

Appendix A – Draft Minutes of Budget scrutiny meetings December 2014.

DRAFT MINUTES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SCRUTINY PANEL 15 DECEMBER 2014

Councillors M Blake, Hearn (Chair), Ibrahim and Morris

Also present: Councillors Adje, Arthur, Barbara Blake, Bull, Connor and Ejiofor

CYPS17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Akwasi-Ayisi, Berryman and Hare and Mr Taye.

CYPS18. URGENT BUSINESS

The papers in relation to agenda item 6 (Scrutiny of the Medium Term Financial Strategy) were admitted as a late item of urgent business as they needed to include information regarding proposals for consideration by the Cabinet which were not available for release until after the agenda for the Panel had been circulated.

CYPS19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

CYPS20. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

CYPS21. SCRUTINY OF THE DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Panel considered the budget proposals contained within the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) relating to the terms of reference for the Panel as follows:

Corporate Priority 1

Reference 1; Early Years:

Panel Members expressed concern at the possibility that current in-house provision might be subject to externalisation. They were also of the view that more detail needed to be provided as to how the savings would be achieved.

The Assistant Director for Commissioning reported that no decision or view had been taken regarding externalisation and it was not specifically being looked at. Provision was currently undertaken by the in-house service and external providers. A review was being undertaken on future provision and this would include engagement and consultation with a range of stakeholders and the local community. The Interim Director of Children’s Services stated that there would be challenge in making specific proposals regarding where the savings would be achieved. In such

circumstances, there might be particular difficulties in maintaining the current number of Children's Centres.

AGREED:

1. That the reassurances received regarding the potential for externalisation of in-house provision be noted; and
2. That the Panel recommend that no final decisions be taken on this proposal until after the review of provision and full consultation has been completed.

Reference 2; Services for Young People including Young Offenders

Panel Members were of the view that it was important that the risks associated with the proposals were evaluated fully. In particular, it needed to be ensured that they would not lead to additional cost pressures on other services in the longer term. They also requested clarity on the specific parts of the services that the savings were intended to come from as well as details of which service areas were statutory. The Panel were of the view that youth services could positively support young people in making a good start in life, becoming good citizens and fulfilling their aspirations. Concern was expressed that the removal of part of the non YOS budget would mean that services would necessarily be focussed around the prevention of offending.

AGREED:

1. That a risk assessment of the proposals to be undertaken to ensure mitigation of any potential unintended impact on spend elsewhere in the system;
2. That reassurance on the balance between targeted and universal provision be reviewed;
3. That further input be obtained from young people on the proposals; and
4. That clarity be provided on the breakdown of where the savings are intended to be made between the YOS and Youth Services, including detail on the specific functions which are statutory, and that concern be expressed at the proposal to reduce the budget by £1.7 million in the first year of the MTFS in the absence of this information.

Reference 3; Public Health – 5-19

Members of the Panel expressed concern at the potential use of pupil premium funding by schools to fund public health initiatives. In particular, the borough had serious health inequalities that needed to be addressed. It was noted that the intention was to work with Headteachers and suggest to them that funding might be utilised to address public health related issues that might impact positively on the academic performance of pupils. It would not be possible to insist on the areas where they spent the funding though. The use of the pupil premium was monitored by OFSTED.

The Cabinet Member for Resources and Culture commented that the Council had been setting three year budgets for the last decade and it facilitated better long term planning. He was nevertheless happy to report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the approach followed by other London boroughs. There would be opportunities to review progress with the implementation of decisions that had been taken and the role of Overview and Scrutiny within this would be vital. The strategy was long term but also flexible.

AGREED:

1. That the concerns of Panel Members at the potential use of the pupil premium to address public health issues be noted; and
2. That the Assistant Director for Finance be requested to circulate information to the Committee regarding the approach followed by other London boroughs in their budget planning processes and specifically the length of time covered within it.

Reference 4; Impact of Early Help on Demand

Panel Members expressed concern at the risk of the savings outlined not being achieved. Careful monitoring of progress would be required in order to provide reassurance that children remained safe. It was noted that the successful implementation of the Early Help offer was anticipated to lead to a lower number of children entering the social care system and would therefore reduce costs.

AGREED:

That concern be expressed regarding the achievability of the savings included in the proposals.

Reference 5; New Delivery Model for Social Care

The Panel noted that there were currently 154 established social worker posts within the Children and Young People's Service. There were currently 32 vacancies and 42 agency staff. There was particular challenge in recruiting and retaining permanent staff. The savings would be achieved by reducing agency staff and vacant posts.

AGREED:

That concern be expressed regarding the potential risk of the savings arising from this proposal not being achieved.

Reference 6; LAC and Sufficiency

The Panel noted that the savings arising from this proposal would come from reducing the use of external fostering provision and residential placements

AGREED:

That the report be noted.

Reference 7; Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Panel Members expressed concern that the proposal might impact on the level of respite that families received. The Assistant Director of Commissioning reported that the proposals were not about cutting services but using facilities to their best effect. It was noted that the savings would arise from a number of different areas. It was possible that Haslemere Respite Centre would be affected as a number of options would be considered.

