

# **MINUTES OF MEETING Corporate Committee HELD ON Thursday, 3rd December, 2020, 7.00 - 10.00 pm**

## **PRESENT:**

**Councillors: Isidoros Diakides (Chair), Zena Brabazon (Vice-Chair), Dawn Barnes, Dana Carlin, Vincent Carroll, Mahir Demir, Scott Emery, Liz Morris, Alessandra Rossetti, Anne Stennett and Joseph Ejiofor**

### **165. 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.

### **166. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS (IF ANY)**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Berryman and Cllr Dogan.

### **167. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Urgent Business

### **168. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

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

The Committee received two deputations in relation to agenda Item 10, the Renaming of Black Boy Lane.

The first deputation was given by Anna Taylor and Ian Jackson Reeves both residents of Black Boy Lane. Below is a summary of the key points made as part of the deputation:

- Concerns were raised that the discussion to date on the subject seemed to be focused around ideology and insufficient consideration had been given to the practical realities involved and the huge impact that the change of name would have on local residents.
- A number of legal and important documents would have to be changed including pensions, passports, immigration documents, bank accounts and mortgage statements, for example. The cost of this would be significant and the suggested compensation figure of £300 would not be enough for many people. The change of address would also invalidate some insurance policies which could have a huge financial impact on individuals.

- Particular concerns were put forward about the additional cost on non-UK citizens and those with dual nationality who would have to resubmit immigration and visa documents to the Home Office, many of which would require lawyers to be present and would, as a result, be very expensive. In addition to the cost involved, many people were naturally wary of doing anything that may result in questions being asked about their visa/immigration status.
- Concerns were also put forward with the inadequacy of consultation until now on this proposal in general terms, as well as a specific failure to engage with residents, who were elderly or otherwise hard to reach.
- Ms Taylor advocated that common sense had to be used and that the impact and cost to residents had not been properly understood.
- Mr Jackson-Reeves commented that the proposal smacked of tokenism and that the amount of money being spent on changing a name could be far better put to use by supporting those most in need.
- It was reiterated that the number of places that a person's address was officially registered had not seemingly been fully appreciated and that a cursory search online would show how important a person's address was. The cost to people of having to change all of these and the time and effort spent doing so was unrealistic for a lot of residents.

In response to the deputation, the Committee put forward a number of questions:

- a. In response to a question around the consultation process, the deputation party advised that the consultation was very limited and that this had primarily consisted of one letter sent out to residents in June/July, which a number of residents did not receive due to some people's addresses being missed off the list. The Committee was advised that the whole consultation process seemed to be very confused, particularly in terms of the order in which things had been done. Further concerns were outlined with this taking place during Covid-19 and an inability to meet with the Council in person to discuss the matter. Mr Jackson Reeves set out that his impression was that this was a done deal and that the consultation was effectively a box-ticking exercise. The deputation party also commented that the family of John La Rose's family were seemingly against the proposals and advocated that the money could be better spent elsewhere.
- b. The Committee noted the frustration felt by residents and sort assurance as to whether they would support it if the Council was able to put in place adequate support processes. In response, the deputation party commented that part of the problem was that each resident would have different needs and that non-UK residents could be hit with bills of thousands of Pounds. Further concerns were also raised about the impact on local businesses and the submitting of tax returns.
- c. The Committee commented that the report set out that only 35 residents of Black Boy Lane had responded to the consultation and questioned whether a lack of internet access was part of the problem.
- d. In relation to a question around whether it was felt that £300 was enough, residents advised that this was the first time that they had been made aware of the figure and that there was an anecdotal account of a friend who had gone through something similar and that the costs could amount to £2k-£3k.
- e. In relation to a question around whether the residents would support the proposal if the Council covered all of the costs, the deputation party set out that

it was also a question of the time and effort involved as most people worked long hours and did not have the time to undertake the various tasks involved.

