

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, 25TH MARCH, 2019

PRESENT:

Councillors: Lucia das Neves (Chair), Pippa Connor (Vice-Chair), Mahir Demir, Ruth Gordon, Adam Jogee and Yvonne Denny (Church representative), Mark Chapman (Parent Governor representative), and Luci Davin (Parent Governor representative)

22. 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.

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

24. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

26. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None

27. MINUTES

The Committee noted the upcoming discussion around libraries at its meeting in June and requested that any information in relation to changes to branch libraries should be distributed to members before going out to the wider public. **(Action: Andy Briggs).**

The Committee echoed the discussion that they had previously and emphasised the need for additional budget scrutiny briefings for individual panels, as part of the ongoing budget scrutiny process.

The Committee noted the action from its previous meeting around overpayments of housing benefits and recommended that this topic should be included as part of its overall work plan. **(Action: Rob Mack).**

The Committee sought clarification around the number of 'ongoing' actions in relation to the action tracker included as part of the agenda pack. In response the Clerk

agreed to speak to the Chair and provide an updated version for Members. **(Action: Clerk).**

In relation to Unison being invited to its forthcoming meeting for the FOBO item, the Committee requested that the other relevant trade union reps also be invited. **(Action: Clerk).**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meetings on 28th January 2019 and 5th February 2019 be approved as a correct record.

28. MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL MEETINGS

In relation to the minutes of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel on 15th January, the Chair highlighted that to the end of December 2018, Haringey had collected £6.782m in CIL monies and that only £1.9m had been spent.

In relation to a question from the Chair, the Housing and Regeneration Panel Chair advised that a review of the management process of CIL had been delayed as part of a London-wide consultation process and that the process would likely take 16 months.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the following Scrutiny Panels be received and noted and recommendations contained therein approved:

Children and Young People – 4th February 2019.

Adults and Health – 18th January 2019 and 29th January 2019.

Housing and Regeneration – 15th January 2019 and 21st February 2019.

29. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS - COMMUNITIES, SAFETY AND ENGAGEMENT

The Committee invited the Cabinet Member for Communities, Engagement and Safety to partake in a question and answer session on his portfolio. The Chair drew the Cabinet Member's attention to the following questions which were put forward by members of the public as part of the Scrutiny Café process in October:

- How could links be fostered between residents throughout the Borough, especially east - west where there are few public transport connections?
- How could intergenerational involvement and the outcomes that can be achieved from young people and older people working together be encouraged?
- A large number of community buildings had been lost in recent years. Had consideration been given to developing an inventory of them?
- The Runnymede Trust did a survey of Haringey's race equality scorecard before the last Council elections, drawing on Council statistics. What plans were there to develop a comprehensive action plan in response to this?
- How was it intended to address race inequality issues and how will the local community be engaged within this process?

In response to the above questions, the following was noted in response:

- a. The Cabinet Member acknowledged the importance with which the Council and partners regarded the issue of serious youth violence and advised that 120 people attended a recent community meeting. During the meeting employment emerged as a key theme of the discussion. The Cabinet Member advised that he was working with officers to hold similar meetings regularly, including plans for two public meetings in the summer, one in Wood Green and one in Tottenham. Partners from the Bridge Renewal Trust were undertaking a mapping exercise to map provision for young people across the Borough. The Cabinet Member also advised that the Haringey Community Gold had been launched with the deployment of 6 detached youth-workers. The Cabinet Member also advised that the police recently chaired a meeting on community safety concerns specific to the east of the Borough including robberies of young people.
- b. The Cabinet Member advised that he would come back to the Committee with a written answer in relation to the question on intergenerational involvement. **(Action: Cllr Mark Blake).**
- c. In relation to community buildings, the Cabinet Member advised that a process was underway to identify 25 buildings as part of a community buildings review. The Committee was also advised that the policy was being revised and would come back to Cabinet in due course. The Cabinet Member advised that the Council was currently trialling a project around social value rents.
- d. The Cabinet Member advised that the Council needed to integrate the equalities agenda with its wider policy agenda to ensure that it was front and centre. The Cabinet Member also advised that Haringey worked closely with the Runnymede Trust on their draft scorecard report but were still awaiting the final report. The Cabinet Member advised that he hoped to get the report back in time in order to formally report to the Fairness Commission.
- e. The Cabinet Member set out that the Borough Plan identified a range of priorities to tackle race equality issues such as youth justice and levels of temporary accommodation. The Borough Plan also set out the connected communities programme which sought to provide support to recent migrants. The Council was also currently undertaking a review of school exclusions and alternative provision. Furthermore, the Council published its Youth at Risk Strategy which was agreed at Cabinet in March and which identified black boys as a priority group.
- f. The Chair requested that a report on social value rents come back to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration, particularly in relation to its impact upon the voluntary and community sector. **(Action: Rob Mack).**

