

# **MINUTES OF MEETING Overview and Scrutiny Committee HELD ON Thursday, 17th March, 2022, 7.00 pm**

## **PRESENT:**

**Councillors: Pippa Connor (Vice-Chair), Dana Carlin, Makbule Gunes, Matt White,**

**ALSO ATTENDING: Yvonne Denny and Lourdes Keever**

### **60. 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.

### **61. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Moyeed. Cllr Connor chaired the meeting as the Vice-Chair.

### **62. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business

### **63. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

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

None.

### **65. MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meetings on the 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022, were agreed as a correct record.

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

#### **RESOLVED**

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

- Children and Young People's – 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021
- Adults and Health – 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020
- Environment and Community Safety – 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021
- Housing and Regeneration – 9<sup>th</sup> December 2021

## 67. UNIVERSAL CREDIT

The Panel received a presentation on Universal Credit, which was tabled at the meeting, and introduced by Phylis Fealy, Haringey Employment and Partnership Manager at the Department for Work and Pensions and Ian Smith (DWP). Andy Briggs, AD for Corporate and Customer Services and Jim Brady, Service Manager for Customer Services were also present for this agenda item. The following arose in discussion of the presentation:

- a. The Committee sought assurances around the number of job vacancies that were available to deaf and the disabled claimants. In response, the DWP acknowledged that supporting access to the job market for disabled residents was something that was part of the work undertaken by Job Centres, including the provision of disability advisors. The DWP agreed to come back to the Committee with the numbers of disabled people that were being supported into work and information on which areas they were getting jobs in. **(Action: Phylis Fealy).**
- b. The Committee queried whether any information was collected on the type of industries people ended up getting jobs in and their ability to focus on a particular area of employment. The example of graduates being able to access jobs in creative industries was given. In response, the DWP advised that they would support people to get into specific areas of employment, particularly during their initial interactions with the Job Centre. However, in order to maintain eligibility for Universal Credit, service users would have to give consideration to other areas of employment as time progressed. The DWP assured the Committee that they did not seek to put people in just any job as it was important to get them into sustainable employment and to get them off Universal Credit all together. The DWP also advised that they used in-work benefit calculators to assess individual claimant's circumstances. The Committee was advised that it was difficult to produce hard data showing the ability of claimants to focus on particular areas of employment.
- c. The Committee raised the example of some of the projects undertaken in Islington to support people into employment once they had come out of prison and the difficulties experienced by these people in transitioning into the workplace. Previously, Islington had offered training, housing and financial support for 12 months as part of a holistic package of support measures and the Committee questioned whether this was something that had been considered in Haringey. In response, the DWP advised that they were not aware of anything like this in Haringey but that work coaches did go into prisons and work with offenders. The DWP agreed to come back to the Committee with a written response to this question. **(Action: Ian Smith).**
- d. In response to a question around the extent to which the DWP were involved in SEND programmes in the borough, the DWP advised that one area of their

- community role was around supporting schools through their school employment advisors. It was noted that the DWP went into schools and raised awareness of apprenticeship schemes and other employment opportunities. It was noted that the schools advisor had been closely involved in SEND discussions in the borough and that this was something that the DWP were definitely involved with.
- e. The Committee enquired whether the employment support schemes mentioned, such as supporting graduates were orientated to benefit claimants, or whether they were open to all. In response, the DWP advised that these were mostly limited to benefit claimants, and these were the customers in the Job Centres and that the DWP needed to prioritise them. It was acknowledged that similar programmes had been in place in the past.
  - f. The Chair requested further details, and the data behind the information given in the last three slides of the presentation. In particular the Chair was keen to understand how many people had been helped through the co-funding and commissioning work. In response, the DWP advised that the figures varied depending on the programme and also according to the need and the staffing resources that were available to put toward the programme. The Chair clarified that this programme was co-funded by the Council and that in future she would like to see more information on some of the numbers involved in these schemes.
  - g. The Committee noted the project in place for supporting the Somali population and questioned whether there were any specific projects aimed at Ukrainian refugees. In response, the DWP advised that there was nothing specific in place at present, but that this would likely come forward as the events unfolded. It was not anticipated that there would be any delays in rolling out a targeted programme such as this, given past roll out of similar projects.
  - h. The Chair requested further information around the Domestic Violence initiative as well as the Chad Gordon campus initiative supporting people into the autism hub. **(Action: Phylis Fealy).**

