

MINUTES OF MEETING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY, 15TH OCTOBER, 2019, 19:00 – 21:45

PRESENT: Councillors Lucia das Neves (Chair), Pippa Connor (Vice-Chair), Erdal Dogal, Adam Jogee and Khaled Moyeed.

Co-optees/Non-Voting Members: Mark Chapman (Parent Governor representative), Luci Davin (Parent Governor representative) and Yvonne Denny (Co-opted Member - Church Representative (CofE))

1. **FILMING AT MEETINGS**

Noted.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

3. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no new items of urgent business.

4. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In relation to Item 12, Councillor Moyeed declared a conflict of interest having represented the traders in his professional capacity as a solicitor. The Councillor agreed to not be present for Items 5 and 12, when the Scrutiny Review of Wards Corner would be under discussion.

In relation to Item 9, Mark Chapman declared a conflict of interest as he was the Chair of Governors at Fortismere School.

5. **DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS**

(Councillor Moyeed left the room for the duration of the deputation and for the entirety of the discussion on Item 12.)

The Chair invited Stuart McNamara to introduce his deputation which addressed concerns about the voices of the market traders and residents not being properly considered, as well as wider concerns about how the Council communicated and engaged with residents on regeneration programmes. He was accompanied by Stefania Alvarez and Javie Huxley.

Stuart McNamara thanked the OSC for accepting the deputation and praised the three months of evidence gathering by the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee for the scrutiny report on Wards Corner. He highlighted the following:

- Praised the scrutiny report and its findings, noting the traders had requested the Council carry out a scrutiny review on the matter.
- A meeting had been held with the Leader of the Council in 2018 to request a scrutiny review, the halting of any major decisions at the market until the review had been complete, and continuous engagement between the traders and the Council with ongoing dialogue. All three had been declined at that time.
- Traders at a Shepherds Bush market had won a case on appeal at the high court against a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO).
- Critical of the Council's Regeneration department and drew comparisons between situation at Wards Corner to the failed Haringey Development Vehicle scheme.
- Recognised a number of councillors had been supportive of the traders at Wards Corner but criticised the executive for indecision on the matter.
- Critical of the Section 106 and the Seven Sisters Market Trader Steering Group.

The Chair thanked Stuart McNamara for the deputation and invited Committee Members to ask questions. The deputation party provided the following responses:

- Considered the scrutiny report to be thorough and impartial with the recommendations being fully supported by the evidence gathered.
- Highlighted that the report was critical of the Council's failure to monitor the Section 106.
- Queried why, given concerns had been raised surrounding the Seven Sisters Market Trader Steering Group in 2016, those remain unresolved.
- Noted the success of the Seven Sisters Market with its large number of traders and compared this to high streets, such as Wood Green, where there was a notable number of vacant properties.
- Praised the community asset of Wards Corner and claimed it provided what the local community needed.
- Regarding the Seven Sisters Market Trader Steering Group, it was noted this met 21 times with traders making repeated concerns about their distress at the situation but claimed the market operator used the Steering Group as a forum to denigrate the traders. It was claimed traders had put forward recommendations at the meetings, but these failed to progress, which resulted in the traders opting out of the Steering Group following a vote of no confidence in the process.
- Claimed the Council failed to monitor the Steering Group and failed its obligations to the traders under the Section 106 agreement.
- The deputation sought:
 - independent round table discussions chaired by an individual outside of the Council. Those discussions should ensure all parties had equal say and be facilitated by the local MP and/or GLA assembly member.
 - Proper consideration of the community plan should be given, and the building should be redeveloped, to be paid for by tax players;
 - Removal of the market operator and for them to be subject to a thorough independent review;

- Disbandment and breaking up of the Council's Regeneration Department;
- Proper consideration of the overall site, with affordable housing considered;
- Transparent running of the market with traders at its heart; and
- The Council to stop, what the deputation claimed, to be the persecution of the traders in the Latin Village.

The Chair thanked the party for their deputation and emphasised the Council's scrutiny committees would always seek to support the community, wherever possible.

