

# **MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 12TH OCTOBER 2023, 7:00PM - 9.20 PM**

## **PRESENT:**

**Councillors:** Matt White (Chair), Pippa Connor (Vice Chair), Alexandra Worrell and Makbule Gunes

### **1. 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.

### **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Venassa Holt, Yvonne Denny and Lourdes Keever.

### **3. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business.

### **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no deputations, petitions, presentations, or questions.

### **6. MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the previous meeting on 24th July 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

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

#### **RESOLVED**

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

- Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel – 22nd June 2023
- Children & Young People’s Scrutiny Panel – 26th June 2023
- Climate, Community Safety & Culture Scrutiny Panel – 13 July 2023
- Housing, Planning & Development Scrutiny Panel – 27th June 2023

## **8. CORPORATE DELIVERY PLAN PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

The report was introduced by Caire McCarthy, Assistant Director Strategy, Comms & Collaboration as set out in the agenda pack at pages 51 – 94.

Haringey’s Corporate Delivery Plan sets out organisational delivery plans for the first two years of the administration (up until April 2024). The Delivery Plan included the outcomes the Council were working towards as an organisation; the activity planned to deliver these outcomes; how we would work to deliver it; and the key delivery dates. The plan was organised around the following themes:

1. Resident experience, participation, and collaboration
2. Responding to the climate emergency
3. Children and young people
4. Adults, health, and welfare
5. Homes for the future
6. Safer borough
7. Culturally Rich Borough
8. Place and economy

The following arose during the discussion of this agenda item:

- a) This was the first formal performance and progress update against the outcomes in the Corporate Delivery Plan. It reflected the position at the end of Quarter 1 2023 based on the new performance framework managed on Monday.com, a new web-based project and programme management tool.
- b) Key performance indicators were measured using Red Amber Green (RAG) status.
- c) The table (Appendix 3 of the report) showed the updates relevant to the 171 outcomes as specified in the Corporate Delivery Plan. There were restrictions on the amount of information which could be included on the table, this was to ensure that the table was not congested, and the information would be more manageable to read.
- d) The chair suggested that the table should also include information on whether the outcome had been achieved and methods used to measure the outcomes. The Committee was advised that the challenge was around presenting and publishing all the information obtained in a way that would be manageable without the risk of information overload.
- e) In response to a follow up question, the Committee was advised that having access to all the data would be difficult as the organisation was set up in a way where the data was stored in different systems. The team had been exploring different ways in which they could gather all the data in a single place and had

- started working with Monday.com to help achieve this. However, officers advised that if the Committee had a particular area of interest or concern, the team would be able to provide data requested around this.
- f) Regarding the Directors summaries on page 89 of the pack, this was a summary of positive highlights and areas of attention that was described in the corporate delivery plan.
  - g) There were concerns raised about lack of commentary evidencing the progress made for some outcomes and whether the commentary was reflecting its RAG rating. The Committee was advised that the next report would include detailed feedback, specific examples, and more statistics.
  - h) Regarding Theme 4 (Adult, Health & Welfare) it was noted that there was a reduction in levels of violence against women and girls. However, there was no commentary for this outcome on the table. The officer advised that more information regarding this was presented on the narrative section of the report on page 61.
  - i) Regarding Theme 2 (Responding to climate emergency), it was noted that there had been an increase in tree planting on Haringey Estates and the Committee queried about why this was RAG rated as red. The Officers advised that this had been RAG rated as red as there had not been an increase in tree planting on the estates. This had also been on an ad hoc basis, grant led and there was no budget allocated for this. However, the housing team had identified an opportunity in planting around 30,000 trees across the borough and this would be reflected in the Quarter 2 update report.
  - j) Cllr Gunes commented regarding Theme 3 (Children and Young People), that there were concerns around most outcomes being RAG rated amber, as this indicated that there had been no improvement in the service. The chair suggested for Cllr Gunes to send an email regarding this to the Scrutiny Officer and this would be taken forward to the relevant officers for a response. **(Action Cllr Gunes)**

## RESOLVED

That the Committee to note the report.

## 9. FINANCE UPDATE QUARTER 1

The Committee received the budget report which provided the position at Quarter 1 (Period 3) of the 2023/24 financial year including General Fund (GF) Revenue, Capital, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budgets. The report focused on significant budget variances including those arising from the forecast non-achievement of approved MTFS savings.

The report was introduced by Councillor Carlin, Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Investment as set out in the agenda pack at pages 95 – 150.

By way of introduction, the Panel was advised that there was an overspend in Adult Social Care and the forecast was set to be an overspend of around £20 million by the end of the year. However, the Cabinet Member stressed that there was no immediate risk of Haringey needing to issue a Section 114 Notice

This was an ongoing issue due to lack of government funding for Adult Social Care and the Council was now 13 years into austerity. This issue was not specific to Haringey and other local authorities were also facing similar budgetary pressures in demand-led service areas. The Cabinet Member suggested that to her knowledge, there could be up to 25 local authorities that were in discussions with the government about the possibility of needing to issue a Section 114 Notice.