A summary of the questions put forward by Committee members, as well as the responses from the Cabinet Member are set out below:

- a. In relation to concerns raised in relation to Section 60 searches, the Cabinet Member acknowledged that there were deep community concerns about the use of these powers but also recognised that they could be effective when used correctly. The Cabinet Member promulgated the need for an evidence led approach and acknowledged that the Council and partners needed to keep asking questions locally.
- b. The Committee sought further details about the Haringey Community Gold programme and how the outreach workers would operate. In response, officers advised that the resource would be responsive to issues within the

community rather than individuals, and would bring together a programme of interventions involving key community partners. The Cabinet Member cautioned that this was a finite resource and that the overall provision of resources was still significantly lower than in 2010.

- c. The Committee welcomed the funding provided by the Young Londoners Fund for the Community Gold and sought further information around the ongoing budget provision for this. In response, the Cabinet Member advised that the funding was for an initial three-year period and that alternative sources of funding were being examined for the future. The Cabinet Member commented that Haringey would be submitting a bid to the Home Office's Youth Endowment Fund.
- d. In response to a question around proposed interventions planned in the west of the Borough and to what extent the youth worker resources would be operating in the west of the borough, the Cabinet Member acknowledged that there was a significant level of need across the borough and that interventions would take place accordingly. The Cabinet Member also advised that he was looking to speak to colleges at Alexandra Palace to see if there was scope to hold some youth worker provision at that location.
- e. The Committee raised concerns from the community in relation to proposed rent increases for community buildings and welcomed the Cabinet Member's comments about a social value rent trial. The Cabinet Member advised that he was happy to meet with community groups to discuss their concerns in relation to community buildings and suggested that officers would be happy to come back and provide an update to the Committee on the social value rent trial for community buildings.

30. OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REPORT 2017/2018 AND COMPLAINTS AND MEMBER ENQUIRIES ANNUAL REPORT.

The Committee received two reports, one which detailed the complaints received by the Local Government Ombudsman's office for 2017/2018 and one which set out the Member Enquiry and Complaints Annual Report for 2017/2018. It was noted that this report was compiled later than usual due to the introduction of GDPR regulations. It was anticipated that the Complaints and Member Enquiries annual report for 2018/19 would be issued in July 2019. The reports were introduced by Carla Segel, Head of Service Delivery and Debbie Darling, Acting FIG and Business Support Manager, as set out in the agenda pack at pages 63-75. The following was noted in response to the discussion:

- a. The Committee sought reassurance about the Council being able to demonstrate that it was learning from complaints, particularly in light of a rising number of upheld complaints. The Committee also expressed concern with the proportion of complaints received in relation to housing benefit claims and council tax. In response, officers advised that there was one report issued by the Ombudsman against Haringey in 17/18 which was serious and the Council had accepted the report's findings. Officers advised that there were 24 cases that were investigated by the LGO and upheld, the bulk of which required the formal issuance of an apology. Only one of these upheld cases related to housing benefits. Officers acknowledged the need to get better at learning from complaints across the organisation and commented that they were working with IT to develop learning points from each case on the Council's Respond system.

- Officers agreed to come back to the Committee with an update on the process of learning from complaints and how this was reported to OSC at a future meeting. **(Action: Carla Segal).**
- b. The Chair noted with concern that Haringey had the highest number of complaints of its statistical neighbours. The Chair sought clarification on how much the Council spent on financial redress. In response, officers agreed to circulate that information to Members outside of the meeting. **(Action: Carla Segal).**
 - c. The Committee sought assurances around the discrepancy between the low volume of S2 complaints in Children's Services and the comparatively high cost of redress payments. Members requested further information in relation to this as well as what proportion of the redress cases related to SEND children. **(Action: Carla Segal).**
 - d. The Chair commented that the Council had consistently failed to meet its target in relation to complaints and sought assurances that the target would be met in the current year. In response, officers advised that the current year to date score was around 90% and that the target would not be met this year. Officers advised that this was a very challenging performance area and that a number of staff had been lost from this area over the years. Officers welcomed the opportunity to have a discussion with Members about how the service could meet the target of 95%.
 - e. The Committee requested that officers provide case studies of the types of complaints that were regularly received as well the responses given and that these come back to the Committee as part of its discussion on FOBO and the wider complaints process at its April meeting. **(Action: Carla Segal).**
 - f. The Committee sought further information in relation to the nature of the 292 complaints received from the Revenues service and the nature of those complaints. In response, officers advised that this was a difficult area and there were a lot of cases where people simply did not want to pay what was outstanding. However, there were also some issues around chasing old debt and incorrectly applied discounts, for example. Officers advised that over half of these complaints were generated in response to the policy being implemented correctly but they were still logged as complaints because the customer was unhappy.
 - g. The Committee sought assurances about whether there were any vacancies within the service. In response, officers advised that there were none with the service that collated the complaints but there could well be some in the individual services who responded to complaints. Officers cautioned that there was no scope for expanding the staffing resources to improve the performance scores, however improvements needed to be made to improve self-reporting of complaints, which would reduce demand at the back-end. Improvements in the process were also required to make sure that the Council got it right first time.
 - h. The Committee sought clarification about the information set out in table 3.11 of the complaints report and queried whether some of the complaint reasons could be unpicked to provide more clarity about the underlying reasons of those complaints. In response, officers acknowledged that the information could be presented differently in order to ascertain what the reasons were and whether there were learning points gleaned. **(Officers to note).**

