

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

## 14 APRIL 2015

<b>Chair:</b>	* Councillor Jerry Miles	
<b>Councillors:</b>	* Ghazanfar Ali * Richard Almond * Jeff Anderson * Michael Borio	† Kam Chana * Ms Pamela Fitzpatrick (1) * Paul Osborn * Stephen Wright (4)
<b>Voting Co-opted:</b>	(Voluntary Aided)  Mrs J Rammelt Reverend P Reece	(Parent Governors)  † Mrs A Khan
<b>Non-voting Co-opted:</b>	Harrow Youth Parliament Representative	
<b>In attendance: (Councillors)</b>	Keith Ferry	Minute 93

- \* Denotes Member present
- (1) and (4) Denote category of Reserve Members
- † Denotes apologies received

### 86. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

Ordinary Member

Councillor Chris Mote  
Councillor Kiran Ramchandani

Reserve Member

Councillor Stephen Wright  
Councillor Ms Pamela Fitzpatrick

**87. Declarations of Interest**

**RESOLVED:** To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Item 8 – The Integration of Public Health Within the Council

Councillor Jeff Anderson declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he and his wife were Health Walk Leaders. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Agenda Item 11 – Report from the Libraries Scrutiny Review

Councillor Jeff Anderson declared a non-pecuniary interest in that his wife was Portfolio Holder for Community, Culture and Resident Engagement. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Councillor Ms Pamela Fitzpatrick declared a non-pecuniary interest in that she was a member of the steering group regarding North Harrow Community Library. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

**88. Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2015, be taken as read and signed as a correct record subject to the insertion of 'The DWP estimated that 2% of claimants would find it difficult to manage their finances once they received all of their benefits in a single monthly payment.' after the second sentence of the penultimate paragraph of minute 84.

**89. Public Questions, Petitions and References**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions were put or petitions or references received at this meeting.

**RECOMMENDED ITEMS**

**90. Scrutiny Annual Report**

The Committee received a report which outlined the activities of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the scrutiny sub-committees and the scrutiny lead councillors during the 2014-15 municipal year.

It was noted that the annual report had been previously submitted to the Committee and subsequently amended and discussed at the scrutiny library group.

An officer confirmed the inclusion of photographs in the final document. It was noted that Councillor Mrs Vina Mithani would be listed in addition to Councillor Michael Borio in the report from the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

**Resolved to RECOMMEND:** (to Council)

That the annual report be submitted to Council for endorsement.

## **RESOLVED ITEMS**

### **91. Background Papers for Committee Reports**

The Chair referred to the resolution of the Call-In Sub-Committee held on 10 March 2015 that the Committee be requested to consider whether a referral to Cabinet was required regarding concern that material documents might not have been listed as background papers to the Sub-Committee meeting.

A Member stated that it should be reinforced that when a matter was considered by the Call-In Sub-Committee, any material evidence relied on should be listed as background documents. With regard to the subject of the Call-in, considerable work had been undertaken as to how the charges for the cost of waste collection would work but that information was not available to members of the public. The view was expressed that should this happen again the Call-In Sub-Committee would look unfavourably at it.

A Member stated that the issue at the Call-In Sub-Committee meeting on 10 March 2015 had been that the documents in question were working papers but it was agreed that the need for all background documents to be listed should be highlighted.

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet be requested to consider the importance of listing all relevant background documents.

### **92. The integration of Public Health within the Council**

The Director of Public Health introduced the report, informing Members that it was the second anniversary of the establishment of the Joint Public Health Service with Barnet.

The Committee noted that the ring fencing of the public health grant had been extended for a further year beyond the initial two years and was anticipated to be extended for a further year. Whilst the aspiration was to move to a needs based allocation, Harrow currently had the second lowest allocation with £36 per head which was based on historical funding.

An officer responded to the following questions from Members:

- What extent, if any, was the public health service consulted regarding major regeneration schemes and, if so, what was the benefit?

Public Health was consulted in relation to these schemes. It was critical that a Health Impact Assessment was produced at an early stage.

- What percentage of families and children were failing to get adequate food and vegetables and were in poverty having to rely on food banks?

The selling of fruit and vegetables by parents in schools had been a success and had become self sustaining. The officer undertook to investigate whether any work had carried out locally to measure the use of food banks.

- As Harrow had a traditionally low smoking rate, why was the local proposed indicator for the Health Premium Incentive Scheme the smoking prevalence in adults aged 18 and over? Would the low base make the achievement of significant improvement difficult?

The officers considered that, on the information available, the target was achievable. The increase in the use of Shisha and e-cigarettes had been factors in the adoption of the indicator as was the lack of opportunity to give up smoking for those in prison or with mental health issues. As e-cigarette use was not routinely measured, London data was used. The service liaised with Trading Standards as appropriate.

- What was the effect of the different funding formulas for Harrow and Barnet on the joint service?

Whilst the ring fencing remained separate, service efficiencies had taken place. Examples were sharing expertise such as on the procurement of drugs and alcohol service or, as appropriate, one officer working across both boroughs. Best practice was shared and the Inter-authority Agreement was regularly monitored. The boroughs worked together, such as with regard to Health and Wellbeing Boards and strategies.

- The report stated that, although the overall growth rate of the public health grant in 2014-15 was 5.5%, the growth in allocation for Harrow was 3.1%. Did this mean that Harrow was falling back in the formula?

Yes, fair shares were not being implemented and lobbying was taking place as a result.

