

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes

9 February 2023

Present:

Chair: Councillor Amir Moshenson

Councillors: June Baxter
Govind Bharadia
Dean Gilligan
Vipin Mithani
Phillip O'Dell
Samir Sumaria
Sasi Suresh

**Non-voting
Co-opted:** Harrow Youth Parliament
Representative

**Apologies
received:** Councillor Dan Anderson
Councillor Eden Kulig

21. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Member:

Ordinary Member

Reserve Member

Councillor Dan Anderson

Councillor Sasi Suresh

22. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note the declarations of interest, if any, as published on the Council's website prior to the meeting.

23. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2022 taken as read and signed as a correct record.

24. Public Questions

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were received.

25. Petitions

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions had been received.

26. References from Council/Cabinet

RESOLVED: To note that no references were received.

27. The Corporate Plan

The Committee received an introduction from Councillor Paul Osborn Leader the Council, on the Corporate Plan with the following highlights:

The Leader explained that the Corporate Plan had been tabled late at the Committee due to the issues with Cabinet's publication deadlines.

He explained that the Corporate Plan was underpinned by a Corporate Delivery Plan, aligned to the administration's priorities. The actions in the Delivery Plan would be integrated into the corporate objectives setting process, with a view to having clear performance targets for staff around the delivery of each action.

The plan contained twenty-four flagship actions which were deliverable, tangible and measurable things. Each of the flagship actions was assigned to one of the Council's three priorities. It would deliver council services that were easily accessible and effective, promises that were delivered upon, clear customer service standards and improved communications to put residents first and restore pride in Harrow.

Other highlights included the following:

- All council homes including Grange Farm Community Hall had to deliver a planning website by the end of the summer to adopt new planning protections, to restrict tall buildings to create safe and secure cycle parking.
- The roll out of the first car park, by May 2024. The use of Council car parking spaces for car clubs.
- Dealing with 90% of complaints within 15 working days and the improvement of the website to enable a more personalised service with my Harrow account as residents would be able to see the progress of staff that they have reported going through the system.

- The launch a consultation platform for my Harrow talk to help the Council engage with, listen to residents and increase their involvement in decision-making.
- The work with residents to create a new adult social care, mental health model, the old arrangement was about to end, and the Council wants to work with residents, community groups and the voluntary sector to develop a new mental health system, to improve and transform resource centres into true adult social care and wellbeing hubs to promote early intervention.

The Leader explained that now the Corporate Plan was completed, the next piece of work was the development of a corporate scorecard, and he was happy to engage with the Committee and the Portfolio Holder for Performance on a quarterly basis to develop a process on how the score card would be scrutinised.

Members asked the following questions:

The Vice-Chair asked the Leader what changes were necessary to ensure such timely provision of vital reports to the committee. The Leader explained that as this was the administration's first budget and corporate plan there had been a lot to do and the situation had not been helped by the timing of the Settlement from government. He explained that he had requested Democratic Services address the scheduling issues with the cabinet agenda publication dates and scrutiny committee and efforts would be made to ensure timely publication of reports.

The Vice-Chair also questioned about the lack of mention of the career development such as apprenticeship schemes for adopted/foster children in care who are always left behind academically. The Leader responded that the council as corporate parents, would like to provide the best available opportunities for looked after children in the care system but this could be widened to include people who had been adopted or in foster care.

The Vice-Chair asked the Leader how he could ensure that consultation with residents would be at the heart of the proposals in the Corporate Plan as major development areas such as the Kodak bridge project had been deleted without consultation with residents or ward councillors. The Leader in response, explained the extenuating circumstances around the Kodak bridge project including the results of an initial consultation on safety and viability and the discussion at the planning policy advisory meeting. Furthermore, a new platform to enable the adoption of new consultation standards to ensure a better consultation process for the Council.

A Member questioned about the costs involved in implementing the new planning IT system and given the Council's income targets, how would the system increase the number of planning applications. In response the Leader explained that he had been closely involved in the procurement of the new system. The previous system was not fit for purpose and had caused tremendous difficulties for staff and residents. Details could be shared with the

committee. The Acting Corporate Director, Resources, Strategy and Partnerships informed the committee that the new system had been procured and it was hoped that delivery would be as the timetable set out in the Corporate Plan.

A Member commented that there were happy to see the proposed publicly available scoring system for the roads considering the state of the roads in the borough and asked if the Council had found provider for car clubs. The Leader discussed some of the details of the car club proposals and stressed that this had not been done to prejudice the procurement process.

The Vice-Chair asked if the plan to repair 60 carriageways and footways over the next 12 months was being carried out on the existing budget or ward area, and would the area experience an increase in capital spend and would the Leader commit to consulting all ward councillors before determining the roads or would decision left solely to officers. The Leader in response explained that he was happy to engage with ward councillors over the list of roads, but the selection process was designed to be fair and transparent to commence the worst affected roads.

A Member asked what the target in the reduction of fly tipping was. The Leader explained that a score card for target setting was in development and the new CCTV cameras, would be transformational and make a massive difference to fly-tipping.

A Member asked if the Leader could indicate when the Council would know if the Household Support Fund would fund local schemes for another 12 months, including free school meals, as stated within the Corporate Plan. The Acting Corporate Director, Resources, Strategy and Partnerships explained that the Council was awaiting guidance from the government, but the expectation was that the fund would cover the entirety of the next financial year.

A Member asked about the future of the Bridge in Christchurch Avenue a popular mental health day-care centre and the home of Harrow Community kitchen. The Leader agreed that this was an important venue due to the King's visit during his visit to Harrow and the Leader believed the venue should be secured for their use over several years however there was a regeneration programme, and it may be that other sites could become identified as part of that, a better site could be found should they need to move.

A Member asked what percentage of the construction of affordable housing on Milton Road was private or shared ownership. The Leader said that he could recall but would be happy to check and report back to the Committee.

A Member suggested that due to the tight programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could the development of a scrutiny process for the balanced scorecard be assigned to Scrutiny Leads instead. The Chair was of the opinion that the research could be done by Scrutiny Leads but the report should be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for formal

comments and recommendations. The Leader in response said he was happy with any decision reached by the Committee.

A Member questioned that as the Corporate Plan would be translated into targets for relevant directors could the results be shared with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In response the Leader explained the process in detail and said he was happy to attend the Committee to answer Members' questions on the matter.

The Chair thanked the Leader, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Acting Corporate Director, Resources, Strategy and Partnerships and the Finance Director for their attendance and detailed answers.

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Plan be noted.

28. Scrutiny Review on Customer Experience

Members received a presentation on the Customer Experience from Councillor Samir Sumaria.

A Member commented that it was important to point out that while it was a good to put residents first and find out exactly what they wanted however, there may not be enough resources to meet those expectations, but it was useful for officers, to understand what the residents and businesses expect to help the Council tailor our services to meet those expectations.

The Chair agreed with the Member and suggested that the comment could come under resident consultation, which was actually speaking to the public and finding out exactly what they expect from their service areas. The Chair suggested that comments could be included in the methodology in that section of the report.

The Acting Corporate Director, Resources, Strategy and Partnerships informed Members of the residents' survey was currently out in the field which had the customer experience-based questions in it, so there might be relevant information for the Committee's review.

The Chair suggested the establishment of a baseline and targets for measurement purposes.

RESOLVED: That the Customer Experience Scrutiny Scope Document be approved.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.30 pm, closed at 8.03 pm).

(Signed) Councillor Amir Moshenson
Chair