- i. The Committee raised concerns with clarity of communication with residents generally, and noted the specific example of recent changes to rent bills causing confusion to members of the public, which in turn generated a number of complaints from residents who were unsure of how much they owed.
- j. The Chair commented about the heading used around 'general information/service' request and the fact that it was a particularly vague term. The Chair requested that officers reviewed the use of this heading and consider breaking it down further. **(Action: Carla Segal)**.
- k. Officers agreed to come back to the Committee in July to discuss the 2018/19 complaints report. **(Action: Carla Segal)**.

RESOLVED

- I. That the contents of the Ombudsman Letter Report 2017/18 and the proposed next steps be noted; and
- II. That the contents of the Complaints and Member Enquiries Annual Report 2017/18 and the proposed next steps be noted.

31. Q3 BUDGET MONITORING

The Committee received a budget monitoring report which covered the position at Quarter 3 (period 9) of the 2018/19 financial year. The report was introduced by Jon Warlow, Director of Finance as set out in the report pack at pages 77-98. The following arose from the discussion of the report:

- a. The Committee noted that as at Quarter 3, the forecast continued to show a significant projected overspend, albeit with a slightly improving position of £9.3m to £9m for Quarters two to three, on the General Fund. There was a worsening position of around £1.4m in Children's Services which was predominantly due to the cost of external Looked After Children placements and the cost of care packages. Some of these costs had been offset by an improving position with Adults due to the receipt of a winter grant from government. The forecast for the HRA was an improving position with a £4.4m surplus projected, up from £3.6m in Quarter 2.
- b. Officers commented that the Council was approaching a deficit balance position of £2.6m within the Dedicated Schools Grant which would trigger a threshold for a recovery plan to be drawn up. Officers were beginning the process of drafting and implementing this plan.
- c. In response to issues raised by the Chair during report clearing, officers set out that Haringey's LAC overspend was 3%, which was significantly below many of its statistical neighbours. The Committee's attention was also drawn to the fact that NRPF accounted for around 9% of the total overspend in Children's Services. Furthermore, Haringey's share of Brexit funding from the MHCLG equated to £210k over two years.
- d. The Chair emphasised that the Committee was keen for Scrutiny to be involved early on in the process of budget setting and requested that information to be properly scrutinised by the individual panels. In response, officers emphasised that any requests for further information could be added to the finance briefings. Officers requested that questions be asked in advance of the meeting in writing. It was commented that budget reports were always published well in advance of OSC meetings. Officers also set out that they

were happy to organise a package of training for Members, to coincide with the new planning year for the MTFs.