The Committee also received a second deputation on behalf of Haringey Stand Up to Racism. The deputation was presented by Gary McFarlane and Vivek Lehal was also present as a member of the deputation party. Below is a summary of the key points made as part of the deputation:

- The deputation party welcomed the proposed name change and suggested that this issue went to the heart of what Britain is as a country and what Britain wants to be.
- The Black Lives Matter movement raised many questions about how to eradicate racism in society. One issue was the presentation of the history of racism in the UK and the use of monuments, statues, street names and the naming of public buildings. Many of these names were rooted in slavery and colonialism. This should be seen as being about righting historic wrongs.
- Haringey is a multi-ethnic and multicultural borough with a proud history of challenging racism.
- The deputation party acknowledged the concerns raised by the previous deputation about money but commented that if this was a problem then money should be sought from the government or perhaps the City of London, who profited greatly from slavery.
- It was commented that symbolism was important and that, in light of Black lives Matter, if this action was not taken now then when would it be.

In response to the deputation, the Committee put forward a number of questions:

- a. In response to a question, the deputation party advised that Stand Up to Racism had put also forward a number of other representations on street names and locations in the borough that they would also like to see changed, including Rhodes Avenue.
- b. In response to a question around why this mattered in contemporary Britain, it was suggested that this was about remembering the dead generations that went before and trying to right the wrongs of the country's past.
- c. In response to a question, the importance of positive change was emphasised and that as broad a conversation as possible was needed on this topic.

The Chair thanked both deputation parties for their contributions, after summarising the key messages and concerns raised to be taken into account by the committee and he stressed that this was an interim stage in the process, with no decisions having been taken at this stage, and that if any final decisions were to be eventually made, they would be taken at a future meeting of the committee following a full statutory consultation.

## **170. MINUTES**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

## **171. UPDATE ON THE RENAMING OF BLACK BOY LANE**

*\* Clerk's note – The Committee agreed to vary the order of the agenda in order to take the item of renaming of Black Boy Lane first, followed by the External Auditors update. The minutes reflect the order in which items were considered at the meeting, rather than the order on the published agenda.\**

The Committee received a report which provided an update on the renaming of Black Boy Lane and recommended that Corporate Committee agreed to proceed to a statutory consultation on the renaming to La Rose Lane, following a report to the Committee in July and the subsequent consultation with local residents on the two possible street names which were 'La Rose Lane' and 'Jocelyn Barrow Lane'. The report was introduced by Rob Krzyszowski, Interim Assistant Director for Planning, Building Standards and Sustainability as set out on pages 49-84. The Leader of the Council, Joe Ejiofor was also present for this item.

The Leader of the Council advised the Committee that the decision being asked of them was just to agree to take this issue to the next stage and agree that a formal consultation be launched on changing the name. It was suggested that many of the concerns raised by residents and by the deputation party would be addressed as part of this consultation and captured in a future report to Committee, which would formally seek authorisation for the name change. The Leader also advised the Committee that he had been in regular contact with the family of Mr La Rose and they were very supportive of this change. The Leader also noted that this was an important task, as language mattered.

The following was raised in discussion of this item:

- a. The Committee commented that more work needed to be done around engaging with residents and ensuring that they were supportive of this change. In response, officers advised that the Council had made a conscious decision to undertake a consultation at an early stage and to consult on two possible names. Under the legislation, the Council could have just picked a name and gone straight to the statutory consultation process. However, it was felt important to offer residents a choice and to seek to engage them at an early stage.
- b. The Committee raised concerns with the email circulated to all councillors received from the Padmore Institute, which was responsible for protecting Mr La Rose's legacy and who had voiced various concerns and expressed opposition to the proposed change of street name. The Committee sought assurance around why the family and the institute had not been consulted with at the start of this process. The Committee also requested clarification as to why other names had not been considered.
- c. The Committee noted with concern that the estimation of costs from residents compared to what was set out in the report seemed to vary widely. The Committee voiced their disappointment that the report did not include a full costing per person of what the change in street name would cost. In response, officers advised that Section 8 of the report set out that the Council had put forward an estimated cost of £300 per household. Further costings would be included in the subsequent report to the Committee, when the Committee would be asked to make a final decision.
- d. Members of the Committee reiterated the need for a proper consultation process to be undertaken with local residents and commented that, in the light