AGREED:

1. That the proposal be noted with concern; and
2. That additional information on the proposal be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee including a breakdown of where the savings are planned to be achieved.

Reference 8; Enablers

The Panel noted that it was intended that this saving would be achieved through a review of systems and processes and greater rigour in their implementation and interpretation.

AGREED:

That the proposal be noted.

Reference 9; Services to Schools

The Panel noted that the intention was to safeguard services by making them more attractive to schools. Panel Members emphasised the importance of school improvement services in delivering positive outcomes for young people.

AGREED:

That the proposal be noted

Reference 10; Pendarren

The Panel noted that this saving proposal concerned the delivery of services and was not based on the sale of the site. A range of options would be considered and this would include in-house provision. The facility was well liked by schools and the intention was to safeguard its future. However, more commercial ways of operating needed to be considered.

The Interim Director of Children's Services reported that a report outlining the range of options would be available shortly.

AGREED:

That the report outlining potential future options for the development of Pendarren be submitted to the next meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel.

Cllr Kirsten Hearn
Chair

Draft Minutes of the Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel Thursday 11th December 2014

Present: Cllr Connor (Chair), Cllr Adamou Cllr Beacham, Cllr Bull, Cllr Mann, Cllr Patterson, Cllr Stennett

Also attending: Cllr Hearn

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Helen Kania

2. Urgent Business

None received.

3. Declarations of interest

None received.

4. Deputations

None received.

5. Scrutiny of the Draft medium Term Financial Plan

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing attended the meeting to discuss the budget proposals with the panel. The Cabinet member made the following points:

- Budget proposals are drawn up in the context of a reducing Revenue Support Grant and increased demand for services;
- In addition, the implementation of the Care Act in April 2015 will place new duties and responsibilities on the Council;
- Overall, the budget reflects the priorities and commitments of the manifesto published in may 2014.

The panel raised a number of general issues ahead of the budget scrutiny process these are summarised below:

1) Cost of implementing the Care Act: The panel noted that the costs of implementing new duties were difficult to quantify given a) the volume of assessments required and b) the number of self-funders (who were not in contact with the authority). It is estimated that a £240k grant will be provided to support additional costs incurred through assessments.

2) Current Overspend in Adults

The Panel noted that there was a projected over-spend of £3.6m in Adults in current financial year. Within panel discussions it was noted that:

- There was a management action plan in place to reduce the budget deficit;
- There were signs of improvement where a £600,000 reduction in deficit forecast was recorded from period 6 to period 7;
- There were a number of cost pressures which had precipitated this overspend:
 - People living longer healthier lives
 - Demographic pressures
 - More young people transitioning from child to adult care;

- There was less scope and capacity to manage overspends as the service was already leaner from previous reconfigurations;
- The overspend relates to this financial year and is independent of proposals within the MTF5.

The panel scrutinised savings and investment proposals as set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan that fell within its remit. These were:

Priority 2 Empower all adults to live healthy, long and fulfilling lives items 11-24.

Priority 2 – Item 11: New pathways for older people (£4,020,000 saving)

In panel discussions it was noted that:

- The Neighbourhood Connect pilot project was undertaken with older people and aimed to provide supported discharge from hospital and contribute to reduced social isolation;
- There was positive feedback from those who participated in the pilot and it was planned to use the Neighbourhood Connect model to support other care groups;
- If plans proceeded to replace the Haven, Neighbourhood Connect would work with existing clients to befriend them and assist in transition to the community settings;
- There were concerns that if the Haven were to close, the therapeutic benefit of those attending the centre (personal and group interaction with a stable cohort of service users) would be lost;
- There were strong reservations about replacing a day care service (The Haven) which works well and is valued by the community with a service (Neighbourhood Connects) for which there was insufficient information (e.g. how many carers needed to support this) and which has not been fully tested;
- Similarly, there were inherent risks (e.g. continuity of care, availability of volunteers) in using a volunteer centred model (Neighbourhood Connects) to provide for care in the community;
- Funding for the Haven is approximately £320k and there are approximately 55 service users which equates to £120-170 per service user per week. Other providers of day care on average cost £80 per week. The cost of residential care for elderly people is approximately £650 per week;
- If the Council wished to develop the preventative agenda and to reduce future costs, there may be a real case for not only maintaining day care provision at the Haven but developing this service further, to prevent more costly admissions to residential day care in the future (where weekly costs are threefold that of day care);
- Osborne Grove is currently underutilised (it's being partly used as a furniture store) but has significant resource potential for other care services or to generate other income streams for the council;
- If the service at Osborne House was re-provided, care packages would be commissioned for existing service users in alternative intermediate care;
- The Haynes and the Grange are both currently used to provide care for people with dementia, and it is proposed that these services be reassessed. The latter centre is a listed building and there may be little capacity or scope to extend the service offer from this site.
- Members of the panel had visited the Haynes centre and found this to be a high quality service catering for a relatively small number of service users (18).

Whilst there is scope for increased capacity at this service, there is an existing waiting list and staff were wary that this may lead to a diminution in the quality of services provided.

