

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, 16TH OCTOBER, 2017, 19:00

PRESENT:

Councillors: Charles Wright (Chair), Pippa Connor (Vice-Chair), Emine Ibrahim, Tim Gallagher

Also Present: Councillor Zena Brabazon

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred those present to agenda Item 1 as shown on the agenda in respect of filming at this meeting and asked that those present reviewed and noted the information contained therein.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Hearn.

Apologies for absence were also received from Yvonne Denny.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

5. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

The Chair advised that a petition had been received around changes to waste collection services. The petition was signed by 1423 residents and had therefore not met the threshold for a debate at Full Council. Instead, the petitioner had agreed to come and address the Committee given the synergism with agenda item 8 on OSC budget recommendations for the current municipal year. The Chair asked the Cabinet Member to respond to the petitioner as part of their response to item 8.

The Chair invited Mr Peter Simon to address the Committee in reference to his petition around changes to waste collection services including; charging for bulky items, charging for replacement bins and charging for garden waste (from 23rd October). Mr Simon called on the council to suspend the changes to waste services and to urgently review, consult upon and publish the potential impact upon the local environment and residents. Mr Simon raised concerns that the evidence base for the

changes was weak and that the outcome of their implementation had not been properly thought through.

In response to the petition, the Committee sought the petitioners views on whether maintaining the current hessian sacks would mitigate the need for another bin. Mr Simon responded the salient factor would be whether there was a charge for those sacks. Mr Simon expressed surprise that the Council had not, for instance, considered the introduction of fortnightly collections before introducing additional charges for waste collection services. Following clarification, the petitioner advised that his preference would be for a reduction to the existing service in an attempt to deliver savings, rather than income generation from additional charges. In response to a comment from the Committee around charges for garden waste collection being common in London, Mr Simon advised that Haringey's changes were above that of many other boroughs; advising that that the average charge was £50-£60, whereas Haringey were going to charge £75.

The Chair advised that he was going to take agenda items 14 and 13 immediately following the conclusion of item 8. **Clerks note- The minutes follow the order of items at they were taken, not as they were listed on the agenda.**

6. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the public minutes of the meetings held on 13th June and on 17th July be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

7. MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL MEETINGS

RESOLVED

That the minutes, and recommendations contained therein, of the below Scrutiny Panels be approved:

- Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel – 6th March 2017 and 29th June 2017
- Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel – 6th February 2017, 7th March 2017 and 22nd June 2017
- Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel – 29th June 2017
- Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel – 26th June 2017

8. UPDATE ON 2017/18 BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Clive Heaphy, Chief Finance Officer, introduced the report which set out an update on the 2017/18 Overview & Scrutiny Committee budget recommendations. The following arose during the discussion of the report:

- a. In response to a request for clarification on the timings for disability related expenditure, the Committee was advised that the analysis was being undertaken and that the findings should be available in the next 6-8 weeks.
- b. The Chair welcomed the fact that a number of the Committee's recommendations had led to savings being deferred.

Cllr Ahmet, the Cabinet Member for Environment responded to the points raised in Mr Simon's petition under agenda item 5. The following was noted:

- a. The changes to waste collection services had been in discussion since the Cabinet Member was appointed in April 2016 and a lot of consideration had been given to their implementation.
- b. 16 London boroughs charged for green waste and a number of others provided no service at all as it was not statutory.
- c. An alternative offer had been introduced for residents with smaller gardens to use compostable bags for their green waste.
- d. The Cabinet Member advised that they were unable to accept concessions to the £75 rate for collection of garden waste. The Committee was also advised that there was a six month introduction period to allow for sufficient communication of the changes with residents.

The following arose in the wake of Cllr Ahmet's response to Mr. Simon:

- a. In response to a question on whether consideration had been given to fortnightly collections of green waste, the Client & Commissioning Manager cautioned that that the food waste and green waste collections were linked and so it was not the case that fortnightly collections of green waste would halve the cost of the service. The Committee was advised that fortnightly collections were considered but were ultimately dismissed because they did not deliver the level of savings required.
- b. In response to a question around the viability of hessian sacks, the Client and Commissioning Manager advised that any savings would be significantly reduced by the cost of tagging the sacks. In addition, the introduction of biodegradable sacks had no limit to the amount of waste that could be collected and therefore gave residents more flexibility.
- c. The Client & Commissioning Manager advised that the biodegradable bags had a broadly neutral environmental impact and also helped reduce detritus levels caused by green waste.
- d. Cllr Brabazon raised concerns with the financial viability of the scheme and queried whether it would generate the levels of income that had been forecast. In response, the Cabinet Member advised that the service would be widely advertised and cautioned that ultimately if it failed to generate the required level of income then further savings would need to be made. The Chair commented that regular monitoring of the MTFs took place and that any concerns that arose would be well highlighted.
- e. The Chair asked the Environment & Scrutiny Panel to monitor the changes to waste collection going forward. Cllr Gallagher agreed that the panel would monitor the situation over a six month period and would report back to OSC in due course. **(Action: Cllr Gallagher).**

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the progress that had been made on the recommendations detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

9. UPDATE ON TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Thomas Skeen, Head of Pensions introduced the report as set out. Which presented the updated Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2017/18-2019/20. Head of Pensions introduced Luke Webster, Chief Investment Officer from the GLA.

