

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

8 APRIL 2014

Chairman:	* Councillor Jerry Miles	
Councillors:	* Sue Anderson * Marilyn Ashton * Mano Dharmarajah * Chris Mote	* Phillip O'Dell * Anthony Seymour * Lynda Seymour (2) * Victoria Silver (1)
Voting Co-opted:	(Voluntary Aided) Mrs J Rammelt Reverend P Reece	(Parent Governors) Mrs A Khan
Non-voting Co-opted:	† Harrow Youth Parliament Representative	
In attendance (Councillors)	Tony Ferrari Janet Mote Paul Osborn	Minute 502 Minute 504,506 Minute 501, 502

- * Denotes Member present
- (1) and (2) Denote category of Reserve Members
- † Denotes apologies received

495. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

Ordinary Member

Councillor Bill Phillips
Councillor Yogesh Teli

Reserve Member

Councillor Victoria Silver
Councillor Lynda Seymour

496. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Items 8 and 13 – Families First - Troubled Families

Councillor Chris Mote declared a non-pecuniary interest in that his wife was the Portfolio Holder for Children and Families and she had been invited to the meeting to answer questions and make comments on this report. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Councillor Anthony Seymour declared non-pecuniary interests in that his wife had previously been employed by the Children's Services department of the London Borough of Barnet, his son currently received speech and language therapy and his daughter had previously received speech and language therapy. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Councillor Lynda Seymour declared non-pecuniary interests in that she had previously been employed by the Children's Services department of the London Borough of Barnet, her son currently received speech and language therapy and her daughter had previously received speech and language therapy. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

497. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2014, be taken as read and signed as a correct record subject to noting that in terms of minute 493 – Climate Change Strategy and Delivering Warmer Homes strategies - the Committee wished to place additional emphasis to Cabinet on the importance of the following issues:

- the Climate change agenda required ownership across the corporate management team;
- carbon impact should be included as standard in all committee reports;
- the changes to the energy company obligations;
- school travel plans and that schools should be working to a higher standard;
- solid wall insulation.

498. Public Questions

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were received.

499. Petitions

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions had been received.

500. References from Council/Cabinet

None received.

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

501. Scrutiny Annual Report 2013-14

The Committee received a report of the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning which accompanied the scrutiny annual report 2013/14. The officer advised that the Council's Constitution required the Committee to report annually on its activities to Council. Given that the report was the last of the current administration it was also helpful to leave a legacy to the scrutiny members of the new administration.

The Chair expressed his gratitude to all scrutiny members, leads, the Scrutiny Manager and her team and the Democratic Services officer for their work. He made particular mention of the upheaval and difficulties face by the scrutiny team during the current municipal year. Other Members endorsed the sentiments expressed adding that the work completed with limited resources and changes in personnel was to be commended.

The Portfolio Holder for Communications, Performance and Resources and former Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee expressed his thanks to the Chair stating that the tone he had set had helped scrutiny to be as effective as it had. In his view, scrutiny was most effective when councillors worked together. Another Member added that she had found her time as a scrutiny member both enjoyable and worthwhile as members from different political groups worked together for the benefit of the Council.

A Member indicated that it may be helpful to expand the report in terms of the section on the mental health. She would discuss this with the officer separately.

With reference to community use of borough parks, a Member reported that two further green gyms were to be installed. In addition, he had received trim trail plans from Italy but they required translation.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That the annual report be submitted to Council for endorsement.

RESOLVED ITEMS

502. Programme Minerva

Members received a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which set out progress to date on Programme Minerva since December 2013. The Portfolio Holders for Communication, Performance and Resources and Finance, the Corporate Director of Resources and the Director of Customer Services and Business Transformation were in attendance.

The Corporate Director of Resources outlined the content of the report and, in particular, the decisions of Cabinet on 15 January 2014. He advised that the scope of the Minerva programme had been extended across the Resources directorate and that a review of the Human Resources function was underway.

In terms of ICT procurement, the Director of Customer Services and Business Transformation reported that as the contract with Capita was not going to be extended, a procurement exercise would be carried out. The Council had appointed Eversheds as the legal adviser for the duration of the procurement. Eversheds had been the advisers on the initial contract with Capita and this had proved to be a good contract for the Council.

The Director advised that there had been initial soft market testing of IT providers and companies had indicated that they would require a six month handover from award of contract. She stated that April 2015 was therefore being targeted for the appointment of a new supplier in order to facilitate a low risk transfer. There was a government initiative to award IT contracts to a number of small suppliers and work was being done with the Council's legal advisers to finalise the way forward over the coming few weeks. The next step was to prepare a procurement strategy.

Members then made comments and asked questions as follows:

- In response to the question as to whether Capita had delivered on its contract, the Portfolio Holder for Communication, Performance and Resources expressed the view that they had not and stated that the programme was two years behind schedule. In terms of Capita's track record, between 2005-2010/11 a number of projects had been delivered. It had been a difficult few months and there had been a number of high level meetings with Capita and there had been improvement.

The Corporate Director advised that when the Council went back to the market, the expectation was that projects would have been delivered and IT would therefore be a different service to the one that was let in 2010.

- A Member questioned the indicative savings of the programme, making reference to section 7 of the report and was advised that the scope of the savings was approximately 20% of the Resources budget.

