

# **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY, 29TH MARCH, 2018, 19:00**

## **PRESENT:**

**Councillors: Joanna Christophides, Pippa Connor (Vice-Chair), Kirsten Hearn, Emine Ibrahim and Charles Wright (Chair)**

**Also Present: Luci Davin**

## **85. FILMING AT MEETINGS**

The Chair referred those present to agenda Item 1 as shown on the agenda in respect of filming at the meeting and the information contained therein.

## **86. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Gallagher. Cllr Christophides was in attendance as a substitute for Cllr Gallagher.

## **87. URGENT BUSINESS**

It being a special meeting under Part 4, Section B, Paragraph 17 of the Council's Constitution, no other business was considered at the meeting.

## **88. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

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

The Committee received a deputation from Ceri Williams. Sona Mahtani and Richard Hawkins were also part of the deputation party. The following points were noted as part of the deputation:

- a. The deputation party raised concerns that none of the questions that they had raised previously at the Cabinet Member Signing on 19<sup>th</sup> March had been satisfactorily answered.
- b. Ms Williams commented that there had been no consultation or proper process involved in the transfer of the Youth Zone budget.
- c. Concerns were also raised around OnSide's governance profile and the fact that they had presented a niche one site solution that did not reflect the views of the local community.
- d. The deputation party raised further concerns around the fact that no tender process had been undertaken, as Council officers had suggested that no similar providers could be found. Ms Williams questioned the fact that the

- Council was also proposing to provide match funding to OnSide, particularly in light of there being no open tendering process.
- e. The deputation party highlighted that in the response to their questions at the 19<sup>th</sup> March Cabinet Member Signing, officers had advised that the £250k un-budgeted funding would have to be found from elsewhere within the service's budget.
  - f. Additional concerns were put forward about the proposed central location of the Youth Zone site and a lack of any evidence that the police supported the location.
  - g. The deputation party questioned why the decision was being taken in Purdah by an outgoing administration against a backdrop of concerns from the local community. The deputation party requested that the decision be deferred until after the local elections being held on 3<sup>rd</sup> May.

In response to the deputation the following questions were put forward by the Committee:

- a. The Committee sought clarification around concerns with youth provision at Bruce Grove. In response Ms Mahtani advised that they were concerned that the Council was seeking to create new facilities rather than investing in the existing services and that as a result, a number of staff would be transferred into the new facilities, seemingly without consultation.
- b. The Committee also sought clarification from the deputation party about whether they had received the letter of support for the proposal from the Police, following the assurances given at the meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> March. In response Ms Williams advised that she had not received the letter and that it was not part of the documents included in the agenda pack for this meeting.
- c. In response to a query about whether the deputation party were aware of other local providers who could potentially provide youth services, the Committee were advised that the whole building centred model was wrong. Instead, the key element of youth work was around building trust with the young people and that should be the focus of any successful model. There were existing spaces within the borough that could be used to hold youth services and funding should be diverted to investing in existing services.

## **90. CALL IN - CONFIRMATION OF THE SITE PROPOSED FOR A YOUTH ZONE AND APPROVAL OF CAPITAL AND REVENUE FUNDING TOWARDS THE PROJECT**

Stephen Lawrence-Orumwense, Deputy Monitoring Officer introduced the Monitoring Officer report to the Board, which was included in the agenda pack at pages 1-8. The Deputy Monitoring Officer outlined the Call-In procedure to the Committee and advised that the advice of the Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer was that the decision taken by the Leader was within the Council's Budget and Policy framework. The Committee noted that in relation to the called in decision on Youth Zone capital and revenue funding, the relevant budget and policy framework documents were the Community Safety Strategy, the Youth Justice Plan and the Budget and MTFs report presented to Cabinet in February 2018. The Deputy Monitoring Officer reminded the Committee questions must be focused on the substance of the reasons outlined in the two Call-In submissions.

