

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL
MONDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2013**

Councillors: Adje, Basu, Bull, Reid and Winskill (Chair)

Co-opted Members: Mr I Sygrave (Haringey Association of Neighbourhood Watches)

CSP85. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

CSP86. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

CSP87. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

CSP88. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

CSP89. MINUTES

The noted that a meeting was shortly to take place at the North Middlesex Cricket Club with representatives from the MCC to discuss proposals to develop cricket within the borough,

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of 7 November be approved.

CSP90. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS - CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES

Councillor Richard Watson, the Cabinet Member for Communities, updated the Panel on matters arising from his portfolio and answered questions as follows:

- In respect of libraries, he reported that an internal high level review had already taken place. External support was now being used to address in depth the issues that had arisen in the earlier review and look at how the service might develop over the next five years. The work was not about reducing libraries but developing them into hubs for the community and incorporating a range of services within them. It was more likely that there would be investment in services than budget reductions. The company that had been appointed was experienced in this area and their review would be short, lasting around three months. As part of the review, a number of key stakeholders would be interviewed. External practice, both national and international, would also be looked at.
- An Integrated Offender Management system was being developed by the Council and its partners and, in particular, the Probation Service. The unit was multi

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disciplinary in approach and worked with a defined cohort of people. The ambitious target of reducing re-offending by 20% in the next 4 years had been set.

- Specific changes were being made to the Probation Service and how it operated. There would be procurement of services at local level and payment would be based on results. He felt that the changes were likely to de-stabilise current local arrangements and create uncertainty. In addition it was possible that service providers would focus on the easier targets. The Panel noted that procurement of the new service was currently taking place. It was agreed that a briefing note be circulated to the Panel and that the issue be put on the agenda for a future meeting.
- In respect of area forums/committees, the Cabinet Member reported that a proposal on their development would be submitted to Chairs shortly. This was likely to represent a compromise on the way forward. He would be happy to share this with the Panel in due course.
- The leisure contract with Fusion was now more than a year old and they were shortly to commence refurbishment works at leisure centres as part of a significant programme of investment.

In answer to a question regarding the mobile library service, he reported that a decision to reduce funding for the service had previously been taken by the Council. The service was provided to schools, housebound people and nursing homes. Schools had been written to telling them that they would have to pay more should they wish to continue receiving the service. He wished to ensure that the service to housebound people would continue and would shortly be announcing a proposal relating to this. This would be an in-house solution. Some support would also be provided to sheltered housing developments but this was to be targeted against need.

A Panel Member stated that many young people within the borough appeared to have a negative attitude towards the Police. Hazel Simmonds, the Interim Head of Community Safety, reported that the Police had been working with Haringey Youth Council in order to help improve relationships. As part of this, they had attended meetings of the Youth Council and had worked with them to develop a communications strategy. They were also seeking to promote the Police cadets as well as continuing to work with the boxing club. They were aware that work was required in this area. The Panel suggested that this issue be considered at a future meeting of the Panel in the new Municipal Year.

It was noted that the Haringey Community Police Consultative Group had had a sub group for young people called Haringey Young People Empowered and it was suggested that this could be revived as part of the new structure for Safer Neighbourhood Boards. It was agreed that Mr Sygrave would pass details of the initiative on to relevant officers.

In reference to the Integrated Offender Management scheme, the Cabinet Member felt that this had the potential to deliver significant results. It was a key priority and enabled targets to be set. The Community Safety Review Manager reported that the scheme would look at all issues that might cause individuals to re-offend.

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In answer to a question, the Cabinet Member reported that the links between customer services and libraries were being developed as part of the service transformation programme led by Councillor Goldberg. There was potential to join some services with libraries. In addition, different ways for engaging with customers needed to be looked. There was a shift to performing more services on-line and libraries could play a part in this. All libraries already functioned as hubs for the community but there was more scope for development within the larger ones.

The core of the library service would remain as it was. The aim of the development process was to enhance what was currently in place. Amongst other things, libraries could be used to assist people in accessing information technology (IT) through using the hardware that was available or the provision of courses.

The Cabinet Member reported that a meeting was shortly to take place with Fusion regarding the leisure contract and pricing and agreed to update the Panel on progress. The Panel noted that it was not possible for Fusion to change the concessionary rates for admission to leisure facilities without the Council's prior agreement.

AGREED:

1. That a briefing note be circulated to the Panel on the changes taking place within the Probation Service and that the issue be put on the agenda for a future meeting; and
2. That the issue of relations between young people and the Police be considered as an agenda item for a future meeting of the Panel.

CSP91. SCRUTINY OF THE DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Panel considered proposed savings as follows:

(Appendix B, Pace and Sustainability)

1: The Panel noted that it was not possible to make savings within libraries without impacting on jobs. The proposal involved holding vacancies rather immediately filling them or using agency staff to cover work. The saving was equivalent to one post out of fifty. There was no proposal to delete posts though. The service would be able to choose where the vacancy would be in order to mitigate the effects on smaller libraries. It was also important to get a mix of staff in libraries so that each had some experienced people.

7: The Panel noted that the proposal involved combining both the children and youth libraries at Wood Green library. It would lead to more regular opening and still provide a large area.

11: The Panel noted that the amount currently within the budget for IT budgets was not being fully spent so it was considered that a reduced amount would still be adequate and enough to cover requirements.

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12. It was noted that the use of car allowance was minimal within libraries with only one person currently receiving it. The bulk of the reduction was likely to come from leisure and parks.

The Chair commented that, unlike other Council locations, Hornsey library still had staff parking. It was agreed that officers would look further at this issue.

CSP92. UPDATE ON LIBRARIES REVIEW

The Cabinet Member reported that the consultants undertaking the review had recently begun their work. The earlier review that had been undertaken on libraries had identified a number of gaps and these would be addressed by the work that was being done. All libraries would be remaining. The consultants would be reporting in January and a report could be made to the Panel in due course. The work would fit in with the customer services transformation. A range of stakeholders would be interviewed for their views as part of the process. There would also be focus groups. Non users would be involved in the process as well. However, it was a time limited process so there were some restrictions on the number of people who could be involved.

The Panel noted that the footfall figures for each library had been reported to a previous meeting and had shown a reduction in attendance. This had been mirrored nationally and was due to a range of reasons.

Members of library support groups who were present at the meeting stated that they were very pleased that the work was being done although this was the third review that had taken place in the last six years. They felt that it was important that the needs of children and young people were also considered as part of the work. However, they were of the view that the timescale was ambitious and asked for confirmation of how it would be achieved.

The Panel noted that some libraries, including Hornsey and Marcus Garvey, did not have friends groups. The Cabinet Member agreed to discuss further this issue with the head of service,

AGREED:

That confirmation of the timescale for the review be provided to relevant library friends groups and the Panel by the Deputy Director for Place and Sustainability

CSP93. WORK PLAN

AGREED:

That the work plan be noted.

CSP94. ISSUES FROM AREA COMMITTEE CHAIRS

None.

Cllr David Winskill

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Chair