The following arose during the discussion of this item:

- a) Haringey's finances were managed well with 76% of pre-existing savings expected to be met.
- b) The most significant area of forecast overspend was in Adults, Health and Communities which accounted for 91% of the total. £17.5m of this was Adults social care with a further £1m pressure on temporary accommodation.
- c) The Council had statutory spend in Adult Social Care, which was demand led with over 3500 care packages and high-cost packages for very disabled residents.
- d) During the budget forecast, officers had discussed themes of how the Council could work together across different directorates to deliver savings, both short and long term.
- e) In response to concerns raised about support from the National Health Services, the Committee was advised that the Council had received significantly less health and care funding, in comparison to neighbouring boroughs.
- f) The Committee was advised that a budget meeting was held last week with the Adult Social Care service. It was noted that the number of care packages had decreased, and this may be due to recovering from post COVID demand.
- g) The Committee noted that there was also an increase in the number of young adults which also created a budget pressure.
- h) Regarding the Council's reserve position of £15 million, this was lower than average for a Council of this size. The Council could only spend the reserves if there was an unexpected risk and not on day-to-day spending. However, the Council had used the reserve to balance budgets and was now working towards replenishing and increasing its reserve position.
- i) The Committee noted that when the budget for 2023-24 was set, the Chief Finance Officer had to identify whether there would be enough reserve by conducting various risk assessments. The risk assessments looked at the general fund position, contingency budgets as well as ways of mitigating risks in the budget that is set in 2023-24.

- j) In response to a follow up question, the Committee was advised that the Minimum Revenue Provision was an amount of money the council set aside in the General Fund budget to repay the borrowing costs from the capital budget. there were statutory arrangements that governed this.
- k) In terms of publishing the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts, the Committee was advised that last year's accounts were published on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023. However, the Council's accounts would still need to be audited. The issues around auditing were still ongoing at a national level and the government was working on this to get new auditors signed up to clear the backlog.
- l) In response to a question about capital projects, the Committee was advised that a review of the capital programme was underway, to assess projects that could potentially be postponed or even cancelled altogether. It was commented that, in general, capital projects where contracts had been already signed, would likely progress as scheduled.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Committee to note the report.

### **10. PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING IN HARINGEY**

Participatory budgeting involved local people in making decisions on the spending priorities for a defined public budget. The process can vary in format but, in general, focuses on engaging and empowering citizens in making decisions about local services. The report was introduced by Jean Taylor, Head of Policy, as set out in the agenda pack at pages 151 – 156.

By way of introduction, the Panel was advised that the Council had committed to developing a pilot participatory budgeting approach by December 2023.

A lot of work had been done in engaging with colleagues across London in boroughs which had introduced participatory budgeting in a number of different ways. A number of London local authorities had changed their approach, in light of issues that occurred with their initial approach, and Haringey officers were seeking to learn from their experiences and were conscious of making Haringey's approach meaningful for residents.

The following arose during the discussion of this item:

- a) The report was a pilot proposal on how the Council could start participatory budgeting in the borough.
- b) In terms of educating residents on budget setting and decisions, the Committee commented that it would be beneficial if residents were engaged in the process at an early stage, so they have a real understanding of the financial challenges the Council faces. Most residents will not understand that around 70% of the Council's budget was spent on Adult and Children's Social Care.

- c) The Committee was advised that although the Council had Wood Green Voices reaching out to engage with groups who may not usually engage with the Council was always a challenge. Officers were mindful of the need to reach out to different groups and communities across the borough.
- d) The Committee noted that one of the common features of participatory budgeting is that ideas were mobilised on a local area basis to fund issues which were of immediate local interest or concern, this was usually for a physical improvement as this would impact them on a day-to-day basis.
- e) The Committee noted that if the participatory budgeting were to be delivered in a meaningful way, it would require a genuine sharing of power. However, this would be difficult, in a budget context, as the Council would have statutory responsibilities which would need to be delivered and not all residents would understand the areas where funding was most needed.
- f) In terms of the model of how funding could be allocated in participatory budgeting, there had been discussions with other London local authorities to assess whether a community grant process or in-house delivery was more effective.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Committee to note the report.

### **11. SCRUTINY REVIEW: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT**

The report was introduced by Councillor Gunes, as set out in the agenda pack at pages 157 - 190.

The review looked at the role of the Council in both promoting and commissioning physical activity and sporting opportunities for children and young people in all parts of the borough and included:

- Progress against the specific priority for children and young people set in the Active Together Strategy 2019-2023.
- How children and young people's views was taken into account in planning and whether current opportunities that was available reflect these.
- Barriers to participation and how these might be addressed.
- How the needs of marginalised groups were provided for.
- The impact of Covid and the cost-of-living crisis.
- The role of the Council in increasing participation amongst children and young people and how it might use its influence most effectively.

## **RESOLVED**

The Committee agreed to consider and make recommendations to Cabinet on how the Council promotes and commissions physical activity and sporting opportunities for children and young people in all parts of the borough for incorporation within the development of the new physical activity and sport strategy for the borough.

## **12. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Committee considered its work programme as set out at pages 191 - 200 of the agenda pack.

This report provided an update on the work plan for 2022-24 for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

### **RESOLVED**

- I. That the current work plan for 2022-24 was noted
- II. That the Committee considered the agenda items and reports required for its meetings in 2023/24. The next meeting was scheduled to be held on 27th November 2023.
- III. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee formally delegated responsibility for scrutinising the Housing Strategy, to the Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel.

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

There were no items of urgent business.

## **14. FUTURE MEETINGS**

- 27 Nov 2023
- 9 Jan 2024
- 18 Jan 2024 (Budget)
- 11 March 2024

CHAIR: Councillor Matt White

Signed by Chair .....

Date .....