- of the problems caused by the pandemic crisis and the intervention of the Christmas/New Year recess, they would support delaying the process until this had been carried out.
- e. In response to a question, officers advised that letters were sent to everyone on the street and that a second follow-up letter was sent out to everyone, following concerns that some residents may have not received the first letter. The Council also extended the consultation window by two weeks to allow more responses to be received.
  - f. In response to a question around what percentage of responses in the affirmative would be required to secure a name change, officers advised that there was no set threshold and that, ultimately, it would be a decision for Corporate Committee to take.
  - g. The Committee enquired whether the Council could offer administrative support to residents to assist them in the process of getting various documents changed. The Committee were advised that there would be a dedicated resource in place to support residents on this.
  - h. The Committee enquired whether there was some scope to means test the cost of changing addresses to different households, rather than having a flat rate. A Committee Member reiterated the need for the full costs to be set out before a final decision could be taken. In response, officers advised that no final decision had been taken and that the statutory consultation would seek views around the costs involved and how the Council could best mitigate those costs.
  - i. The Leader set out that, contrary to what had been stated earlier in the meeting, both the family of Mr La Rose and the Padmore Institute were supportive of changing the name to La Rose Lane. The Leader advised that he had received six letters from the family, which were all supportive of the proposal and he had also spoken to three members of the Padmore Institute board, who were also supportive of it.
  - j. The Leader agreed that he would provide the Committee with copies of these letters as part of the final decision stage of the process. The Committee commented that they would have liked to see the letters included in the current agenda pack, in order to facilitate them taking a decision to go out to statutory consultation.
  - k. The Chair made reference to an earlier consultation event on the subject, where residents and local businesses raised issues about local traffic management and the physical condition of the street and commented that the council should avoid what has happened in some other examples where authorities wanted to honour certain individuals by naming streets, buildings or estates after them, but neglecting them and allowing them to be run down to the point where the initiative became almost an insult rather than an honour. He suggested that, if the proposal proceeds to the next phase, consideration of measures to address traffic management, street cleaning and physical maintenance problems should form part of the proposed consultation and planning.
  - l. The Chair summarised the key points coming out of the discussion, i.e. that there was general agreement that
    - The general principle of renaming streets in appropriate cases, for reasons like the ones described in the report, was broadly supported

- The specific person proposed (i.e. John LaRose) was an appropriate person to be honoured in this way, whether here or elsewhere
  - There were concerns about the apparent objections by Mr Larose's family and the Padmore Institute, which could be allayed by the assurances provided by the Leader and his public commitment to circulate the relevant correspondence
  - There were concerns about various shortcomings identified in the initial "voluntary" consultation round, that should be addressed in any further work on the proposal
  - There were specific concerns about the lack of a clear picture on the total costs, the appropriateness of relying only on a flat-rate voluntary payment (as opposed to a case-by-case means tested approach), and the potential need to provide adequate administrative support to affected individuals encountering complex bureaucratic issues
  - There were concerns that the pandemic crisis and the Festive season recess may affect the achievement of a full and effective consultation, and that the process should probably be delayed, to allow enough time to do it properly.
- m. The Committee agreed to proceed to statutory consultation about the name change, with a rider that if the proposals were to come back to the committee for final decision, further assurances must be provided on the following concerns raised by members:
- A full and proper consultation be undertaken and the views of all the residents sought.
  - That a full costing be provided on the cost of the name change to affected residents.
  - Consideration be given to slowing down the process to allow for consultation to take place and to bring the local community on board with the decision.
  - Consideration be given to the fact that starting the consultation process after the New Year would not unduly impact the delivery timescales and would afford officers more time to make the consultation process as comprehensive as possible.
  - Definitive assurances needed that renaming Black Boy Lane into LaRose Lane would be supported by his family and legacy trust
  - Assurances needed that the issues raised around the most appropriate method of voluntary payments and adequate provision of administrative support to affected residents have been fully addressed.

