- Elections and the impact of voter ID requirements
- The Council's insourcing approach going forward and lessons learned from the insourcing of housing.
- Some pre-scrutiny work around the new waste contract

A co-opted members emphasised the need for disability access in any future leisure service provision.

The Chair requested an update in relation to a recommendation from the review on the proliferation of gambling, which was around commissioning a targeted piece of research to look at the specific harms in Haringey. Officers agreed to review the twelve month follow up on this and come back to Members in writing. **(Action: Dominic).**

The Committee requested that the feedback from the scrutiny café be recirculated. **(Action: Philip).**

**RESOLVED**

Noted.

**88. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

N/A

**89. FUTURE MEETINGS**

Noted as:

- 24 July 2023
- 12 Oct 2023
- 27 Nov 2023
- 9 Jan 2024
- 18 Jan 2024 (Budget)
- 11 March 2023

CHAIR: Councillor Matt White

Signed by Chair .....

Date .....