

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY, 2ND OCTOBER, 2018

## PRESENT:

**Councillors: Lucia das Neves (Chair), Pippa Connor (Vice-Chair), Mahir Demir, Ruth Gordon, Adam Jogee, Yvonne Denny and Luci Davin**

### 6. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred Members present to agenda Item 1 as shown on the agenda in respect of filming at this meeting, and Members noted the information contained therein'.

### 7. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

### 8. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no Items of Urgent Business.

### 9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 10. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

### 11. MINUTES

The Committee requested further information in relation to bringing services back in-house and the adoption of a 'Preston' model of supporting the local economy. In response, the Chair commented that the Cabinet Member for Insourcing was due to come and speak to the Committee at a future meeting as part of its work programme.

In relation to the points raised around CAMHS and the waiting lists involved, the Chair of the Children and Young People's Panel agreed that the Panel would look into this as part of its work programme and report back to the Committee. **(Action: Cllr Demir).**

In relation to comments around the development of a co-design approach, the Panel Chair agreed that the Adults and Health Panel would monitor this as part of its work programme. **(Action: Cllr Connor).**

In response to an action in the minutes, officers advised the Committee that the year-end balance for Section 106 was £6.9m and £4.5m for the CIL.

In response to a question around the nature of the Budget Resilience Reserve and the Capital Financing Reserve, officers advised the Committee that both reserves were funded through revenue reserves. These were achieved through improvements in last year's financial outturn position, as detailed in the Budget Outturn report that the Committee received at its July meeting.

In relation to the discussion around development of Wards Corner and the reasons for a reduction in CPO payments and Section 106 money, the Director of Finance agreed to provide an update to the Committee at its next meeting. **(Action: Jon Warlow)**.

The Chair advised the Committee that it had not been possible thus far, due Members' diaries to arrange an additional information session around the financial outturn process. The Chair agreed to follow this up. **(Action: Chair)**.

In response to a request for further information in respect the ACM cladding on a private holiday hotel at Tottenham Hale, [redaction of hotel name following MHCLG guidance] the Chair advised that the Committee had received an update at its latest evidence gathering session and that Committee would continue to monitor this issue as part of its review into Fire Safety.

The Committee agreed that the actions from the minutes should be compiled into a table for the Chair to chase up in advance of future meetings. **(Action: Clerk/Chair)**.

## **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

## **12. Q1 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee received a budget monitoring report which set out the financial position at Quarter 1. The report was introduced by the Interim Chief Finance Officer & Section 151 Officer, Jon Warlow. The Committee noted that the forecast revenue outturn for the General Fund was a £5.9m overspend, post mitigations. The Interim Chief Finance Officer reassured the Committee that officers would build in the non-deliverable savings, as set out in the report, into the MTFS at an early stage of the financial planning process. The future programme of savings would incorporate non-deliverable savings and it was hoped that this would ensure a robust starting position for the MTFS.

The following arose from the discussion of the report:

- a. In response to a question, the Committee was advised that a significant proportion of the base budget pressures related to demand-led services. The challenge was to build future financial models that recognised this and with a degree of flexibility to respond.

- b. In response to a question, the Interim Chief Finance Officer reassured the Committee that the five year financial planning window for the MTFS was an appropriate timeframe, particularly as transformational projects usually had a multi-year profile. Taking a five year approach to financial planning also emphasised the impact of savings on the years ahead.
- c. In response to further questions around demand pressures and the feasibility of drawing down on reserves to mitigate undeliverable savings, officers emphasised the fact that the authority's budget had structural funding challenges. Officers acknowledged that the budget overspend could be mitigated to an extent, as per last year, but advocated that the structural deficit needed to be addressed as well. Officers advised that around two-thirds of the budget was spent on care services and that there was no way to produce an MTFS within the available funding envelope without looking at how the Council could provide those services differently.
- d. The Committee sought assurances around the Council's ability to make projections in relation to demand and the confidence that officers had in those projections. In response, officers acknowledged that making projections was difficult. Part of the process involved ensuring that forecasting systems were aligned and were used as effectively as possible. Officers assured the Committee that senior officers responsible for the provision of care services were involved in budget forecasting and the budget setting process.
- e. Officers advised the Committee that there were significant elements of risk to the future funding envelope for local government. These included an upcoming Government Spending Review, a local authority Funding Review and a Business Rates review, as well as the potential impact on funding from the UK's exit from the European Union. These pressures were not unique to Haringey but it was anticipated that the funding period of 2021 onwards could be the most challenging period yet faced by local authorities.
- f. In response to a question around the Dedicated Schools Grant, officers advised that there was a forecast closing position of a £4.3m shortfall and that most of this was in relation to the high needs block. Officers have challenged those funding calculations and are due to meet with representatives from the DfE and the Education Funding Authority to discuss this further.
- g. The Committee requested that the Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring report include some more information around the feasibility of savings and the risks involved if they are not delivered. **(Action: Jon Warlow).**

## RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- I. Noted the forecast revenue outturn for the General Fund (GF), including corporate items, of £5.9m overspend post mitigations of £7.5m and consider what remedial actions need to be implemented to bring closer to the approved budget (Section 6, Table 1, and Appendix 1 of the report).
- II. Noted that the final 2017/18 general fund outturn, post completion of the external audit, was an increased overspend of £0.404m compared to the £0.019m reported in the outturn which has been offset against the GF reserve.

The 2018/19 brought forward GF reserve balance is now £15.5m still in line with the level proposed in the budget paper approved by Full Council in February 2018.

- III. Noted the net HRA forecast of £0.2m overspend. (Section 6, Table 2, and Appendix 2 of the report).
- IV. Noted the net DSG forecast of £2.59m overspend, the actions being taken to seek to address this and the potential implications for the GF. (Section 7 and Table 3 of the report).
- V. Noted the latest MTFs savings position in 2018/19 which indicates that only 33% (£5.2m) will be achieved. To consider what remedial action is required to improve this position. (Section 8, Table 4 of the report).
- VI. Noted the latest capital forecast expenditure of £192.8m in 2018/19 which equates to 84% of the approved budget. To also consider & approve the proposed changes to the approved budget (Section 9, and Table 5 of the report).
- VII. Noted the measures in place to reduce overspend in service areas; and
- VIII. Noted the budget virements as set out in Appendix 3 of the report.

### **13. FIRE SAFETY REVIEW UPDATE**

The Committee received a progress report on the Scrutiny Review on Fire Safety in High Rise Blocks, which was begun by the previous Committee as part of its work plan for 2017/18. The Head of Organisational Resilience gave a verbal update to the Committee around the preparedness of the Borough to coordinate a response to a major incident and health and safety considerations for staff. The following points were noted:

- a. The Council's emergency plans were regularly reviewed and tested as part of the Haringey Resistance Forum, a statutory partnership body.
- b. Following Grenfell, the Council undertook a local review of the lessons learnt. In addition, a number of staff were deployed to assist in the response with Kensington and Chelsea. In addition, the Chief Executives of London Councils commissioned a peer review of London local authority resilience arrangements. A further multi-agency review was also undertaken following the peer review. As a result, the Committee considered that there were a number of fora from which the Council could learn lessons.
- c. The Head of Organisational Resilience summarised some of the key actions resulting from the lessons learnt:
  - The Council had developed its mobilisation plan and put in place arrangements to ensure that there were enough people in Emergency Response roles in order mobilise staff effectively.
  - A workshop was held with voluntary, community and faith groups to help them understand how the response to a major incident worked.
  - The Council had taken steps to ensure that staff would be visible in the eventuality that the Council had to respond at scale.

- Long standing mutual aid relationships existed with other London boroughs. A piece of work is underway as part of the London-wide Resilience Forum to standardise the emergency plans for each London borough so they structured in the same way.
  - A London-wide Memorandum of Understanding had been put in place with the British Red Cross.
- d. The Committee were advised that there were two high rise buildings used by Council staff, both of which were ten storey buildings and neither of which had combustible ACM cladding.
  - e. A fire risk assessment was in place for both buildings and tests were conducted regularly on a range of fire safety equipment. An updated fire risk assessment had been commissioned for both buildings, the Head of Organisational Resilience would be working with the Council's facilities management contractor to ensure that each of the actions arising from the fire risk assessment were put in place.