Agreed:

- (i) that the proposal for the closure of the Haven and the re-provision of the Haynes and the Grange Service be reconsidered pending a detailed review by Adults Services, including;
 - further financial data;
 - alternative options for the Haven Day Centre;
 - the idea of expanding day care if it can be shown to reduce the need for more expensive residential care in the future (e.g. as step down care);
 - further evidence from the evaluation of the Neighbourhood Connects project previously piloted in Haringey;
 - further evidence as to how Neighbourhood Connects service model would be appropriate for those currently using day care;
 - evidence as to the viability of the Neighbourhood Connects as a *volunteer centred* model to support day care services for older people;
 - how those with *high level* dementia care needs will be provided for in the community;
- (ii) that the proposal for the re-provision of the Haynes and the Grange Service be reconsidered pending a detailed review by Adults Services, including;
 - further clarification on what is being proposed, particularly in relation to the future support provided to:
 - those clients with *high level* dementia care needs
 - support to carers
 - Further details of the consultation process, who will be consulted and when;
- (iii) that details of the above-mentioned review be referred to Overview & Scrutiny in early January;
- (iv) in respect of Osborne Grove, it is recommended that further negotiations are undertaken with the CCG to increase NHS contributions to support the maintenance and further development of this intermediate care centre.

Priority 2 – Item 12: New pathways for people with learning disability - Accommodation (£5,171,000 saving)

In panel discussions it was noted that:

- Proposals would involve the closure of Linden, though service users will be rehomed in supported community housing;
- A number of community houses had been identified and were in the process of being developed as supported homes in the community for people with learning disabilities (e.g. Dukes Avenue);
- Adults and Housing Services were working together to identify other housing sites (voids etc) which potentially could be used for supported accommodation;
- There was a concern as to whether new services would be in place to replace decommissioned services, given that a majority of the savings proposals were in year 1.

Agreed:

- (i) that the proposals be noted.

Priority 2 – Item 13: New pathways for people with learning disability – Day Opportunities (£2,280,000 saving)

In panel discussions it was noted that:

- Since the introduction of personal budgets, where service users have more control over the day care opportunities they need, no service users have been placed within in-house day care services;
- Three of the four day care centres will close, with day care services re-provided through a social investment/voluntary sector;
- Ermine Road Day Care centre will be retained within these proposals as this is for services users with particularly challenging behaviour and for whom it may be difficult to accommodate within mainstream day care opportunities.

Agreed:

(i) That concern be expressed at:

- how these closures will impact on the current users of these day care services;
- how these closures will impact on carers, and if there are any other alternative sources of community based support?;
- the potential for long-term additional costs to the Council should customers be less able to access community based activities;
- that further information be submitted to the Panel confirming that these issues is being addressed.

Priority 2 – Item 14 New pathways for people with disabilities (£526,000 saving)

Item 15 New pathways for people with mental health needs (£1,670,000 saving)

In panel discussions it was noted that:

- A new range of services will be provided which rely less on traditional institutions, indeed, placement in residential care will be a last resort;
- The new model of service provision focuses on the re-ablement of service users and which seeks to promote social inclusion and independent living within the community;
- The prospect of service change was undoubtedly causing anxiety amongst service users, and that the council must ensure to be open and transparent about prospective change;
- The Independent Living Fund will be transferred to the Council, and members sought clarification as to how these funds will be used locally;
- Although there would be some similarity in the new pathways of care that might be developed for those with a physical disability or with mental health needs, the cyclical pattern of service use typified by mental health service users would be acknowledged in such plans;
- Adults service will work closely with housing services to identify supported living facilities, 10 units had already been identified by housing (one bedroom/studios).

Agreed:

- (i) Further clarification of how Independent Living Funds will be used once these have been received;

- (i) That concern be expressed at the potential detrimental effects on recruitment of staff to care for clients should levels of pay be offered by providers that fall below London Living Wage levels and that further information be provided regarding pay rates offered.
- (ii) That concern be expressed at the achievability of savings to be generated by the development of the Shared Lives services as a social enterprise.

Priority 2 – Item 16 New model of Social Work and Care Management (£970,000 saving)

In panel discussions it was noted that:

- As a result of the Better Care Fund and Care Act, it is anticipated that management and administration savings will be achieved through closer integration of health and social care;
- The introduction of new models of social work and care management which include greater use of supported self assessment and on-line self assessment and the use of voluntary sector brokerage and support planning will also achieve savings;
- It was noted that the Council will have new responsibilities under the Care Act particularly in relation to self funders (those who fund residential, day care or home care from their own funds) who may require assessments and onward referral to local services. The number of self funders is unknown and will only become apparent in 2017/18;
- A report on the councils preparation for the Care Act will go to Cabinet in March 2015.

Agreed:

- (i) That concern be expressed at the achievability of the savings proposed and that further evidence be provided that the proposed levels are realistic.

Priority 2 – Item 17 Care Purchasing Residential Care (£4,000,000 saving)

In panel discussions it was noted that:

- Benchmarking of the cost of care purchasing packages with other authorities places Haringey in the median range, however, there is a potential to further reduce these costs through:
 - renegotiation of existing contracts;
 - greater use of block contracts;
 - commissioning alliances with other authorities (in particular with Barnet, Enfield and Hackney);
- There were over 270 individual spot contracts currently in operation and there would be efforts to consolidate these (block contracts) to achieve savings;
- The panel had a number of service quality and service monitoring issues in relation to the greater use of block contracts, for example the provision of the London Living Wage within contracts. Whilst there were safeguards in place for monitoring service quality, it was estimated that incorporating the London Living Wage within contracts would increase residential care costs by £8m. Regional alliances in commissioning may also support stronger quality assurance processes.