- How did Barnet being significantly bigger affect the joint funding arrangements?

The post of Director of Public Health was funded 50/50 between Harrow and Barnet Councils, some posts were funded 60/40 depending on the staff and budget and some posts were 100% Barnet.

- How was the performance indicator 1.07, re proportion of all people in prison aged 18 or over who have a mental illness or a significant mental illness, defined?

The general term was a severe and enduring mental illness, not necessarily requiring sectioning.

- What was the percentage target for getting people of working age who had bipolar or schizophrenia back to work? What schemes were available for those with less significant mental health disorders, how many people had been assisted and how long had they been off work.

The longer people were out of work the harder it was to return. There were programmes to help people within the first few weeks of being out of employment with conditions such as anxiety. About 30% had been helped back to work. Mental health was a priority in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy which was being refreshed and would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

- Were psychological therapies more difficult to source and sustain in the NHS?

It was one of the key targets of the NHS with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) having a target for improving access to therapies. The West London Alliance (WLA), based in Ealing, had obtained £1.4million to fund mental health and employment initiatives.

- The performance indicators do not provide a sense of what would happen if an initiative was either not undertaken or increased. For example, did the distribution of leaflets have a measured impact on a performance indicator? If the public health budget was no longer ringfenced, how could the continuation of the performance indicators be justified?

The challenge for public health was long term prevention and as such was under threat during a period of austerity. An example of an initiative where the benefit to Harrow Council was difficult to calculate was the stop smoking services but it benefited the NHS. Likewise the drugs and alcohol services benefited the criminal justice system.

- How can the effect of Harrow Council's funding on no smoking initiatives on Harrow be calculated when some people stop smoking voluntarily and there are government campaigns?

There is evidence that public health intervention surpasses other public sectors, for example, the one to one smoking initiative reduces smoking by 5%.

- How are healthy outcomes calculated when Harrow residents have dementia, and experience fuel poverty, and poor housing?

One measurement for long term outcomes, for example, is life expectancy. However there are pockets of inequality within the Borough. However there were good rates for heart disease, low rate of cancer deaths and good outcomes for diabetes.

- What is the correlation between unemployment and health?

There was a need to refer those with mental health to psychological therapies. The team was working with the welfare benefits taskforce.

- Being out of work was a significant issue for young people so were there schemes for young adults?

The officer was unaware of specific schemes so would consult with colleagues. It was the responsibility of the General Practice Commissioning Group.

The Chair thanked the Director of Public Health for this attendance.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

### **93. West London Waste Plan**

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise on the outcome of the Public Examination of the joint West London Waste Plan. It was noted that the officers had requested Cabinet Members to recommend the adoption of the West London Waste Plan to Full Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Business, Planning and Regeneration outlined the background to the formation of the Plan and highlighted that it was a planning document and part of the Local Plan. The main principle was to establish the amount of waste in the area and safeguard sites for waste facilities. The Forward Drive Depot was the only site affected in Harrow, the boundary for which had been amended as a result of the prior adoption of the Area Action Plan.

In response to questions, the Portfolio Holder stated that:

- should Harrow decide not to adopt the West London Waste Plan, the Council would be required to produce its own Plan which would apply to the Forward Drive Depot only and would not be integrated with other Councils;
- the targets were set by the London Plan;
- the effect of the introduction of the caddy and brown bins on the percentage recycled was a matter for environment services and not planning officers. The planning perspective was to ensure the safeguarding of sites to meet projected need by ensuring that the land was not developed;

- Harrow was the second best performing London Borough in terms of percentages for recycling and composting;
- the West London Waste Authority (WLWA) had responsibility for decisions as to what waste was sent to landfill.

The Chairman thanked the Portfolio Holder and Planning Policy Officer for their attendance.

**RESOLVED:** That

- (1) the outcome of the independent Examination in Public of the West London Waste Plan be noted;
- (2) the Portfolio Holder for Business, Planning and Regeneration be notified as soon as practicable when the post-adoption statutory requirements for the West London Waste Plan have been complied with;
- (3) Cabinet be informed of the comments made by the Committee.

#### **94. Report from the Libraries Scrutiny Review**

Consideration was given to a report on the findings and recommendations of the Libraries Scrutiny Review. The review examined libraries performance, the changes proposed for Harrow's libraries and the strategy for Harrow's libraries for the next three years.

The Chair introduced the report, stating that three meetings had been held during March 2015 resulting in 14 recommendations. The Vice-Chair reported that a number of the recommendations related to communications and that the Review plan should include longer term objectives and be more ambitious. The effects on local communities and infrastructures arising from any future decisions around the closure of libraries should be more fully considered and there should be increased joining up with other Council activities.

A Member sought information on how it was intended to identify and engage in relation to recommendation 4 that Carillion should undertake further research into 'hidden communities' in Harrow so as to better understand current and future needs around library provision. It was noted that the Review Group had not wanted to be too prescriptive and expected Carillion to respond to the Review Group and for Cabinet to suggest recommendations as to implementation.

The view was expressed that the time horizon was not long enough. It was suggested that a discussion commence to ensure that libraries did not 'disappear'.

A Member expressed the view that the review did not convey a vision of libraries and that libraries performed a variety of roles. Words such as

'envisioning' were unhelpful and greater use of plain English would increase understanding.

**RESOLVED:** That

- (1) the report from the Libraries Scrutiny Review be endorsed;
- (2) the review's report and recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.45 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR JERRY MILES  
Chair