## 68. UPDATE ON THE FAIRNESS COMMISSION

The Committee received a report which provided an update on the recommendations from the Fairness Commission. The report was introduced by Jean Taylor, Head of Policy and Claire McCarthy, AD for Strategy, Communications and Delivery was also present for this item. The following arose during the discussion of this item:

- a. The Committee enquired about Recommendation 15 on the additional licensing scheme, which had been introduced in 2019. The Committee questioned whether an estimate had been done of what proportion of the overall number of eligible houses in the Private rented sector had been licensed since the scheme began (C.1000 homes). The Committee also requested further information about what was being done to push landlords who had not joined the scheme to do so. Officers agreed to ask the service to provide a response. **(Action: Jean Taylor).**

- b. Officers advised that they would be unable to answer questions relating to the detail behind a number of the recommendations as these were service specific. Officers from the Strategy and Policy teams were responsible for collating the Fairness Commission recommendations but a lot of the work behind this was necessarily done by specific services across the Council.
- c. In noting the above response, the Chair sought a written update around Recommendation 3 and the number of people that would fall within the protected characteristic of socio-economic disposition. **(Action: Jean Taylor)**.
- d. The Committee commented that they would like to see more detail behind the work that had been done to date to achieve the recommendations of the Fairness Commission. The Committee suggested that in future updates they would like to see RAG ratings, targets and details about what officers were seeking to achieve. Officers advised that the Borough Plan was due to be refreshed in the wake of the upcoming elections and that this would include delivery plans as well as KPIs attached to the delivery plans. It was suggested that more specifics could be expected at this stage about how the recommendations were being implemented.
- e. The Committee commented that they would like to see more work done around Recommendation 7 and that after fairly wide ranging discussions on this topic as part of the evidence gathering process, they would have expected to see more progress made around some of the easier to implement outcomes around disability access, such as reasonable adjustments at meetings. In response, officers acknowledged these concerns and agreed to include feedback on specific recommendations, as appropriate, in future. By way of context, it was commented that not everything in the discussions could be captured in the recommendations but that officers would welcome specific feedback on particular areas that it was felt had been omitted or on specific points around reasonable adjustments.
- f. The Chair added that she would like to see better engagement from officers with groups who had been involved in the fairness commission as part of a co-production process and that these organisations, such as disability groups and Children and Young People's groups should be actively engaged going forwards, as part of the delivery of the Fairness Commission. **(Action: Officers to note)**.

## RESOLVED

That the update to the recommendations from the Fairness Commission was noted.

## 69. SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO CHILD POVERTY

The Committee received the report from a Scrutiny Review into Child Poverty from the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel. The report and covering report were included in the agenda pack at page 79 and it was introduced by Cllr Gunes, the Chair of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel. The following arose as part of the discussion of this agenda item:

- a. The Committee welcomed the report and its recommendations. The Committee were particularly concerned about rising levels of child poverty and the resultant increased reliance on foodbanks for many families. A co-opted member advocated that the Council needed to make more headway with feeding hungry children in the borough. In response the Chair of the Children's Panel acknowledged that tackling child poverty needed to be a key priority in the refreshed Borough Plan, and that the Council needed to fully consider how it would achieve this goal.
- b. The Committee noted particular concerns around the hidden costs of schooling and welcomed the recommendation about roll out free school meals across the borough. The Committee noted that the roll-out of free school meals was a manifesto commitment and that this needed to be a key priority for the administration.
- c. The Committee enquired about the extent to which the review had looked at digital access and the growth in the attainment gap in schools for children who had access to IT equipment at home and those that did not. In response, the Chair of the Children's Panel set out that she shared the concerns around this issue and advised that the report covered concerns around a divide in digital access to wider Council services, rather than schools. The Committee was advised that the report was focused on areas of direct poverty, such as food poverty but that the issue of a digital divide in schools was a concern that should be put forward and monitored by the Council.
- d. The Committee agreed to make a recommendation that tackling the digital divide in schools should be part of the refresh of the Borough Plan and that it should be a key area of concern for the Council in relation to child poverty moving forwards.