Agreed:

- (i) that further feedback on the approach to Care Purchasing would be provided to a future meeting of Overview & Scrutiny;
- (ii) that further information be submitted to the Panel to confirm that quality, effectiveness and good user experience can be maintained at reduced levels of cost for contracts;
- (iii) that the proposals be noted.

Priority 2 – Item 18 Care Purchasing Packages (£5,700,000 saving)

In panel discussions it was noted that:

- This will involve a reassessment of existing packages in the context of promoting a re-ablement approach to enable people to live independently in their own homes in the community;
- In the context of the above, service users will be encouraged make more use of personal, family, community and voluntary sector resources;
- This proposal will represent a significant cultural shift, whereby assessments will be undertaken in the context of identifying existing resources available to meet needs rather than an assessment for services.

Agreed:

(i) that concern be expressed regarding the achievability of the necessary increases in the use of the personal, community, family and voluntary sector resources required by the proposal and that it therefore be reconsidered.

Priority 2 – Item 19 Voluntary Sector Savings (£1,400,000 saving)

In panel discussions it was noted that:

- It is estimated that approximately £18m of voluntary sector support services are purchased by the Council (e.g. CAB, HAVCO, Ageconcern). There is also a £3m budget to provide grants to local voluntary sector services. The proposal is to reduce this latter budget to £1.6m, achieving a saving of £1.4m over 3 years;
- All current contracts with the voluntary sector are due to end in 2015/16 which will present an opportunity to reassess and evaluate services provided;
- It will be important to re-commission services in the context of obtaining appropriate local care infrastructure ahead of the Care Act and generally support strategic capacity of the voluntary sector locally;
- There was a concern that a reduction of the total grant paid to voluntary sector services may lead to a loss of capacity in this sector locally, which may contradict other Adult Services objectives e.g. use of voluntary sector to provide for day care opportunities, re-provision through social investment etc;
- The Council commission HAVCO and Healthwatch

Agreed:

(i) That confirmation be provided of how fairness and transparency will be addressed in the re-tendering of services.

Priority 2 – Item 20 Healthy Life Expectancy (£977,000 saving)

In panel discussions it was noted that:

- There are 4 elements to a locally commissioned public health programme (40+ health checks, exercise referral, stop smoking and health champions) and these will be integrated in to one commissioned service;

- There was concern that any loss of preventative service provision is counter intuitive, especially as the Council seeks to obtain further savings in the years ahead;
- That all services appeared to be working in delivering health benefits, but in the context of financial constraint, decisions must be reached on those services that deliver greater health benefit locally;
- Re-commissioning is at an early stage and the service will assess evidence of effectiveness to inform commissioning intentions, hence savings will be achieved in year 2;

Agreed:

- (i) There were concerns as this proposal, as indicated outcomes would be lower uptake of preventative services (e.g. smoking) which may lead to increased risk of health problems at a later date and more costly health care interventions by health or social care services;
- (ii) that the proposals be noted.

Priority 2 – Item 21 Substance misuse (drugs and alcohol) (£591,000 saving)

In panel discussions it was noted that:

- The Councils commissions support for drug and alcohol users from a wide range of specialist support services and re-commissioning and partnership working and opportunities will present opportunities to achieve and savings;
- There are a number of specialist contracts with providers which may be provided through mainstream providers which will also achieve savings (e.g. CAB);
- There was a concern that the planned proposals would impact negatively on those requiring support, which may have future cost implications for the panel;
- Although savings will be achieved in all service areas (prevention, treatment and recovery) the recovery/reintegration model would remain central to the service;
- There were concerns that the service reductions outlined would represent a ‘cost shunt’ to local partners, in particular the mental health trust;

Agreed:

- (i) that the number of service users covered by the drugs and alcohol team be provided;
- (ii) that the proposals be noted.

Priority 2 – Item 22 Sexual Health (£1,684,000 saving)

In panel discussions it was noted that:

- A range of services are currently commissioned to provide sexual health services including NHS community services, GPs, pharmacists and the voluntary sector;
- It is expected that savings will be achieved through directing more people to local sexual health services (rather than other GUMs);
- There was a concern regarding the use of home testing kits for sexual health and whether there is appropriate support for their use;
- By law, residents can access any GUM service, for which local services are cross-charged. Through working with other boroughs and the increased commissioning power that this may bring, this may help to reduce the sexual health service tariffs (payable to other boroughs when local residents use their services);

- There was a concern as to why Commissioning of Sexual Health Service was being considered under member signing on 16th December when it was included within MTFs proposals as this would seem to pre-empt Cabinet and scrutiny decisions. It was noted that the Cabinet member signing is a service tender, the process which commenced in June 2014 and which must be completed by April 2015.