## **RESOLVED**

That Corporate Committee:

- I. Considered the feedback from the Consultation #1 (Informal) on possible street names and to approve 'La Rose Lane' as the preferred choice;
- II. Agreed that the Council undertake a Consultation #2 (Statutory) on the proposal to rename Black Boy Lane to 'La Rose Lane' by posting or giving

- 'notice of intention' in accordance with Part II Section 6 of the London Buildings Acts (Amendment) 1939; and
- III. Agreed that outcome of the Consultation #2 (Statutory) including any objections, and the proposed approach to voluntary payments and support, be reported back to the Committee for consideration and for a final decision on the proposal.

## **172. PROGRESS UPDATE ON THE AUDIT OF THE FINAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2019/20**

The Committee received a verbal update from Leigh Lloyd-Thomas from the external auditors, BDO on the Audit of the Final Statement of Accounts 2019/20. The Committee was advised that the onset of Covid had significantly impacted the ability of the sector to undertake all of the required audits within the given timescales and that only around half of local government audits had been signed off by September. BDO advised that Haringey's audit started around a month ago. It was anticipated that the field work would be completed by Christmas and that it would be ready to be signed off in January. The Committee noted that the Council had submitted the final accounts on time but that auditors had simply not had the staff to complete it on time.

BDO fed back that they had been able to sign off three ongoing objections to the statement of accounts. These objections related to: Spending on the initial phase of the Haringey Development Vehicle; contract monitoring of PFI contracts for schools; and an allegation of non-compliance with penalties for non-payment of Council Tax. In all three cases the auditors had written to objectors to explain that they had investigated and found nothing of concern. BDO also advised that they had also received one new objection to the current statement of accounts which related to governance structures around the Council housing programme. This specifically related to a case where a property was purchased, was subsequently deemed to be surplus to requirements and then put back on the market for significantly less than the purchase price. BDO advised that there may be a very good reason for this, but that further investigation was required before a determination could be made.

The following was raised in discussion of this item:

- a. In response to a question, Leigh Lloyd-Thomas from BDO advised that they had not found any issues to date that crossed the materiality threshold but cautioned that there was still work to be done and that he could not say for certain that there wouldn't be going forward.
- b. In response to a question, BDO reassured Members that the objections raised at present were not considered material and would not affect the auditor's ability to certify the accounts as true and fair.
- c. BDO advised that since the final accounts were compiled, Kingston Council had lost an appeal around repaying a surcharge for tenants' water rates and that any council who had undertaken a similar scheme with Thames Water was expected to repay tenants for the excess amounts charged. It was noted that Haringey's legal and finance officers were looking at the potential exposure for the Council. In response to a question, BDO advised that they could not determine whether this would exceed the materiality threshold until Haringey had determined the number of people who may be affected, and the amounts of money involved.

- d. The Committee raised concerns about the fact that the deadline for the signing off of the accounts would be missed and sought assurances around whether the imposition of any further lockdowns could impact the timeline further. In response, BDO advised that they had effectively never come out of lockdown as they were not able to undertake site visits or face to face meetings. So any further lockdowns would not unduly further impact their ability to complete the audit. It was commented that Covid and lockdowns had resulted in it taking up to 50% longer to complete an audit and there had been no corresponding increase in staffing levels to offset this.

## RESOLVED

- I. That the update on the Audit of the Final Statement of Accounts 2019/20 was noted.