- e. Officers suggested that they were committed to supporting Scrutiny but were unable to offer a dedicated resource in that respect. However, the Director of Finance committed to ensuring that Business Partners were available to attend panel meetings to respond to queries and concerns. The Director of Finance requested that issues be flagged up in advance to accommodate this. The Chair acknowledged the Director of Finance's comments and highlighted that further discussions on this would form part of the scrutiny stocktake process. **(Action: Chair).**
- f. In response to a query around the comparative data for LAC overspend, the Director of Finance acknowledged that benchmarking could be deceptive and agreed to provide further information on Haringey's relative position in relation to some of our statistical neighbours. **(Action: Jon Warlow).**
- g. The Director of Finance agreed to come back to the Chair of the Children's Panel with further details on the nature of the £400k overspend identified in misplaced care packages. **(Action: Jon Warlow).**
- h. In response to a query around the relative health of the Council's overall budget position, officers acknowledged that there would be some testing delivery issues involved with the budget given the level of savings required in the forthcoming year. However, it was expected that the budget would be deliverable. Officers advised that budget holders would be expected to provide signed written assurance on their ability to keep within allocated budgets to ensure ongoing sustainability. There was also some resilience built into the balance sheet around the deliverability of savings as part of the budget resilience fund.
- i. In response to a further question around the achievability of savings and the extent to which the Council would be carrying forward a number of budget pressures into next year, officers advised that sizable redress had been identified in response to the issues identified and the pressure on budgets from undelivered savings. Officers reassured the Committee that an exercise had been undertaken to ensure that budgets reflected the known costs of a service and to better understand where that budget should sit within a particular service. The budget monitoring arrangements for 2019/20 would involve a live budgeting process which would come back to the relevant committees to report significant cost pressures.
- j. In response to concerns about the setting of undeliverable income targets for children's centres, officers acknowledged that there would be issues that emerged but requested that scrutiny panels flagged up emerging issues to Finance and Finance would then be in a position to provide support to the individual panels and drill down on those issues.
- k. The Committee sought clarification about the DSG budget position and raised concerns that the council had seemingly transferred money away from Early Years funding to the high needs block. In response, officers acknowledged that this was the case and set out that there was a limited amount on inter-fund transfer permitted, which had been agreed by the Schools Forum. Officers recognised that this reduced the amount of money available to Early Years but advised that this was deemed prudent. Officers cautioned that this only partially mitigated the risk and that going forward a more permanent solution was needed.

- I. The Committee suggested that further emphasis needed to be given to investment in the commercial portfolio. In response, officers acknowledged the fact that the Council needed to get better at generating income through its commercial portfolio and further acknowledged that where the Council could improve its commerciality it reduced adverse impacts in other services.
- m. The Committee requested that a more detailed line-by-line financial breakdown of the priority areas be provided to OSC and the Panels. The Director of Finance advised that there was a current year breakdown online and that he would email members with a fuller breakdown of the new year's budget. **(Action: Jon Warlow).**

RESOLVED

That the following be noted:

- I. The forecast revenue outturn for the General Fund (GF), including corporate items, of £9.1m overspend post mitigations of £6.4m and the need for remedial actions to be implemented to bring closer to the approved budget;
- II. The HRA forecast of £4.4m underspend;
- III. The net DSG in-year forecast of £3.5m overspend and projected year end DSG Reserve deficit of £2.6m and the actions being taken to seek to address this;
- IV. The latest capital forecast expenditure of £172.4m in 2018/19 which equated to 75% of the approved budget;
- V. The forecast delivery of savings in 2018/19 (Section 8, Table 4 and Appendix 4 of the report); and
- VI. The budget virements as set out in Appendix 3 of the report.

32. Q3 PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Committee received a performance report which covered the latest data available as at December 2018. As part of the new Borough Plan, there is a performance framework to track progress against the objectives and targets set out in the delivery plans. The intention was to start measuring against the outcomes and measures set out in the new framework from a baseline from April 2019. The report was introduced by Charlotte Pomery, AD for Commissioning as set out in the agenda pack at pages 99-105. The Committee also received a handout which set out a refreshed set of priority performance dashboards for the new Borough Plan. The following was noted in discussion of the report and the accompanying hand-out:

- a. In response to concerns raised about funding reductions for early years interventions, officers advised that the performance indicator related to 0-5 year olds. The saving in question related to a top-up offered to the funded offer for two year olds through the DSG. Officers advised that further work was being done to minimise the impact.
- b. The Committee raised concerns with the priorities identified in the Adults priority dashboard and the fact there seemed to be significant overlap between the CCG, NHSE and Council priorities. The Chair of the Adults Panel suggested that this could make it difficult to monitor Council performance on its own. In response, officers emphasised that the outcomes and priorities were designed to reflect that it was a Borough Plan rather than just a Council plan. The indicators were designed to demonstrate wider outcomes. Officers advised that a number of statutory adult social care indicators would continue to be