Cllr Hare introduced the first Call-In on behalf of the Liberal Democrats. Cllr Hare suggested that the Call-In was both outside of the Policy Framework and the Budget Framework, highlighting that there was no explicit allocation in the MTFs for the £3m capital funding required. The Liberal Democrats requested that the decision was paused until after the election to allow proper consideration. The following concerns were noted as part of the Call-In introduction:

- a. Having a single location in the borough would inevitably make it difficult to access from some parts of the borough. The specific location proposed in Woodside was especially problematic. Cllr Hare suggested that the travel time from Highgate was around 45 minutes and would involve 3 buses.
- b. No EQIA had been undertaken.
- c. A lack of funding, in terms of both the £3m capital allocation and the £250k per year revenue funding, which would presumably have to be found from elsewhere within the revenue budget.
- d. The Call-In also questioned why a new facility was being proposed rather than investing in existing services. Cllr Hare noted that both Jacksons Lane and Muswell Hill had youth service facilities.
- e. The lack of formal consultation with residents was also raised. Cllr Hare suggested that proposals had not been properly scrutinised by the Community Safety Partnership.

Following the introduction of the first Call-In, the Committee sought clarification on the outcome being sought. The Committee highlighted that the Monitoring Officer's report set out the options available to Committee and emphasised that any deferment of the decision would ultimately have to be taken by the original decision maker. Cllr Hare acknowledged this and requested that the Committee refer the decision back to the original decision maker with a recommendation that its implementation be deferred until after the election. The Committee also sought clarification on the budgetary concerns set out in the Call-In. In response the Committee was advised that the Call-In signatories had significant concerns about the final implications of this decision and were also concerned with the centralisation of services.

Cllr Blake introduced the second Call-In. Cllr McNamara and Cllr Brabazon were also present. Cllr Blake suggested that the Call-In was both outside of the Policy Framework and the Budget Framework, highlighting that the proposal would result in the allocation of over 40% of the youth work revenue budget, without adequate discussion by Councillors. The signatories requested that the decision was sent back to the Leader for reconsideration. The following concerns were noted as part of the Call-In introduction:

- a. A single site provision contradicts previous policy positions which have stated that such a model was unworkable.
- b. A lack of consultation with the wider community.
- c. The proposal represented a financial risk for the Council because of the location which was poorly accessed by transport links and the provider had no experience of delivering the proposed model within the context of a London Borough.
- d. Concerns were raised about the proposal to build on Metropolitan Open Land and the resultant threat of legal challenge.

- e. The safety of young people was highlighted as a serious concern given the location. Concerns were also raised around the potential for young people to be groomed for gangs.
- f. It was felt that this decision should be taken by the next administration.

In response to the points raised in the second Call-In, the following questions were noted:

- a. The Committee queried whether the suggestion that the lack of transport connectivity could be solved by providing buses to get young people to the youth centre. In response, the signatories expressed scepticism about the efficacy of this given the fact that there had been no consultation process.
- b. In response to a query about existing Council services, it was suggested to the Committee that the Council needed to get its early intervention and prevention processes right. Furthermore, the cohort in question contained a number of vulnerable young people and the additional cost to the Council if those young people ended up in care should be considered when looking at youth service provision.
- c. The Committee asked whether the second Call-In signatories were aware of other organisations that undertook similar work. In response, the Committee was advised that there were some London based organisations, as well as the Princes Trust. The potential to undertake a consortium model with local organisations was suggested as a possible alternative model.

Following the introduction of both Call-Ins and the subsequent questions put to the two Call-in representatives, Cllr Weston, Cabinet Member for Children and Families responded to some of the points raised.

- a. Progressing ahead with the Haringey Youth Zone would bring significant external investment in partnership with the Council, to enable an expansion of youth provision in the borough.
- b. This would facilitate a wider range and amount of activities available, including new sports and leisure facilities. Provision would be set at affordable rates.
- c. Agreements existed between Onside and a number of other London boroughs, including Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Hammersmith & Fulham and Croydon.
- d. In response to the concerns raised around accessibility and transport access, officers commented that the site was around a twelve minute walk from Wood Green Underground station and about a twenty minute bus ride from White Hart Lane station. Officers also advised that the accessibility of the site would be considered as part of the planning permission process, including the possibility of mandating a shuttle service.
- e. Officers suggested that Woodside ward had one of the lowest rates of weapon enabled offences, which supported the assertion that this was a neutral location and safe for young people to travel to.
- f. Development of sites on Metropolitan Open Land was governed by the London Plan and Haringey's strategic planning document. A special case would have to be put forward to get agreement to build on Metropolitan Open Land. The proposals include the designation of additional land to offset the loss of Metropolitan Open Land.
- g. Officers advised that there was an ongoing consultation underway with children and young people in respect of Youth Zone.

Following this, the Committee put a number of questions to the Cabinet Member and officers. The following points were noted.