## 173. UPDATE ON THE AUDIT OF THE HOUSING DELIVERY PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report which provided an update on recommendations from the Housing Delivery Programme audit, that had been implemented since the last update to Corporate Committee report on 30th July 2020. The report was introduced by Robbie Erbmman, AD for Housing and Anna Blandford, Senior Housing Project Manager, as set out in the agenda pack at pages 17-24. The following arose during the discussion of this item:

- a. In response to a request for reassurance around delivery architecture for the programme, officers advised that a full suite of delivery architecture was in place. Since the July meeting the cash flow system, Sequel, has been embedded into the team to support the Pro Val system in providing cash flow analysis all the way through a project and all staff had received training on it. Highlight reports had also been introduced and these fed into programme highlight reports that were reported up to programme highlight reports received by the Housing Delivery Board.
- b. In relation to a question around the communications plan and wider engagement, officers advised that prior to the communications, consultation and engagement procedure notes and guidance being in place, there was guidance that existed for officers around consultation and engagement, but with the onset of Covid these had been updated and revised.
- c. The Chair noted concerns around the consultation experiences of some people previously in relation to the Delivery Programme and requested that officers share further details of the three cases of statutory consultation that were undertaken during Covid. **(Action: Anna Blandford)**.
- d. The Committee commented that they would have liked for the project pro-formas and templates of how the programme was managing risk to be included in the report as an appendix, given the large amounts of money involved. Officers agreed to share copies of the blank project templates with the Committee. **(Action: Anna Blandford)**.
- e. The Chair requested assurance that every project within the programme was part of a database that recorded what the project was, the cost, who was responsible etcetera. The Chair also sought assurance that the database was closely monitored and regularly updated. In response, the AD advised that every project that had a gateway zero, which was every project agreed by Cabinet to go into the Housing Delivery Programme, was included in the



- database. Officers acknowledged that this was regularly reported upwards to the Programme Board and Cabinet and that any slippages would be reported on a monthly basis.
- f. The AD for Housing agreed that a follow-up mini audit be undertaken by Mazars in few months' time to look at the processes and systems in place within the Housing Delivery team. **(Action: Robbie Erbmenn & Minesh Jani).**

## RESOLVED

That Corporate Committee

- I. Noted the progress made to date on actions following the Corporate Committee report on 30th July 2020.
- II. Noted that all actions from the Council House Delivery Programme Audit from December 2019 have now been completed.

## 174. TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT Q2

The Committee received a report which provided an update on the Council's treasury management activities and performance in the three months to 30 September 2020, in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice. The Committee were advised that all treasury management activities carried out were within agreed parameters set by the Treasury Management Strategy and that all performance indicators had been met. The report was introduced by Oladapo Shonola, Head of Pensions & Treasury, as set out in the agenda pack at pages 29-52. The following was raised in discussion of this item:

- a. In response to a question around a large movement of £41.1m related to the Debt Management Office between March and June, officers advised that this reflected the fact that the authority had £77m invested with the DMO in March, but as the year progressed the Council spent down its balances so there was less money invested with the DMO.
- b. In response to a question around the rate of maturity increasing between March and June, officers advised that the authority had managed to secure more longer term borrowing, which was a positive as it usually meant a higher yield on the investment.
- c. In response to a question, officers advised that in relation to non-treasury investments, the Council provided a number of soft loans to partners. The most prominent example of this was Alexandra Palace. Officers acknowledged that any loan provided to the management company for Alexandra House would be reflected here in future reports.
- d. Officers agreed to circulate a list of organisations and partners who the Council provided loans to. **(Action: Dapo).**

## RESOLVED

The Corporate Committee:

- I. Noted the half year Treasury Management report detailing the activity

undertaken during the first half of the financial year to 30 September 2020 and the performance achieved, attached at Appendix 1 of the report;

- II. Noted the Treasury Management activity undertaken during the first quarter of 2020/21 (April to June 2020) and the performance achieved attached at Appendix 2 of the report;
- III. That Members noted that all treasury activities were undertaken in line with the approved Treasury Management Strategy.