The following arose during the discussion of the report:

- a. A report setting out the new Treasury Management arrangements was presented to OSC in March 2016. OSC were being given an update on the implementation of those arrangements, and an opportunity to provide comments, before they were presented to Corporate Committee and Full Council for formal adoption.
- b. Current 'in-house' arrangements involved a low level of cash reserves and investment in 'Triple A' rated money market funds. The new arrangements involved entering into partnership with the GLA for the provision of certain treasury management activities, which included undertaking borrowing on the Council's behalf which would be set within strict parameters.
- c. The Committee was advised that the GLA managed investments that totalled around £3 billion, which was around 200 times that of Haringey. The scale of the GLA activities afforded a far greater diversification of risk and they also benefited from a higher yield; creating a small saving for the Council. The risk profile of investments carried out by the GLA was exactly the same as in-house.
- d. In response to a question, the Committee was advised that the savings amounted to around £30k per year but that the primary driver was risk reduction and increased resilience.
- e. Following assurances being sought around the cost of the new arrangements, the Committee was advised that the GLA would charge 2 basis points on the investment performance that the pool achieved. In addition, there would be an annual re-charge to reflect the amount of work done on investments and borrowing; an indicative calculation for last year was a re-charge of around £40k.
- f. In response to concerns raised, the Committee was advised that Haringey would still be responsible for decision making, through its setting of an annual Treasury Management Statement and the setting of borrowing parameters. Officers also advised the Committee that its treasury advisor, Arlingclose, would need to be retained.
- g. In relation to a query around increased borrowing and how the TMSS related, to say the HDV, officers advised that the HDV would be classified as capital expenditure and would be dealt with in the same way as any other capital expenditure plan. The Treasury Management Statement set the parameters for risk and part of the treasury management process was to look at borrowing rates and assess when the Council should borrow money.
- h. In response to a question around debt levels and to what extent the authority was near its borrowing, the Committee was advised that the Council was significantly below its borrowing limit. It was estimated that the authority's borrowing was at £250m which was around 60% of its limit.
- i. In response to a question, the Committee was advised that the arrangement with the GLA was for a 12 month contract, which would contain exit provisions if the Council wished to extricate itself from the joint arrangement.
- j. In response to a question around whether the TMSS should give a firm commitment around exiting any LOBO arrangements that the Council had entered in to, the Committee was advised that a blanket commitment was

probably not in the Councils interest. The Committee was also advised that early exit of such arrangements would incur significant financial penalties.

- k. The Chair requested that the TMSS make specific reference to the authority's position on LOBOs. OSC also requested that Corporate Committee continued to regularly review whether the investment in LOBO financial instruments presented value for money. **(Action Thomas Skeen).**
- l. The Committee also commented that the Treasury Management function should operate separately from political decisions around where the money was invested and that this was something for Corporate Committee to consider.

RESOLVED

That the proposed updated Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2017/18 to 2019/20 was noted.

10. CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITY PERFORMANCE UPDATE

Charlotte Pomery, Assistant Director for Commissioning introduced the report as set out.

The following was noted during discussion of the report:

- a. The Committee queried about how to make clear which indicators were the responsibility of the Council and which were the responsibility of partners. In response, officers advised that the increasing integration of services at a wider partnership level would be reflected in the next Borough Plan and this also provided an opportunity for further strengthening of the system leadership role that the Council had.
- b. The Committee raised concerns with performance on the number of HfH properties meeting Decent Homes standards and questioned how this compared with other boroughs. The Committee commented that performance seemed to have been at a similar level for a number of years. The AD Commissioning commented that this was one of the priorities of the P5 Board and agreed to get back to the Committee with details of comparative performance levels and how to improve performance in this area.

RESOLVED

- I. That the Committee noted the progress made against the delivery of the priorities and targets of the Corporate Plan.
- II. That the Committee noted the progress on Priority X.