The OSC next considered Item 12 – Scrutiny Review of Wards Corner.

6. MINUTES

(Councillor Moyeed returned following the conclusion of discussion at Item 12)

Following a query, Councillor Dogan informed the Committee that Councillor Brabazon would provide information on proposals for capital expenditure on schools, including clarification of the position regarding Fortismere School, to the Children and Young Person's Scrutiny Panel at a future meeting.

RESOLVED

To agree the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22nd July 2019.

7. MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL MEETINGS

RESOLVED

To note the minutes of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel held on 19th September 2019 and to approve any recommendations contained within.

8. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS - CABINET MEMBER FOR LOCAL INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Councillor Bull, Cabinet Member for Local Investment and Economic Growth, appeared before the Committee and outlined his areas of responsibility within his portfolio. The Councillor then responded to questions from the Committee and the following information was noted:

- a. The Cabinet Member informed that the unemployment rate in Haringey was 4.5%.
- b. Regarding monitoring the impact of the Liveable Crouch End scheme on the surrounding area, the Cabinet Member invited local businesses to provide any information that demonstrated the scheme was having an impact on their business. Officers noted this was an ongoing pilot scheme and would provide fuller findings of the economic impact on the area to the Committee when they became available.
- c. In response to a question regarding encouraging businesses to provide jobs to local residents, the Cabinet Member noted there were provisions within the

- Procurement Strategy that had weighting in favour of businesses that sought to provide local residents with jobs. The Cabinet Member noted the Community Wealth Building fully supported the encouragement of local residents being provided with jobs where the Council provided investment and development.
- d. Regarding assisting young people for the future by preparing them for the job market, the Cabinet Member noted Haringey Adults Learning Service should be able to assist in that area. He would also explore with the Cabinet Member for Children and Families what extra support and assistance could be provided to young people which ensured they were fully prepared for the job market.
 - e. Regarding the support that the Council would provide to businesses on struggling high streets, the Cabinet Member noted general improvement was required such as cleaning up the streets and removing graffiti to make them a more attractive business investment. The Cabinet Member reiterated support for encouraging the employment of local residents from new business areas regenerated. With regard to Wood Green High Street specifically, Officers added that there was a piece of work underway called the Wood Green Place Shaping Manual which sought a collaborative approach between councillors, the community, and departments of the Council to identify projects that would help improve Wood Green High Street.
 - f. Officers noted the Section 106 provided for major schemes to contribute to Haringey Works which provided free employment and skills support exclusively for Haringey residents. It also provided for funding to be made to the Haringey Construction Partnership which facilitated local employment in the construction sector.
 - g. Regarding the High Road West Strategy, the Cabinet Member recognised businesses concerns and informed the Committee there were plans to work with the Peacock Industrial Estate businesses to find alternative locations for them to continue their businesses in Haringey, or as close to the borough as possible.
 - h. The Cabinet Member noted that the two small business loan funds would be available for start-up companies as well as existing businesses in Haringey, if the businesses were able to provide a credible business plan. The two council-run small business loan funds were the Opportunity Investment Fund and the new Productive Valley Fund, as discussed at Cabinet on 8th October 2019. There would be support provided to small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) applying for the Loan Funds who did not have English as their first language. Officers added that small businesses and start ups received £110mil a year from the Council. For start-ups, the Council had the provision to directly award contracts valued at £10k and under. It was also now easier for contracts below £160k to be awarded to small businesses.
 - i. The Cabinet Member recognised there were concerns surrounding the apprenticeship levy and noted the Council was looking into best practice and lessons learnt from Hackney Council. The Cabinet Member noted the Council needed investment in its HR department to ensure the maximum was achieved from the Apprenticeship Levy.
 - j. Regarding town centre managers, Officers agreed that they provided great value to the community, building partnerships with businesses and locals. It was noted the town managers had previously been funded by the general fund and efforts would be made to look at how this could be alternatively provided.