## **RESOLVED**

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

### **70. SCRUTINY REVIEW ON THE FUTURE OF SEVEN SISTERS MARKET (WARDS CORNER)**

The Committee received a report on a Scrutiny Review into the future of Seven Sisters Market, carried out by the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel. The report was introduced by Cllr White, Chair of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel as set out in the supplementary report pack at page 1. The following arose during the discussion of this item:

- a. The Committee raised concerns about an alleged £2m loan that was given by the Seven Sisters New Deal for Communities to Grainger in around 2002, which was supposed to be used to provide housing as part of the original development scheme with Grainger. A query was raised about what happened to that money and whether, in light of the Development Agreement being terminated, this money should be transferred to the NDC's successor the Bridge Renewal Trust. The Committee agreed to ask officers for a written response on this issue. **(Action: Scrutiny Officer).**

- b. The Committee welcomed the report and welcomed the fact that the report advocated the need to bring the different trader groups together in whatever format the future market site took.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Committee approved the report and its recommendations and approved it for submission to Cabinet for a response.

### **71. SCRUTINY REVIEW - ADULT SOCIAL CARE COMMISSIONING & CO-PRODUCTION**

The Committee received a report on a Scrutiny Review into Adult Social Care Commissioning & Co-production, carried out by the Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel. The report was introduced by Cllr Connor, Chair of the Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel as set out in the second supplementary report pack at page 1. The following arose during the discussion of this item:

- a. The Committee welcomed the report and its recommendations. In particular the Committee welcomed the attempt to define what was meant by co-production and also welcomed the recommendation around introducing a pilot project for an in-house care team.
- b. The Committee welcomed the attempt to clarify exactly what was meant by the term co-production and noted that the word was used extensively by the Council, often without any clarification as to what it meant. A co-optee commented that there were a number of good examples of co-production, such as the Autism Hub. However, it was commented that the setting up of Disability Action Haringey should not be seen as an example of co-production, as it was very much local authority led. Concerns were noted that further thought should be given as to how to reconcile differences in what the local authority wants compared to those of community groups, in relation to future co-production workstreams. The Chair agreed to add some additional comments into the report, in order to address these concerns. **(Action: Cllr Connor/Dominic O'Brien).**

## **RESOLVED**

That the Committee approved the report and its recommendations and approved it for submission to Cabinet for a response.

### **72. SCRUTINY REVIEW - SHELTERED HOUSING: ACCESS TO HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES**

The Committee received a report on a Scrutiny Review into Sheltered Housing, carried out by the Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel. The report was introduced by Cllr Connor, Chair of the Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel as set out in the third supplementary report pack at page 1. The following arose during the discussion of this item:

- a. The Committee welcomed the report and its recommendations.
- b. The Committee suggested that in relation to recommendation 9 of the report - relating to the fact that automatic updates should be produced whenever repair

- dates were scheduled or amended; that this should apply across Council owned properties not just sheltered housing.
- c. The Committee suggested that a further piece of work should be carried out in future in relation to sheltered housing or assisted living accommodation that was managed by other providers, such as housing associations. In response, the Committee agreed to make a recommendation that this be added to the future work programme of the Adults and Health Panel. **(Action: Cllr Connor/Dominic O'Brien).**

## **RESOLVED**

That the Committee approved the report and its recommendations and approved it for submission to Cabinet for a response.

### **73. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Committee noted its work programme for the year.

The Committee put forward the following suggested agenda items for the first meeting of the 2022/23 municipal year:

- An update on the recommendations from the Scrutiny Review into Fire Safety in High Rise blocks. This should also include a separate update on the progress of work being done to remove ACM cladding from housing blocks in the borough, including what support is offered to private leaseholders that face potentially huge bills for its removal.
- A further update on the fairness Commission including reference to what has been implemented to date.

In relation to the Gambling Review which was held on 8<sup>th</sup> March, the Committee agreed to have an informal meeting to pull together the recommendations from this review. Officers agreed to send round a meeting invite. **(Action: Dominic O'Brien).**

The Committee agreed to roll over the Scrutiny Review on Violence against Women and Girls into the 2022/23 municipal year. It was noted that it had not been possible to finish the review this year due to resource limitations, both within the Scrutiny Team as well as within Public Health.

## **RESOLVED**

- I. That the work programme for 2021-22 was noted.
- II. That the Scrutiny Review on Violence against Women and Girls be rolled over into the work plan for the 2022/23 municipal year.

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

None.

### **75. A.O.B.**

None.

**76. FUTURE MEETINGS**

None.

CHAIR:

Signed by Chair .....

Date .....