- monitored as part of the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework and that it may be the case that the A&H Panel wish to monitor these.
- c. The Chair commented that Council needed to be clear about which set of indicators it could expect OSC to utilise to scrutinise performance. The Chair also emphasised the need for individual Panels to be given the opportunity to monitor the performance framework.
 - d. In response to a question around delayed transfers of care, officers advised that the rate was reducing and the Council was working closely with BEH MHT, the Whittington and North Middlesex to improve this and was also working on its discharge to assess process.
 - e. The Committee sought clarification about whether the Decent Homes performance was inclusive of the additional funding announced and queried whether the Council should be more ambitious with its 95% target. In response, officers agreed to come to the Committee with a response. **(Action: Charlotte Pomery)**.
 - f. The Committee raised concerns about the impact of the decant of Tangmere and Northolt blocks on performance around Temporary Accommodation and queried whether the given performance target was realistic. In response, officers advised that a lot of work had been done to map the trajectory of Temporary Accommodation as well as the impact of the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act. Officers agreed to come back to the Committee with some further details on how the performance indicator was calculated. **(Action: Charlotte Pomery)**.
 - g. In response to a query about how Scrutiny could get involved in developing the priority dashboards, officers welcomed any input and set out that Scrutiny could have a potentially significant role in developing the delivery plans for the Borough Plan. The Chair emphasised the need for each of the Panels to have an opportunity to feed into the wider process and suggested that there should be a separate session on this with OSC Members. The Chair agreed to speak to AD Commissioning to set this up. **(Action: Cllr Das Neves)**.

RESOLVED

That the following be noted:

- I. That progress made against the delivery of the priorities and targets of the Corporate Plan, Building a Stronger Haringey Together at this point in the 18/19 year.
- II. That measuring progress against the new Borough Plan outcomes will start from a baseline set as at April 2019, with continued reporting to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the end of Quarter 1 2019/2020 against the new measures.

33. BOROUGH PLAN

The Committee received a cover report and a copy the Borough Plan, which was agreed by Cabinet on 12th February. The following arose from the discussion of this item:

- a. Officers advised that the next steps were the development of a Borough Plan on a page and the development of the delivery plans for each year, which would include links to the MTFS and savings.

- b. The Chair raised concerns about the plan not adequately reflecting the resident engagement pledge that had been discussed previously at OSC. In particular the Chair highlighted closing the feedback loop, estate engagement and the participation of residents as being areas that could be brought out more strongly in the plan. In response, officers acknowledged these concerns and agreed that this would be addressed in the development of the delivery plans. Officers advised that there was an upcoming campaign planned around civic pride and fly-tipping that would also hopefully address some of those participation issues going forwards. The AD for Strategy and Communications agreed to come back to the Committee at a future date to provide an update on participation outcomes and the Citizens Panel. **(Action: Joanna Sumner)**.
- c. In response to a question around the timescales for the development of delivery plans, officers advised that these should be available by the end of April.
- d. The Chair encouraged Panel Chairs to bring the discussion on the development of the Borough Plan into the individual panels.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- I. Review the Borough Plan on a Page and One Year Delivery Plan, as these develop;
- II. Review progress against the One Year Borough Plan Delivery Plan on an ongoing basis, as a complement to wider performance monitoring activity;
- III. Continue to engage in the development of the Citizens' Panel and wider resident engagement strategy.

34. BREXIT - PREPAREDNESS OF THE BOROUGH AND NO DEAL PLANNING

The Committee received a written briefing for noting which provided an update on Brexit resilience arrangements. The Committee noted that there would be a further update provided at the next meeting on 29th April.

RESOLVED

That the briefing was noted.

35. FIRE SAFETY REPORT

The Committee received its final report on its Scrutiny Review into Fire Safety in High Rise Blocks. The report was introduced by Rob Mack, Principal Scrutiny Officer as set out in the agenda pack at pages 175-214. The following arose during the discussion of the report:

- a. Officers advised that the removal of ACM cladding in a housing association block was underway and should be completed by August.
- b. The Chair of the Adults and Health Panel requested some minor amendments to the report. These were; strengthening the tone of recommendation 12, clarify who was responsible for recommendation 13, and include something further on the information given to residents of care homes and their families. Cllr Connor

agreed to send the Scrutiny Officer her amendments in writing. **(Action: Cllr Connor).**

- c. The Committee noted concerns raised about leaseholders being charged for replacement of fire doors. Officers confirmed that as part of the evidence given as part of the review, officers had given assurances that leaseholders would not be charged for replacement of composite fire doors. The Chair advised that the Cabinet Member was picking up this individual case as part of his casework.

RESOLVED

That the Committee approve the report and its recommendations and that it be submitted to Cabinet for response.

[The names of the blocks are redacted following MHCLG guidance]

36. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Committee agreed that Complaints would be added to the July agenda. **(Action: Clerk).**

RESOLVED

- I. That the work programmes for the main Committee and Scrutiny Panels at Appendix A of the report be noted;
- II. That the scope and terms of the reference of the Committee's review on Business Support – Procurement and the Supply Chain – be approved; and
- III. The amended scope and terms of reference for the review by the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel on the Wards Corner Regeneration be approved.

CHAIR: Councillor Lucia das Neves

Signed by Chair

Date