Agreed:

- (i) that further information is required in respect of the efficacy and support is available for the introduction of home testing kits for sexual health;
- (ii) that the proposals be noted.

Priority 2 – Item 23 Other public health services (£498,000 saving)

In panel discussions it was noted that:

- A number of services will be reduced as a result of this saving which include: health intelligence (e.g. needs assessments), health protection (e.g. screening), prescribing (e.g. smoking) and dental health;
- Locally funded health protection services compliment national provision (e.g. breast screening), thus there may be some loss in specialist local input (e.g. targeting local groups) mainstream service provision would remain unaffected;
- It was not clear what population risks there were should proposals lead to reduction in immunisation rates, particularly in relation to communicable diseases e.g. TB;
- There were concerns as to how hard to reach groups would be affected by service restrictions.

Agreed:

- (i) that further information and reassurance is provided in relation to planned service reductions and possible implications for health protection, in particular the impact that such service reduction may have on client groups (e.g. screening);
- (ii) that the proposals be noted.

Priority 2 – Item 24 Public Health Workforce (£686,000 saving)

In panel discussions it was noted that:

- There are approximately 38 staff in the Public Health Department and this proposal will see this total reduced by 10;
- Plans for reconfiguring the service are at an early stage and it is not clear what type of posts will be lost, however, there are a number of skill sets in public health (e.g. commissioning, intelligence) which may present rationalisation opportunities with other councils services

Agreed:

- (i) that the proposals be noted.

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY
SCRUTINY PANEL
WEDNESDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2014**

Councillors B Blake (Chair), Gunes, Hare, Newton and Wright

CSP21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Gallagher and Jogee and Mr Sygrave (co-opted Member)

CSP22. URGENT BUSINESS

The papers in relation to agenda item 5 (Scrutiny of the Medium Term Financial Strategy) were admitted as a late item of urgent business as they needed to include information regarding proposals for consideration by the Cabinet which were not available for release until after the agenda for the Panel had been circulated.

CSP23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

CSP24. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

CSP25. SCRUTINY OF THE DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Panel considered the budget proposals contained within the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) covered within the terms of reference for the Panel as follows:

Reference 31: Residential Street Cleaning

Panel Members expressed concern that the reduction in the level of street sweeping might impact on levels of cleanliness. It was noted that the service had comprehensive information available regarding cleanliness levels in the borough and there were clear differences between areas. Consideration was therefore being given to where savings could safely be made without adversely affecting levels of cleanliness. The proposal was to introduce a litter picking service which could cover a far larger area in a day than sweeping. Streets would nevertheless get both litter picking and sweeping. It was anticipated that the changes would lead to a more consistent level of cleanliness.

Panel Members felt that money should be invested in publicising the cost of littering and other measures to prevent it occurring. It was important that civic pride be developed as part of this. Residents soon became aware of any deterioration in cleanliness. The arguments in favour of introducing litter picking appeared persuasive but Panel Members would want to see evidence that it was effective in practice.

The Assistant Director stated that the service would look at what others boroughs did and adopt of more pro-active approach. The vast majority of people viewed littering as unacceptable though.

The Panel noted that the proposals were being developed in consultation with Veolia. The Assistant Director reported that incorporating feedback from local residents and ward Councillors into plans could potentially be the next stage of development.

AGREED:

That information regarding comparative level of cleanliness of different parts of the borough be shared with Panel Members.

32: Borough wide sweeping reductions

Panel Members were concerned that this proposal might impact negatively on the level of cleanliness of town centres and that this might adversely affect local businesses. The Assistant Director reported that there were no plans to change the cleaning of town centres at the moment other than the introduction of litter picking.

33: Removal of Recycling Bring Sites

The Panel noted that sites for charitable collections of shoes and clothing would not be affected by the proposals.

35; Reorganisation of the Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour Team (ASBAT)

The Panel stated that the service was very important to residents and were concerned that the budget reductions might impact adversely on the service that they received.

The Cabinet Member for Communities reported that the aim was to make the service more efficient by bringing together a number of teams that had responsibility for enforcement. The Assistant Director for Environmental Services and Community Safety reported that the reductions in staff would be at managerial level. The intention was to offer a broader anti social behaviour function that also included noise and street enforcement and other activities. Staff would have a range of enforcement capabilities. No front line staff would be affected by the proposals and the impact of the changes would be monitored.

Panel Members asked what action was being taken to encourage people to improve behaviour. The Assistant Director reported that this could be addressed by developing a greater level of pride amongst residents for their area. However, this was not necessarily easy to achieve across the borough. Communication was important and, in particular, promoting the message that people would be prosecuted if necessary if they committed anti social behaviour. Some excellent results had already been achieved by the ASBAT and publicising successes acted as a deterrent to others through increasing the perception of risk.

The Panel noted that Estate Managers already addressed issues regarding behaviour with tenants and intervened, where appropriate, at an early stage. The

thresholds for the ASBAT were quite high and a softer approach to addressing issues was used in the first instance.

36; Reorganisation of part of the Neighbourhood Action Team

The Assistant Director reported that it was proposed to pool all street enforcement functions as part of a new delivery model. A new role would be designed for staff that would involve them concentrating solely on issuing fixed penalty notices. Research had been undertaken with other local authorities on how they provided similar services. Based on this, it was anticipated that the issuing of fixed penalty notices would increase and that they would help cover the cost of the team.