11. UPDATE ON CUSTOMER SERVICES AND LIBRARIES

Cllr Ejifor, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities introduced the report as set out. The following was noted during discussion of the report:

- a. The Committee requested information on those waiting longer than 20 minutes for a response, be included in future updates. **(Action: Andy Briggs).**
- b. In response to clarification sought around a 781% increase in the use of social media to interact with the Council, officers advised that this figure had come

- from the annual review undertaken by the web team and confirmed that there had been a huge channel shift in that respect.
- c. The Committee raised concerns with the operation of Wood Green Library and the extent to which the presence of the customer service centre affected its functionality as a library. In response to a query around the continuation of its joint function and its expected lifespan, officers advised that the library probably had a lifespan of around 3-4 years and that the intention was to have a new customer service offer and library in the new civic building.
 - d. The Cabinet Member acknowledged some of the concerns raised around the building's functionality as a library and agreed that he would continue to monitor it going forward.
 - e. Officers advised that additional investment would be put into the Wood Green Library building over the next 12-18 months but cautioned that this would be in proportion to its lifespan.
 - f. The Committee asked for clarification on the breakdown of the 2.4m capital investment in libraries. Officers advised that around £1m was for the refurbishment of Hornsey library. The AD for Customer Services and Libraries agreed to provide OSC with a briefing on the breakdown of 2.4m capital investment. **(Action: Andy Briggs)**.
 - g. The Committee raised concerns with the crossover in portfolio responsibilities between the Deputy Leader and the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Culture and commented that it was difficult to ascertain who had responsibility for specific areas, particularly around who was responsible for the maintenance of a co-located building. Cllr Ejiolor advised that he was responsible for Marcus Garvey Library as it was leased back from Fusion but that Cllr Vanier was responsible for most other library buildings.
 - h. The Chair drew the Committee's attention to the fact that the agenda item was primarily around customer services and not libraries and cautioned that the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Culture was not at the meeting to respond to queries on her portfolio.
 - i. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer Services acknowledged that reporting structures were not as clear as they could have been but reassured the Committee that this issue had been addressed. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer Services agreed to meet with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Culture to discuss how to manage the co-location of joint services and to feedback to OSC on this. **(Action: Cllr Ejiolor)**.
 - j. The Committee reiterated a request that the customer service centres provided access to toys and books for children. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer Services agreed that he would speak to officers and reconsider this request, suggesting that perhaps a trial period could be introduced. **(Action: Cllr Ejiolor)**.
 - k. In response to a question on who the service champions were, officers advised that they were library staff with a targeted area of responsibility, such as a digital champion.
 - l. The Committee requested that an update on Customer Services and Libraries be brought back to OSC in March 2018. The Committee requested that both Cabinet Members be invited to attend the meeting. The Committee also requested that the report include performance and analysis of the quality of interactions at customer service centres. **(Action: Clerk/Andy Briggs)**.

RESOLVED

The Committee noted the information contained in the report.

12. BUDGET MONITORING Q1

Clive Heaphy, Chief Finance Officer introduced the report which set out the Council's provisional budget outturn for the year ended 31 March 2017 and the Quarter 1 budget monitoring report to June 2017. During discussion of the report the following was noted:

- a. In response to a question, the Chief Finance Officer advised that underspends in the HRA account were ring-fenced to housing activities and would go back into the account to fund decent homes works etc.
- b. The Chief Finance Officer acknowledged the issue of a failure to spend allocations for capital projects and suggested that he would be pushing the Capital Board to demonstrate their ability to deliver on projects as part of the process, as well as introducing a stop on the carry forward of underspends in capital budgets.
- c. The Committee commented that the capital programme was an ongoing concern, notably a failure to deliver on earmarked projects; especially in light of the need for investment across a range of services. The Committee suggested that they would like to see the implementation of additional rigour within the capital programme put forward as a recommendation from OSC going forward. **(Action: Clive Heaphy).**
- d. The Committee questioned the £24m underspend in the HRA account in light of the shortfall in properties being up to decent home standards and sought clarification that this money could be invested in improvements to housing stock. The CFO cautioned that he needed to do some further work to understand the reasons behind the underspend. However, the CFO advised that he was working with the Interim CEO of HfH to look at the issue and acknowledged that reallocation of funding could start as part of next year's programme.
- e. The CFO acknowledged the £1m underspend in the disability facilities grant and the need for services to roll this programme out as part of an annual rolling programme. The CFO agreed to come back to the Committee with information on the underspend in Assessment and Social Work team being used as a mitigation for overspends elsewhere within Adult Social Services. **(Action: Clive Heaphy).**
- f. The CFO also acknowledged the demand led nature of the main budget pressures and that these pressures were not abating. The consequent off-setting of overspends from general reserves was not sustainable and that long term the key was to deliver better outcomes for service users at lower cost, whilst growing the revenue base from building more homes and increasing the number of businesses.
- g. The Committee sought clarification on the financial details of the saving related to the closure of the Park View depot, given that the staff were paid by the NLWA. **(Action Clive Heaphy).**
- h. The current year Q1 position was a £6.6m overspend, made up of £6.2 overspend from the general fund and £400k in the HRA account.