- k. The Cabinet Member stated the Council's website needed to be more business friendly, such as having dedicated business pages for transactions to be carried out. Successful business stories should also be included.
- l. In response to what the Cabinet Member could do to help those not receiving the London Living Wage (LLW), he highlighted the Council could lead by example and become a London Living Wage Employer. Businesses that worked with the Council would be encouraged to pay the LLW to all employees.
- m. The Cabinet Member noted business rate relief was offered to SMEs and that the Council was willing to work with struggling businesses.
- n. The Cabinet Member invited members to forward via email any concerns they had surrounding street rangers in Wood Green. The Cabinet Member would raise those concerns with Officers.
- o. Officers would provide a written response on the salary of town centre managers (**Action: Peter O'Brien**)

9. QUARTER 1 (PERIOD 3) BUDGET MONITORING FOR 2019/20

Jon Warlow, Director of Finance, outlined the report as set out. The report covered the budget monitoring position at Quarter 1 (Period 3) of the 2019/20 financial year, including General Fund (GF) Revenue, Capital, Housing Revenue Account (HRA), and Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budgets. The report highlighted significant budget variances, including those arising as a result of the forecast non-achievement of Cabinet approved MTFS savings.

The Chair praised the £0.246mil underspend recorded in the Children's and Schools budget. The Chair remarked that:

- the mitigation plans for the overspend in the Adults and Public Health budget should be discussed in detail at the Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel;
- the underachieved income on green chargeable waste services should be reviewed by the Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel; and
- the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should look into the corporate overspends.

In response to questions from the Committee, the following information was noted:

- a. Officers were optimistic that the total overspend recorded would not increase and that any major difficulties usually presented themselves at the end of Quarter 1.
- b. Regarding the new approach to putting together the budget, Officers noted this was working better than previous strategies. The team were being proactive in utilising what was working in the current budget to facilitate strategies for future budgets.
- c. Regarding the care packages overspend, Officers noted there were high-level discussions between the finance team and the directorate to analyse the demography issues, expected projections and cost dynamics on care packages. Those insights would facilitate future planning for care packages from 2021.
- a. Officers noted the 81% ragged Amber (which indicated an intermediate level of confidence in delivery of agreed savings) recording on page 37 in paragraph 8.4, was likely to be lower but officers were cautious in Quarter 1.

- b. In response to whether the underspend in the Children's and Schools would stay within that portfolio, Officers stated this was not a given as there was a corporate overspend overall which needed to be addressed. The situation would be reviewed at the end of the year.
- c. Following any new developments in the borough, the Council would benefit through any increase in business rates. The Council would also benefit from the council tax collection from any new properties.
- d. Regarding the name change of Scheme Reference 115 on page 53, Officers noted this was not deliberate and would amend this for Quarter 2. The Chair requested this be further explored at the Children and Young Persons Scrutiny Panel.

The Chair invited Committee Members to forward any additional questions on the capital budget to the Director of Finance for written responses.

10. BOROUGH PLAN 2019-23 PRIORITY PERFORMANCE UPDATE QUARTER 1

Charlotte Pomery, Assistant Director for Commissioning, introduced this report as set out. The report provided an update on the new Borough Plan priorities, outcomes and indicators. It was highlighted that, as this was Quarter 1, there was a limited amount of information available.

The Chair suggested the comment on 'Priority 1 Housing' at page 65, that "*... the 1000 council homes programme is a fundamentally new area of work in which the council has limited experience*" be explored by the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel. The Chair also suggested the Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel explore the comment on 'Priority 3 Place (Outcome 12)', that "*...the ORC satisfaction survey...show that Haringey residents feel led safe both during the daytime and after dark than the national average*".

The Chair suggested the Overview and Scrutiny Committee explore at future meetings the negative recording for resident satisfaction in 'Priority 5 Your Council (Outcome 18)' regarding getting the right information and advice from the Council's customer feedback. It was considered helpful if any future report on the matter contained comparators with other Council's to see how Haringey compared.