The Panel noted that the service currently issued 1200 notices per year. Other boroughs that had teams that were focussed solely on enforcement issued up to 5000 per year. Increasing the number of notices issued would increase the perception of risk amongst people who might be tempted to commit offences.

Panel Members commented that it was possible that the swift removal of dumped items might encourage people to fly tip. It was noted that various methods could be used to try and encourage behavioural change and that appropriate options would be explored by the service.

AGREED:

That statistics regarding the number of reports of fly tipping that had been received would be shared with the Panel.

37; Restructure of the Emergency Planning Team

The Cabinet Member for Communities reported that the Emergency Planning Team were responsible for a number of functions, including the setting up of Community Assistance Centres when necessary. Pan London discussions were taking place regarding the way that emergency planning was undertaken and it was possible that it would have changed by the time that the savings were required to be implemented. The Assistant Director reported that the team was small but there were a large number of other officers who provided assistance when required.

38; Improved Street Lighting – LED Investment

The Panel noted that the investment would cover the remainder of street lighting i.e. that which not already LED. The Panel also suggested that old lamp standards may have re-sale value that the Council could exploit.

39: Future of Wolves Lane Nursery Site

The Cabinet Member reported that the provision of alternative facilities was being considered as well as staffing issues. In addition, alternative options for the people with learning disabilities who used the site were also being looked at.

The Panel noted that funding came from a range of sources. The intention was to continue the service from another site. There were no staff reductions involved in the proposal.

Panel Members felt that the service was of social value to the community and were concerned that this might potentially be diminished.

AGREED:

That a report back on progress with the implementation of the proposal be made to the Panel in due course and that a visit for Panel Members be arranged to the site.

40: Closure of Park View Road Re-use and Recycling Centre

The Panel noted that most boroughs only had one centre. Park View was comparatively small. Users of the site would be notified of alternative options when it was closed, including those in other boroughs.

41: Increased Income from Parks Events, 28: Efficiency Savings and Delivery Review of Parks

Panel Members stated that Parks Forums had expressed concerns regarding the reduced staffing levels in parks. The Panel noted that the proposals entailed reductions in the back office for allotments through a parks management reduction in year 1 and a back office reduction in year 3. The future of allotments was likely to be based on self management.

The Cabinet Member stated that the increased income from events was helping to maintain the service. The Finsbury Park Stakeholder Group had proven to be successful and there were areas where there was consensus. He wanted the Stakeholder Group to improve and include the neighbouring boroughs of Hackney and Islington so that a joint approach could be agreed. Concert promoters were required to observe licensing conditions and any breaches would be acted upon.

The Panel noted the proposals were within the existing policy and only two large events had taken place in the current year. Four would be required to achieve the savings. Officers considered that it would be possible to reduce the amount of time allowed to promoters for set up and take down.

42: Increased Income from Licensing and Enforcement Action

The Panel noted that services such as pest control operated in a commercial environment and therefore had to be mindful of what others charged. This had been taken into account in the proposals.

43: Increase in Parking Charges, 44: Increased Enforcement of Moving Traffic Offences, 45: Delivery of Parking Plan Including Expansion of CPZs

Panel Members expressed concern at the possible implications for town centres of increasing parking charges as this might deter visitors. In addition, they felt that any additional use of bailiffs should be handled sensitively.

The Cabinet Member for Environment stated that the service had difficult choices to make. The rates of parking charges that were being proposed were not above that of statistical neighbours and the changes would bring them into line with them. Some of the Council's car parks were very busy whilst others were under used. He would be happy to undertake a joint piece of work on the issue with the Panel on the issue.

The Panel noted that there had been no increases since 2011 and the proposed increase was merely to keep up with inflation. There was a particular issue with the lack of availability of parking spaces. In respect of bailiffs, they were only employed as a last resort. The intention was to improve recovery levels by improving internal processes.

The Cabinet Member stated that the issue of parking charges was controversial. Some Councils had provided a limited amount of free time but had found that there had been no evidence of greater footfall. London Councils had undertaken work on the issue and had found that the attractiveness of shops was more of an issue for visitors than the price of parking. Additional evidence would nevertheless be welcome.

AGREED:

That the Panel consider the issue of parking charges as a potential future in-depth project.

General

The Panel felt that the MTFS proposals had been presented in an interesting and thoughtful way. The proposals were also clear within the documentation.

CSP26. WORK PLAN

AGREED:

That the future work plan for the Panel be noted.

Cllr Barbara Blake
Chair

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL
WEDNESDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2014**

Councillors Adje (Chair), Bevan, Diakides, Elliott and Engert

Apologies Councillors Marshall and Councillor Carroll

LC1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Carroll and Cllr Marshall.

LC2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

LC3. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

LC4. DEPUTATIONS/ PRESENTATIONS

None received.

LC5. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The panel scrutinised savings and investment proposals as set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan that fell within its remit. These were:

- Priority 4 - Drive growth and employment from which everyone can benefit – proposals 46-48 (planning) and 53 (regeneration);
- Priority 5 - Create homes and communities where people chose to live and are able to thrive – proposals 56-66 (housing);
- Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme.