The following arose from the discussion of the report and the verbal update from the Head of Organisational Resilience:

- a. In response to a question, the Head of Organisational Resilience advised that the London Resilience Forum were responsible for coordinating emergency planning and resilience arrangements across London. Sitting underneath this forum were a number of sector panels, one of which was the local authorities sector panel which was responsible for the standardisation of emergency plans.
- b. In response to concerns about the Council's facilities management contractor, officers advised that stronger structures were being put in place to manage the contract and additional staff resources had been allocated to manage this contract. The Head of Organisational Resilience assured the Committee, that the Council had processes in place to escalate its response in an emergency and that there were no glaring risks in terms of the Council's overall level of preparedness.
- c. In response to a question around a lack fire extinguishers in communal areas and lack of fire marshals in Council owned residential properties, the Chair advised that she would pick this up with HfH. **(Action: Chair).**
- d. In response to concerns around why the disability access ramp at River Park House was no longer in use, officers advised that they thought it was because of the gradient and non-compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act. The Head of Organisational Resilience advised that he would get back to the Committee about why the ramp was no longer in use. **(Action: Andrew Meek).**
- e. The Committee sought assurances around whether work had been undertaken to establish exactly who was living in Council accommodation and also whether there was any capacity to house people in a major incidents. In response, officers advised that given the housing shortage it would not be easy to find suitable accommodation within the Borough. Officers advised that HfH were continually trying to keep up to date with whose was residing in their properties but the main issue was around identifying leaseholders and with illegally sub-let properties.
- f. The Committee questioned whether any work had been undertaken across-London to establish the level of available housing in the event of a major

incident. In response, officers cautioned that the number of void-properties held by any individual authority was constantly changing and that in the eventuality of an emergency the exact figure at that point in time would be required. The Head of Organisational Resilience emphasised that having joint arrangements in place with the other London local authorities was crucial and would allow an accurate assessment to be undertaken quickly.

- g. In response to a further question around the voluntary sector engagement event, the Head of Organisational Resilience advised that he had agreed to develop a voluntary sector capabilities assessment. This involved a questionnaire being sent out to each of the voluntary/community/faith, groups in order to establish their relative capabilities in being able to respond to an emergency and establish which particular group/s they had links with.
- h. In response to a question around staff and their exposure to fire safety procedures, the Committee was advised that this formed part of the staff induction process. In addition there was a fire safety awareness training video on Fuse and all of the Council's emergency planning processes were also available on the staff intranet.
- i. In response to a further question, the Head of Organisational Resilience advised that weekly fire drills were a key method for ensuring that all those who regularly used the Council's buildings had a good understanding of what to do in the event of a fire.
- j. Following a query around the role of Members in the response to an emergency situation, the Head of Organisational resilience undertook to share an existing briefing document with all Councillors. **(Action: Andrew Meek)**. The Committee were also advised that there was some member training scheduled for November around what to do in an emergency incident. London-wide guidance and training was also planned through London Councils, aimed at leaders within local government. It was anticipated that this would be subsequently formalised into a training package to be delivered at a local level for all boroughs.

## RESOLVED

- I. That the report on progress be noted;
- II. That the Committee received evidence from the Head of Organisation Resilience on emergency planning issues arising from the Grenfell Tower fire and the preparedness of the Borough to coordinate a response to a major incident;
- III. That, in the light of the current uncertainty regarding the final outcome of plans for implementation of the recommendations of the Hackitt Review, consideration of conclusions and recommendations be deferred until later in the year.

## 14. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report which set proposals for finalising the work plan for Overview and Scrutiny and the Scrutiny Panels. The following arose from the discussion of the report:

- a. The Chair advised that the Committee would be feeding back to the public on the scrutiny café event going forwards, as the work plan developed.
- b. The Committee agreed that the theme identified around communicating with the Council should reflect that this was a two-way process and should also include how the council communicated with residents.
- c. The Committee agreed to hold a development session with Panel members around how the work programme will be delivered. **(Action: Chair).**

## **RESOLVED**

- I. That the results of the scrutiny survey and the feedback received from the Scrutiny Café be noted;
- II. That the Committee and the scrutiny panels undertake further work to develop their work plans, including
  - Identifying issues for review as well as “one off” items; and
  - Finalising items for panel meetings taking place in October or November;
- III. That final work plans for the Committee and panels for 2018-20 be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee for approval; and
- IV. That Councillor Barbara Blake replace Cllr Amin on the Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel with immediate effect.

## **15. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

N/A

## **16. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The future meeting dates were noted as:

19 November 2018  
14 January 2019  
28 January 2019  
25 March 2019

CHAIR: Councillor Lucia das Neves

Signed by Chair .....

Date .....