Following discussion, it was noted:

- With regard to 'Priority 1 Housing (Outcome 2) Reduce Homelessness', the Committee sought an update on the Temporary Accommodation forecasting model and how a reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation has been achieved. On street homelessness, Officers noted additional funding had been provided from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to cover the winter period. Haringey was also working with Islington to street homelessness areas which jointly affected both boroughs.
- With regard to 'Priority 3 Place (Outcome 9) A healthier, active, greener place', the Committee sought greater detail on the survey produced by Veolia, including the number of responses, to provide context to the stated 80% satisfaction with park cleanliness.

- With regard to '*Priority 4 Economy Support growth in business and jobs*', the Committee sought the Council to be more proactive in its ambition to increase the number of workers in Haringey earning the LLW or above.
- With regard to '*Priority 5 Your Council (Outcome 19) Being an able, positive workforce*', the Committee requested the actual number of BAME staff members in the top 5% of Haringey earners.
- With regard to '*Priority 3 Place (Outcome 10) A cleaner, accessible and more attractive place*', the Committee sought to explore in greater detail the rate of people killed or seriously injured on Haringey roads.
- With regard to '*Priority 2 domestic abuse with injury*', it was noted this was displayed as green on the Council's website, despite it still being a high figure, as a result of the downward trajectory of the statistic. Officers accepted this could be presented more clearly.
- With regard to '*Priority 2 (Outcome 6) Pathway to success*', the Committee sought for greater clarification on what the Council was doing to address the large disparity in results achieved by white British children compared to black Caribbean children at GCSE level.

11. FRONT OFFICE, BACK OFFICE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods introduced this report as set out. The report provided the Committee with an update on the Front Office, Back Office (FOBO) Transformation Programme.

The Cabinet Member highlighted the following:

- The Cabinet Member had been visiting other councils to see if any lessons could be learned for Haringey's FOBO.
- There had been a reduction in the number of face to face customer service interactions, with an increase in online customer service interactions.
- September Cabinet approved a new parking system which would be live from April 2020.
- There had been no compulsory redundancies issued to any FOBO staff.

Andy Briggs, Assistant Director of Corporate and Customer Services, highlighted the additional points:

- The FOBO Transformation Programme had achieved savings of £2.9mil.
- The service had a productive working relationship with the trade unions in addressing staff changes as a result of the programme.
- The service had improved its communication with customer services.

In response to questions from the Committee, the following information was noted:

- a. For those residents not comfortable using electronic services, there were drop in sessions available to assist those residents in completing services which required online systems. The website had also been made more user friendly.
- b. Stage 2 would include a complete review of the operating model in Haringey's libraries, which would include the encouragement of a self-service model. There had been successful trial runs of the self-service systems for the elderly and those who did not speak English as their first language.

- c. The Council had been recording customer satisfaction levels at its face to face centres, which showed high levels (80%+) of customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction was being recorded on the Council's website, with a scoring system at the bottom of each webpage, and also at the end of Council calls, with a text following up the call asking for a rating of the level of customer service received.
- d. The move towards a greater online customer service presence was cautioned with potentially barring those unable or without the means to access online services. The Cabinet Member noted there would still be the provision to deal with customers fact to face. Furthermore, the emphasis on online customer service would free up the face to face customer service provisions to deal with those genuinely in need of face to face assistance.
- e. The Change in letters being sent out from Revenues and Benefits and Housing Rent letters had led to a reduction in calls to the Council. This freed up customers services and allowed resources to be deployed elsewhere.
- f. The FOBO programme had initially been allocated a budget of £8.4mil, however, the service was currently predicting a spend of £5.4mil, an underspend of £3mil. Officers largely attributed this saving as a result of the contractor the service chose to provide its customer platform.
- g. Regarding G-Cloud, Officers noted this had a much wider range of pre-vetted suppliers available on it.
- h. Regarding the number of landlords who had taken up the invites to the 'Landlord Portal', Officers confirmed they would provide that information **(Action: Andy Briggs)**
- i. Regarding the methodology used for the projection of customer contacts, it was noted the figures in part 2 on page 71 were computer generated. The projections were accurate up to August 2019 with best estimates being used there after. Officers noted there had been a great deal of benefit analysis to match the savings target. Officers would provide what those projections showed in percentage step down in traditional contact but there was no concern if the 'Online – My Account' or 'Online – Contact Us' numbers were to increase. Officers wanted to see a decrease in traditional forms of customer contact to enable resources used for those genuinely in need of direct customer assistance.
- j. All the savings the service had predicted were on track to be delivered, with Officers confident the £2.484mil savings would be met. The Cabinet Member noted efforts were being made to check whether systems used in other departments could be implemented in the service, which would save on costs.
- k. There was to be a complete review of the court officer roles.
- l. Officers stressed the Council's customer services should be providing the resources and support to help those in need, such as those unable to read or write. The Cabinet Member and Officers requested Committee Members provide, via the Chair, contact details for individuals who had experienced difficulty with any of the Council's customer services. The Chair requested any learning points that the Officers formulate from looking into such cases be shared with the Committee.