## 175. QUARTER 2 AUDIT, RISK & FRAUD UPDATE

The Committee received a report which provided a combined update on the work undertaken by the in-house Audit and Fraud Resources team, as well as its outsourced partner Mazars, for the quarter ending 30 September 2020. The report was introduced by Minesh Jani, Head of Audit and Risk Management, as set out in the agenda pack at pages 85-92. The following was raised in discussion of this item:

- a. In response to a question, officers advised that the target for reclaiming properties was a notional target to measure the team's performance in reclaiming properties that had been secured fraudulently by people who had no entitlement to a council property. A national study had found that the percentage of fraudulently held council tenancies was around 5% and this measure was the means by which the Council could monitor such activity.
- b. In relation to a question around Right to Buy properties purchased with fraudulent funds, officers advised that checks were carried out as part of money laundering regulations to establish the source of funds used to purchase a property, to ensure that those funds were legitimate.
- c. The Committee enquired what audit processes were in place to oversee the millions of pounds of government money distributed locally in response to Covid. In response, officers acknowledged that this was a huge task, particularly as the government had stipulated that limited entitlement checks were undertaken, in order to speed up the distribution of grants to businesses. Instead, local authorities would be carrying out a robust process of post assurance checks, including cross-referencing national fraud databases and working with the National Fraud Initiative. The Council was submitting monthly returns to government on this.
- d. In relation to non-fraudulent Right to Buy applications that were refused, officers advised that the role of the Fraud Team was to ensure that things were done properly and that there was an additional level of assurance. The Fraud Team did not interfere in the application process but there were some situations that would illicit involvement and checks being undertaken by the service to ensure that the person was entitled to purchase the property.
- e. In relation to a question, officers advised that where there was sufficient evidence, cases would be referred to the Police and that the Council was also able to use its in-house Legal team to prosecute. There were currently two cases of tenancy fraud being progressed internally.
- f. The Head of Audit and Risk Management agreed to send the audit plan for the year to the Committee. **(Action: Minesh Jani).**

- g. The Committee requested a provisional assessment of the robustness of internal systems for monitoring/auditing Covid-related grants distributed by Haringey on behalf of the government. **(Action: Minesh Jani).**
- h. The Chair requested a follow-up report on the audit of the disposal of assets, following the points of clarification requested at the last meeting and to provide further assurance that the recommendations had been fully implemented. **(Action: Minesh Jani).**

## **RESOLVED**

That the Corporate Committee noted the activities of the team during quarter two 2020/21.

### **176. RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT**

Corporate Committee considered the Risk Management Policy and associated Risk Management Strategy as part of its Terms of Reference for monitoring the effectiveness of systems for the management of risk across the Council and compliance with them. The report was introduced by Minesh Jani, Head of Audit and Risk Management as set out in the agenda pack at pages 93-118. The following points were raised in discussion of the report:

- a. The Committee sought reassurance around the extent to which services were consulted on the Risk Register. In response, officers advised that the risk register was a corporate document and that the Head of Audit and Risk Management consulted with senior officers and finance leads across the organisation to ensure that the register reflected the key risks. The Head of Audit and Risk Management acknowledged that this was a live document and that it needed to be kept up-to-date in order for it to be relevant.
- b. The Committee sought clarification around the corporate Risk Register, in terms of who owned and produced it and how that fed into the wider Risk Management Policy. The Head of Audit and Risk Management agreed to provide a response in writing due to the fact that meeting was overrunning. **(Action: Minesh Jani).**

## **RESOLVED**

That Corporate Committee

- I. Reviewed and approved the Corporate Risk Management Policy and associated Risk Management Strategy.
- II. Noted the Covid risk register as at 31 October 2020.

### **177. ANTI-FRAUD & CORRUPTION STRATEGY**

The Committee received the Anti-Fraud & Corruption Strategy and covering report. The report was introduced by Minesh Jani, Head of Audit and Risk Management as set out in the agenda pack at pages 119-152.

The Committee agreed to address any questions on this item to the Head of Audit and Risk Management via email. **(Action: All).**

## **RESOLVED**

That the Corporate Committee reviewed and endorsed the Corporate Anti-fraud and Corruption Strategy together with the appended Fraud Response Plan, Whistle-blowing Policy, Sanctions Policy, Anti-money Laundering Policy and the Anti-bribery Policy.

### **178. ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE**

None.

### **179. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

4<sup>th</sup> February 2021  
18 March 2021

CHAIR: Councillor Isidoros Diakides

Signed by Chair .....

Date .....