- a. The Committee sought clarification on the amount of funding involved in the proposal and why the decision had to be taken at short notice, rather than wait until after the election. In response officers advised that in terms of capital funding, Onside were due to raise £3.5m, primarily through fundraising, and the Council's match funding would be £3m (capital funding). Officers commented that Onside had already secured around £1m capital funding on that proposed site and that the funding would be in jeopardy if the Youth Zone proposals did not go ahead. In terms of the revenue funding, the Committee was advised that the overall revenue costs were £1.2m per year, for 3 years from 2020/21. Of the £1.2m, £250k would be from the existing Early Help service budget and £950k would be from Onside. In response to a further query, officers acknowledged that the Council's revenue contribution could be reduced in light of future transformational activities.
- b. In response to questions around the Responsiveness Fund, officers advised that this was a capital programme of £3.5m per year for 2 years which was available for a range of schemes across different services who met the required criteria. No other applications to the fund had been made at the time of the meeting. The Committee expressed scepticism with the timing of the fund and queried why it was agreed in February 2018, at the end of the budget setting process.
- c. The Committee raised concerns with the location, expressing concern that it was fairly remote and that young women would not be comfortable accessing the site at night time. Officers acknowledged that they had walked the route to the site at night time. Officers, suggested that locating the Youth Zone at Woodside would bring life and activity into that area.
- d. In response to a query around the procurement process, officers advised that the Council's Contract Standing Orders were followed in wavering the tendering process and that this had happened on a number of other occasions, where it had been determined that it was in the Council's interest to do so.
- e. The Committee sought clarification around the loss of Metropolitan Open Land, the nature of the replacement land offered and any potential loss of flora and fauna. In response, officers advised that the MOL in question was part of the school's land and that it was not expected that the land would be ecologically significant. The proposed replacement land was an adjacent sports pitch. Officers advised that an environmental impact assessment would be a planning consideration carried out as part of the planning application, however a project of this size would be unlikely to require a full environmental impact assessment.
- f. In response to a number of questions around the consultation process, officers advised that any consultation with service users would be based around whether the service offer was suitable and that the decision to establish the Youth Zone had been agreed by Cabinet in 2017. Officers also acknowledged that a full consultation exercise would be undertaken with youth workers including the offer to staff. This would be progressed as soon as practicably possible after the implementation of the decision. The Committee noted that Onside had expressed a desire to utilise the experience of Council staff in directing their outreach work.

- g. A councillor in attendance at the meeting raised concerns that there seemed to be a lack of evidence that the Youth Zone was required and a failure by the Council to adequately demonstrate the need for it. Further concerns were raised about drainage issues that had been identified in the earlier Cabinet report. Officers advised that the original decision was taken by Cabinet in March 2017 and that significant due diligence had been undertaken in the intervening period. Onside would be required to carry out detailed survey work of the site including drainage, and that this would be considered as part of the planning process.
- h. In response to a further question around the implications of delaying this decision, officers advised that delays would likely incur significant financial costs.
- i. The Committee expressed concern that the revenue budget for the scheme equated to around 42% of the Early Help and Prevention budget, and were particularly concerned with which existing services would be cut as a result.

The Committee voted, by 4 votes to 1 that the decision was within the policy framework (Cllr Connor voting against).

The Committee voted, by 4 votes to 1 that the decision was within the budget framework (Cllr Connor voting against).

## **RESOLVED**

- I. The Committee determined that the decision was within both the budget framework and the policy framework.
- II. That the decision be sent back to the original decision-maker to reconsider in view of the below points.
  - a. That there is significant clarification on the sources of funding for the Early Help and Prevention budget to provide assurance that the allocation of revenue funding for the Youth Zone, which begins in 2021, will not have a detrimental impact on statutory services and will not be at the expense of other Children's related services.
  - b. That comment be provided on the reasons for the lack of needs assessment being undertaken and assurance provided that there will be a full and thorough consultation with young people on the Youth Zone 'offer' and their views taken into consideration.
  - c. That the land at Woodside School, proposed for the Youth Zone site, be surveyed to understand if fit for development and that Planning requirements are likely to be met, before agreement is reached with Onside for use of this site.
  - d. That clarification be provided of the impact on Youth Service provision in the borough, following the commencement of revenue funding for the

Youth Zone in 2021. This response should include potential implications relating to TUPE of staff.

**91. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

N/A

CHAIR: Councillor Charles Wright

Signed by Chair .....

Date .....