The Chair requested Officers bring an update report on the FOBO Transformation Programme - Stage 2 in March 2020. Officers could provide the Committee with budget and customer projections updates in January 2020.

12. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF WARDS CORNER

The Chair introduced this report on the Scrutiny Review on Wards Corner.

Stephen Lawrence-Orumwense, Assistant Head of Legal Services, outlined the officers recommendation of the report, that '*Overview and Scrutiny Committee defer approval of the draft Wards Corner scrutiny review findings and recommendation to its next meeting in November 2019 to allow for private third parties to comment on its accuracy, findings and recommendations and for these to be considered in finalising the review report*', with reasons for that recommendation at paragraph 4 of the report. It was noted neither the Chief Planner of the Council or third parties had the opportunity to provide comments on the scrutiny review report, with regards to accuracy.

The Chair noted there was exempt information at Item 16 in relation to additional legal advice on this report but did not consider that information needed to be discussed at the meeting. The Committee, having had sight of that exempt information prior to the meeting, agreed to proceed without discussing that information.

The Chair informed that a letter had been received by Grainger which highlighted their concerns over factual inaccuracies within the scrutiny report and requested the Committee defer approval of the report until its November meeting so that those inaccuracies could be resolved.

Following discussion, the Committee praised the scrutiny report and its recommendations. It therefore decided it would not defer approval of the report until its November meeting.

The Chair proposed approving the scrutiny report and its recommendations but granting the Chair and Vice-Chair, in consultation with the Committee Members, authority to make any necessary factual corrections to the report following third party feedback as appropriate. Legal advice would be sought if the Chair or Vice-Chair considered it necessary. The Committee agreed this approach.

Following clarification from the Assistant Head of Legal Services, the Committee agreed the below resolutions.

RESOLVED

The Committee agreed :

1. To accept the review reports findings and recommendations
2. That third parties be allowed to make representations relating to accuracy of the review report. And that authority be granted to the Chair and Vice-Chair in consultation with Committee members to consider the representations and make any additions to the report, if required
3. To seek legal advice, if required, to help inform the above process

4. To publish the final report and put it before the executive for a response at the December Cabinet meeting.

13. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

Rob Mack, Principal Scrutiny Support Officer, updated the Committee on the work programmes for the main Committee and Scrutiny Panels.

Following the completion of the Ward Corner review, the Committee would be able to focus on the Business Support review, which focussed on Procurement and Local Supply Chain. On Monday 23rd October, there would be an Evidence Gathering session in which Haringey Business Alliance and Barry Phelps, Head of Procurement, would provide evidence to the Committee. Efforts were being made to have a representative from the Federation of Small Businesses provide evidence at a future session.

14. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

18. FUTURE MEETINGS

25 November 2019
14 January 2020 (Priority X)
23 January 2020 (Budget Scrutiny)
12 March 2020

CHAIR:

Signed by Chair

Date