Priority 4 (Planning) - Item 46: Increased income through new advice and review of existing charges (£75,000 saving)

- The planning service currently provides a verbal, free pre-application planning advice service to local residents;
- From 2015/16, a new written and chargeable service will be introduced to improve transparency and accountability of planning advice provided;
- The panel noted that a similar charge will also be introduced for Design Panel at a later stage;
- Exact details of charges for pre-application advice service will be agreed by Cabinet.

Agreed: that the proposal be noted.

Priority 4 (Planning) – Item 47: Changes to policy and practice to remove non statutory consultation (£50,000 saving)

- Planning service currently sends out 175,000 planning notification letters each year which exceeds the statutory minimum (e.g. 4,000 letters sent out for Hornsey Depot Consultation though only 280 were statutorily required);
- From 2016/17 the volume of letters sent will be reduced (subject to confirmation within the revision of the Statement of Community Involvement);
- There will be greater use of web based consultation methods as new systems will be developed (with Northgate);
- A new My Haringey account will be developed for residents where they will be able to receive planning notifications in a particular area.

Agreed: that the proposal be noted.

Priority 4 (Planning) – Item 48: Wider restructure reducing core service (£75,000 saving)

- There is currently a team of officers preparing local plans many of which are temporary and agency staff;
- Workforce demands will be reduced once area plans have been produced and adopted (in year 3).

Agreed: that the proposal be noted.

Priority 4 (Regeneration) – Item 53: Tottenham team increased staffing resource (£250,000 investment)

- This proposal will increase capacity within the Tottenham regeneration team, in particular to project officer support to Area Managers and a GIS officer.
- It is expected that this investment will pay for itself provided that it speeds up regeneration plans (e.g. earlier benefits of new development and regeneration).

Agreed: that the proposal be noted.

Priority 5 (Housing, General Fund) – Item 56: Implement selective licensing across the borough (investment £100,000 year 1 and year 2, increased income £950,000 year 3)

- A investment of £200,000 to set up a selective licensing scheme for all rental properties required for years 1 and 2 will be offset by income from landlord registration of £950,00 in year 3;
- This will be a cost neutral position as income will be used to support enforcement activities (e.g. health and safety inspections);
- Learning from other boroughs (Newham, Enfield and Hackney) which have developed similar schemes will support the development of this initiative;
- Investment is needed to collate evidence to support the application process and to consult with relevant stakeholders (e.g. landlords, tenants).

Agreed:

- (i) that further information on selective licensing scheme is distributed to the panel;
- (ii) that the panel is provided with further information of the impact of £400,000 investment in enforcement activity in respect of residential units in commercial designated areas;
- (iii) that the proposal be noted.

Priority 5 (Housing, General Fund) – Item 57: Private sector supply and management (£500,000 savings years 2 and 3, £250,000 investment over years 1 and 2)

- The Council will set up its own letting agency within Homes for Haringey (which is currently working up options);
- Other local authorities have developed similar agencies, and any learning or evolutions of these services will inform local plans;
- There will be initial start up costs of £250k, though this proposal is expected to generate a surplus once up and running and will also help to save money from the Temporary Accommodation budget.

Agreed: that the proposal be noted.

Priority 5 (Housing, General Fund) – Item 58: Early intervention/Prevention & Temporary Accommodation Management (£500,000 savings years 2 and 3, £250,000 investment over years 1 and 2)

- There are over 1,000 placements in TA in the private sector each year. This places a strain on TA budget as rents in this sector are increasing;
- The six individual proposals will together help to reduce the cost of the TA budget;
- Provision of early housing advice will better support people in meeting their housing needs and in preventing homelessness;
- More efficient processing of homelessness decisions (staff investment);
- A placement protocol will go to Cabinet for approval to provide options for out of borough placement for those needing TA;
- Decanted stock (e.g. from Love Lane) will be used for TA;
- The Panel noted that Children's Services are still procuring housing though there may be plans to unify procurement processes (to prevent competing bids).

Agreed:

- (i) that further documentation is provided to the panel in respect of councils duty to re-home people who may have a property abroad;
- (ii) that the proposal be noted.

Priority 5 (Housing, General Fund) – Item 59: Early intervention / Prevention (Housing Commissioning) (£1,320,000 savings)

- It is expected that significant savings will be achieved in Housing Related Support through new contracting and market testing of agreements which are due to expire over the three year period;
- There has been over achievement of savings in this area in the current year and there is confidence that the projected savings for 2015/16-2017/18 can be achieved;
- The panel noted that in some housing related support schemes, all the furniture is rented, which can then be passed back to Housing Benefit. This may represent an opportunity for further savings

Agreed:

- (i) Head of Housing Commissioning Manager would investigate further the provision of rented furniture within housing support contracts and if this presented an opportunity to reduce costs;
- (ii) Plans for the Supported Housing Review would come to Overview & Scrutiny (Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Panel) the timing of which will be at a juncture where scrutiny can add most value and agreed with officers;
- (iii) that the proposal be noted.