- i. The CFO agreed to come back to the Committee on why the valuers were budgeted for up until March when the HDV was agreed in July. The CFO also agreed to come back to the Committee on what savings were made from the closure of adult day centres and what the unintended financial risks were as a result. **(Action Clive Heaphy)**.
- j. The Committee queried whether the capital underspend could be used to buy street properties to offset the financial pressures on temporary accommodation. In response, the CFO advised that a range of alternatives were being sought to increase provision. It was suggested that a dispersed portfolio of street properties would likely be more difficult to manage than a consolidated block.
- k. The Committee emphasised the importance of schools claiming their full allocation of free schools meals as they were a driver for a variety of other funding sources from central government. The Committee suggested that Finance should be providing support to schools to ensure that take up of funding from free school meals was maximised.

13. UPDATE ON BUDGET SCRUTINY TIMETABLE

Clive Heaphy, Chief Financial Officer introduced the report which set out the timetable for review and agreement of budget/MTFS proposals.

The Chair cautioned that the sequencing of the reporting activity may need to be tweaked in light of January Cabinet being rescheduled. CFO agreed to remove January Cabinet from the timetable and that Cabinet briefings would take place around 29th January. **(Action: Clive Heaphy)**.

RESOLVED

The Committee noted the proposed budget timetable.

14. UPDATE ON HARINGEY JOB SUPPORT

Ambrose Quashie, Head of Employment and Skills introduced the report as set out. The report provided an update on work undertaken to progress recommendations made by Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review of the Haringey job support market. The following was noted during the discussion of the report:

- a. Head of Employment and Skills agreed to come back to the Committee with figures for the number of people with mental health issues that had been assisted with getting back into the job market. **(Action: Ambrose Quashie)**.
- b. Activities were undertaken at Wood Green Library during GCSE results day for the past two years, with a number of different providers providing support to young people. Further engagement work was undertaken with schools around apprenticeships.
- c. The Head of Employment and Skills acknowledged the Committee's concerns around the rollout of Universal Credit and advised that roll out was scheduled to go ahead as planned in July. There was a working group led by AD Transformation and Resources on the implementation of Universal Credit.
- d. In response to a question, the Committee was advised that it was anticipated that there would be around 1000 jobs offered, across a range of different

- industries as part of the work undertaken with Tottenham Hotspur. Every encouragement would be made for employers to pay the London Living Wage.
- e. The Chair suggested that there was scope for greater interaction with HALS. Ambrose Quashie suggested that there was scope to develop a joint offer at Wood Green Library.

Clerk's note: 21:55 -The Committee agreed to suspend Committee Standing Orders to allow the meeting to continue past 22:00

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the progress made towards implementing its recommendations listed at appendix 1 of the report.

15. FEAR OF CRIME SCRUTINY REVIEW

Cllr Gallagher introduced the Environmental & Community Safety Scrutiny review on fear of crime, as set out in the agenda pack. The following was noted in discussion of the report:

- a. The Committee suggested that the panel should undertake a piece of work in future on the impact of the night time economy, particularly in relation to crime and health and wellbeing.
- b. The Committee also raised significant concerns with the defective lighting at the car park at the Civic Centre.

RESOLVED

That the Committee approve the report and its recommendations and agreed that it be submitted to Cabinet for a response.

16. OSC ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

The Committee considered the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17, as set out in the agenda pack.

The Vice-Chair commented that the work done around social isolation appeared to be missing from the Adults & Health Scrutiny Panel work. The Clerk agreed to follow this up with the relevant Scrutiny Officer. **(Action: Clerk).**

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17 be approved for submission to Full Council.

17. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- I. Noted the work programmes for the main Committee and Scrutiny Panels at appendices 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7 of the report.
- II. Agreed the draft scope and terms of reference for the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel's review of Support for Refugee Children, at appendix 4 of the report.
- III. Agreed the draft scope and terms of reference for the Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel's review of Parks at appendix 6 of the report.
- IV. Agreed the draft scope and terms of reference for the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel's review of Social Housing, at appendix 8 of the report.
- V. Agreed the addition of Councillor Carroll to the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel, as listed at paragraph 4.4 of the report.

18. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

N/A

19. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for as it contained exempt information as defined under Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraphs 3&5 of the Local Government Act 1972.

20. MINUTES

RESOLVED

The Committee agreed the exempt minutes of the OSC meeting on 17th July 2017, as an accurate record.

21. FUTURE MEETINGS

The future meeting dates were noted:

- 21st November 2017
- 16th January 2018
- 29th January 2018
- 26th March 2018

CHAIR: Councillor Charles Wright

Signed by Chair

Date