- In terms of sharing services, the Portfolio Holder advised that a number of authorities, including Hampshire, had been approached. He noted the Member's comment that it may be useful to contact Surrey County Council. He was optimistic that a shared approach with Hampshire could be put in place.
- It was confirmed that the Corporate Director of Resources had done engagement work with schools and dialogue was being maintained with them. In terms of engagement and savings, the Corporate Director stated that it was necessary to distinguish between Phase 1 and Phase 2. Savings identified in Finance, Revenues and Benefits and Human Resources equated to 17% of those budgets. The cost to achieve these savings and to re-let was approximately £1.5m. The cost of implementing an outsource option would be much higher given the need to change ERP system and re-locate jobs.
- In response to a question as to how milestones were being shared, this had been included in the initial reporting. The next major milestone would be the OJEU notice to start the procurement exercise. The Portfolio Holder added that a cross party working group had considered the milestones and he was keen to have cross party agreement as the programme moved forward.
- A Member questioned how the discussions with the Unions was progressing and the effect on staffing. The Corporate Director advised that there had been weekly meetings with the unions prior to Christmas but the meetings were now on a fortnightly basis. The in house option had flagged that 40-50 jobs could be affected which was lower than if services had been moved to other locations around the country.

The Chair and the Portfolio Holder for Communication, Performance and Resources suggested that the involvement of Overview and Scrutiny in the programme be discussed following the election in May 2014.

The Chair thanked the Portfolio Holders and officers for their attendance and responses.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress to date on Minerva be noted;
- (2) the involvement of Overview and Scrutiny in the programme be discussed following the election in May 2014.

503. Scrutiny Lead Member Report

Members received a report of the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning which accompanied the reports from the Scrutiny Lead Members.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the actions proposed be agreed.

504. Scrutiny Work Programme - Closing Report

Members received a report of the Corporate Director of Strategic Commissioning which summarised the review programme work that had been undertaken by the scrutiny committees during the last municipal year. The report included recommendations to the 2014-18 administration in terms of projects that could be included in the subsequent work programme.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the conclusion of the work programme be noted;
- (2) the list of issues for possible investigation identified in the report of the Divisional Director of Strategic Commissioning, with the addition of school green travel plans, be recommended to the successor Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

505. Families First - Troubled Families

Members received a report of the Divisional Director of Early Intervention Services which outlined the work on the government's Troubled Families initiative since the previous report to Committee. Members agreed that they would consider both the report and confidential appendices together. The Portfolio Holder for Children and Schools, Divisional Director of Special Needs Service and an officer were in attendance for this item.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

506. Motion to exclude the Press and Public

RESOLVED: That in accordance with Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item for the reasons set out below:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Reason</u>
13	Families First – Troubled Families	Information under paragraph 1 (contains information relating to any individual).

507. Families First - Troubled Families

The officer outlined the content of the report and appendices and explained that the Early Intervention Service was the main deliverer of the Troubled Families Initiative in Harrow. Reports showed that early intervention was the best approach to dealing with families in difficulty. He added that phase 2 of the project would focus on younger children and domestic violence.

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Schools expressed her wish for cross party support of the project and stated the importance of the Multi Agency

Safeguarding Hub and the Children's Centres to its success. As could be seen from the case studies, the key worker was an important role and significant it that he/she could turn a family's life around.

Members then asked questions and made comments as follows:

- In terms of local criteria, as mentioned on page 27 of the report, a Member expressed concern that there was no mention of the outreach worker role and that families needed more support than a key worker alone. She sought reassurance that the staff had the necessary skills. This view was endorsed by another Member who stated that mental health would be a significant factor for those involved in the programme. The officer confirmed that these were criteria set by government but that he fully expected the second phase to reflect the Member's concerns in relation to long term health conditions and working with younger children.
- The officer confirmed that 395 families was the target set by government but that the criteria did not necessarily identify the most troubled families within the borough.
- A Member requested details of the progress to work schemes.
- In response to the comment that European Social Funding was not that successful in Harrow, the officer responded that there had been 100 referrals with only one positive outcome. It had been accepted nationally that this was an issue.
- A Member stated that the name of the programme should be more positive as it was important not to label/stigmatise families. She requested that the term 'Troubled Families' be removed from future reports. Whilst this could be great initiative, there were public sector cuts to contend with.
- In response to Member's request for further information on employment issues, the officer confirmed that employment had to be sustainable and that a claim for Payment by Results could only be made once an individual had been employment for 6 months. He undertook to provide details of the type of jobs secured.
- A Member stated that it may be worthwhile the Committee seeing the methodology used by Oxford Brookes. The officer advised that this work had been undertaken by 2 social workers.
- The officer stated that he did not have any information in relation to carers, young carers and people with disabilities in relation to the project. A number of cases involved individuals with mental health issues. There were currently two counsellors involved in the programme.

- The officer acknowledged that one criticism of the project was that it had not considered adult social care in depth.
- A Member questioned the relationship of the project with CAHMS. The officer advised that his knowledge was limited in this area but that CAHMS would only take a referral from a GP. He confirmed that the key worker working with the GP was important.
- Members referred the cross cutting work being undertaken by Wandsworth Council and suggested that this be considered by the new administration.

The Chair thanked the Portfolio Holder and officers for their attendance and responses.

RESOLVED: That the report and appendices be noted.

508. Vote of Thanks

The Chair expressed his appreciation and thanks to Members for their work and contributions during the life of the administration and made particular mention of the previous Vice-Chair and Chair and current Vice-Chair, the Chair of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee and Performance Lead for Children and Families. He also thanked the Lynne Margetts, Service Manager Scrutiny, and her team and the Democratic Services Officer for their work. In particular, as Lynne was leaving the authority in May 2014, he wished her well for the future.

The Vice-Chair endorsed the sentiments expressed by the Chair and thanked him for all his work and the way he had managed the Committee and facilitated discussion and debate.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.18 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR JERRY MILES
Chairman