Priority 5 (Housing, General Fund and HRA) – Item 60 and 62 Housing Unification synergies (£700,000 savings)

- The Community Housing Service was merged with Homes for Haringey in September 2014, and it is expected that there will be savings arising from this unification, in particular income Collection, Housing Management and Asset Management Teams;
- There was some concern among the panel as to the quality of back office facilities available to Homes for Haringey, and whether the ALMO was tied-in to using these services. It was noted that the Business Improvement Programme would help to develop and expand the back office offer.

Agreed:

- (i) That a further update of the unification process is provided to the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel at its March meeting;
- (ii) that the proposal be noted.

Priority 5 (Housing, General Fund and HRA) – Item 61 and 66 Management (£1,400,000 savings, £450,000 investment)

- Savings will be achieved through new technology, streamlined working and self serving customers;
- The housing management IT system (OHMS) will be upgraded and redeveloped and whilst this will require an initial investment, it is anticipated that this will deliver savings through more efficient and streamlined work processing;
- The panel noted that front line housing staff could still not access email through their phones, which was not conducive to officer accessibility or efficient working;
- Savings will also be accrued through the restructuring of staff: it is anticipated that 30 posts will be lost from a base of 800.

Agreed:

- (i) that the proposal be noted.

Priority 5 (Housing, HRA) – Item 63 Repairs (£1,300,000 savings)

- A number of actions would take place to reduce the cost of repairs to the council housing stock these would include: making better use of assets and selling those which are uneconomic to repair; reviewing lettable and void standards;
- The Panel were concerned at any proposal that may potentially lead to a loss of Council owned stock. The panel noted that any disposal would be subject to a rigorous economic assessment and other possible options for use (e.g. supported housing if it is a sizeable property);
- The Panel were concerned that the current age threshold at which tenants were not responsible for minor repairs was too low, and that this should be reassessed in line with current retirement age;
- The Panel indicated that lettable standards were at a minimum and were concerned that there should be any reduction of these as set out in the proposals. It was noted that there were plans to introduce decoration vouchers which may further help to reduce costs;
- The Panel noted that Homes for Haringey would review the penalties and sanctions imposed on those tenants (and leaseholders) who had wilfully damaged their property.

Agreed:

- (i) that further consideration is given to disposal of council owned stock, particularly the option to demolish and rebuild where the present condition is uneconomic to repair;
- (ii) Homes for Haringey would reassess the age at which tenant responsibility for minor repairs is relinquished;
- (iii) that there should be no reduction in the minimum lettable standard;
- (iv) that Homes for Haringey would review the penalties and sanctions imposed on those tenants (and leaseholders) who wilfully damage their property;
- (v) that the proposal be noted.

Priority 5 (Housing, HRA) – Item 64 Garage Fee Review (£500,000 savings)

- The Panel noted that garage fees have not been reviewed since 1989;
- Proposal to review fees would be considered at Cabinet in February which would result in an increase of between £4-10 per week;
- The Panel felt that this opportunity should also be taken to review parking fees for Homes for Haringey estates (where there is currently no charge);

Agreed:

- (i) that Homes for Haringey review parking fees on its housing estates, particularly where these occur within and existing an Controlled Parking Zone;
- (ii) that the proposal be noted.

Priority 5 (Housing, HRA) – Item 65 Management (£300,000 savings)

- This savings proposal will result from the Housing Unification and Improvement Programme and will remove duplication in quality assurance and contract monitoring;

Agreed:

- (i) that the proposal be noted.

Housing Revenue Account -Proposed Capital Programme 2015/16 to 2017/18

The panel noted that:

- Capital spend proposals were similar to previous years;
- A bid of £6m is currently with the GLA for further capital improvements to local housing stock;
- Decent Homes money would cease beyond 206/17 and that plans for a successor programme are being put in place, including a reassessment of Decent Homes standards;
- In relation to borrowing headroom within the HRA and use of Right to Buy Receipts for new development, it was reported that:
 - o There was a £56m borrowing cap within the HRA and that approximately £21.78m was left in the headroom after planned council new build of 94 new homes;
 - o The preferred order in which RTB receipts would be used was 1) use to acquire ex council owned stock 2) use to support new council development 3) pass to Registered providers for new development;
- It was noted that residents in supported housing were not full charged for services and this would be applied with no impact to residents as this would be covered within Housing Benefit framework (page 122, section 14.2 of the MTFS);
- The panel noted that there would be significant level of redundancies within Housing Management in the three year period and wanted further clarification as to whether these would be financed through the HRA or Council.

Agreed:

- (i) Whilst accepting that the introduction of service charges for those in supported housing would be covered by commensurate rise in Housing benefit, further reassurance was sought on the affordability of such a charge (e.g. will all those affected be fully compensated);
- (ii) That further clarification would be provided as to capital provision for redundancy costs would be met through the HRA or Council;
- (iii) that the proposals be noted.

Draft Capital Programme 2015/16 and Indicative Spending Plans 2016/17 and 2017/18 (page 223)

The panel noted that:

- Public Space – the £5m agreed Tottenham Programme for new community space adjacent to the stadium was of course dependent on completion of the stadium.

Cllr Charles Adje
Chair