

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

## 12 FEBRUARY 2019

<b>Chair:</b>	* Councillor Jeff Anderson	
<b>Councillors:</b>	* Richard Almond * Dan Anderson * Peymana Assad * Honey Jamie	* Jean Lammiman * Jerry Miles * Chris Mote * Stephen Wright (2)
<b>Voting Co-opted:</b>	(Voluntary Aided)  * Mr N Ransley Reverend P Reece	(Parent Governors)  Vacancy
<b>Non-voting Co-opted:</b>	Harrow Youth Parliament Representative	
<b>In attendance: (Councillors)</b>	Graham Henson Varsha Parmar	Minute 46 Minute 45

- \* Denotes Member present  
(2) Denotes category of Reserve Member

#### 40. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

Ordinary Member

Councillor Kanti Rabadia

Reserve Member

Councillor Stephen Wright

#### **41. Declarations of Interest**

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

Agenda Item 7 – Corporate Plan 2019/2020

Councillor Jean Lammiman declared a non-pecuniary interest in that she was Chair of the Shaftesbury High School Governing Body. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Agenda Item 8 - Flytipping

Councillor Graham Henson declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he was Chair of the West London West Authority. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

#### **42. Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Special meeting held on 8 January 2019, be taken as read and signed as a correct record and the minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2018 be taken as a correct record subject to the following:

Minute 32 Draft Scope for Preventing Youth Crime Review and Highways Maintenance Review

Resolutions 2 and 3. Councillor Dan Anderson to be a member of both the Youth Crime Scrutiny Review Group and Highways Maintenance Review Group. Councillors Jean Lammiman and Ghazanfar Ali to be members of the Highways Maintenance Review Group.

#### **43. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations**

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

#### **44. References from Council/Cabinet**

**RESOLVED:** To note that none were received.

### **RECOMMENDED ITEMS**

#### **45. Corporate Plan 2019/2020**

The Committee considered a report on the 2019/20 Corporate Plan which set out the key priorities, activities and outcomes for the next year and the progress that had been made against these to date. It was noted that Cabinet would be considering the Corporate Plan on 21 February 2019 prior to submission to full Council on 28 February 2019 for formal adoption.

The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Performance, Corporate Resources and Customer Services, introduced the report, stating that it sat alongside the final

Revenue Budget 2019-20 and outlined what the Council intended to do and how those actions and services would be funded. Particular attention was drawn to the five priorities set out in the Executive Summary and narrative which highlighted that Harrow was one of the lowest funded Councils in London and the major issues around deprivation, care costs and homelessness. He commented on the limited funding and significant pressures and that Harrow provided services at minimum cost and was doing it well. He thanked the officers for the work undertaken in the preparation of the document. He drew particular attention to:

- successful bids for external funding, however such monies were often time limited;
- the delivery plan which set out the key projects and initiatives to be undertaken together with progress to date would enable scrutiny to ensure that resources were appropriately targeted and benefited the right people at the right time.

The Chief Executive advised that the Corporate Plan set out the aims of Harrow Council at the highest strategic level and provided a good summary for residents. He indicated that scrutiny would be welcomed over the coming year.

A Member referred to the £1.75bn of public and private investment in the regeneration programme and sought information on the proportion of public investment, the envisaged spend in 2019/20 and which regeneration projects would be funded in 2019/20. The Leader of the Council undertook that the information on the amount of public investment would be provided to the Member. With the exception of the Waxwell Lane and Haslam House schemes, the regeneration strategy was under review to look at risks around fluctuating costs and to identify the borrowing cap and resultant revenue costs. It was noted that Ward Councillors would be notified regarding the Haslam House tender.

A Member expressed disappointment at the lack of reference to Members in the Council's Corporate Values. The Chief Executive supported the inclusion of Members stating that all the best Councils were characteristically strong and effective political and managerial leaderships which worked together on common objectives. Whilst the purpose of the document was relatively internal facing as to what officers and managers should do to meet the objectives and targets, it was also necessary to reflect partnership work and its achievements for Harrow. The Leader of the Council referred to the non-executive role for a voluntary organisation representative on Harrow's Cabinet as an example of partnership working. The inclusion of reference to Members in the corporate plan was supported.

A Member stated that he was unclear as to the purpose of the Ambition Plan and how it fitted into the Corporate Plan structure. The Member commented that the agenda report referred both to a Corporate Plan and to a Harrow Ambition Plan and that it was a one-year operational plan, not a strategic document. In addition he suggested that, as the regeneration expenditure of £1.75bn did not refer to one year only, a budget horizon of at least three years

was more appropriate than a one year financial budget. The Leader of the Council responded that there was no certainty on the budget beyond 2019/20 and that the plans, policies and strategies underneath the Ambition Plan such as the SEND strategy and waste review provided the detailed information. It was noted that the three year Medium Term Financial Strategy indicated what the Council intended to do. The Divisional Director, Strategic Commissioning advised the Committee that the Council's Constitution called the document the Corporate Plan. It was therefore recognised that narrative was required as to why it was called Harrow's Ambition Plan.

A voluntary aided sector representative referred to the objective to deliver new schools and school places and asked how the Council planned to create additional school places after 2020 and whether the places would be in existing secondary schools or whether new schools would be constructed. The Leader of the Council responded that an annual report to Cabinet provided information on projected and actual numbers calculated by use of a number of strategies including the projected ONS figures. The school proposed for the Kodak development site was subject to there being sufficient potential pupils. The bulge classes were heading to secondary school and, whilst there were currently sufficient places, the situation would be monitored and capital investment considered if necessary. The Committee was informed that as Local Authorities could not individually set up new schools work would be undertaken through trusts, free schools or academies or work within existing schools if required.

A Member suggested that the Council needed to increase its partnership work with the police against crime. The Leader of the Council reported that there had been a one third reduction in the police budget. The Council tax precept was being used for additional police. It was hoped that the vacancies in the two dedicated ward officer posts, arising from a high turnover within the Police Force, would be filled by officers completing their training at Hendon Training Centre. The creation of Basic Command Units should provide opportunities for greater collaborations and efficiencies such as specialist burglaries. Monthly meetings took place with the Police.

The Member also expressed concern lest the move to online services, despite the offer of training, result in the disenfranchisement of vulnerable people from using Council services if a totally online system was established. The Committee was advised that the contract with Sopra Steria finished at the end of 2020 and the supplier of MyHarrow was closing. A report to be submitted to Cabinet on the migration would ensure some accessibility by the public, particularly in connection with the most vulnerable.

In response to a question as to how Harrow's Council Tax collection levels in excess of 97% compared with other London Councils, the Leader of the Council stated that Harrow performance was one of best in London. He advised that as 1% of Council Tax collection equated to £1.2m it was important to remind people robustly but the opportunity for payment plans was provided.

Concern was expressed that the staffing component of the Plan did not explicitly refer to gender or BAME staff. The Leader stressed the

commitment made that equality was top of the agenda and that it was recognised that there was always room for improvement. The Chief Executive advised of the inclusion of all the protected characteristics but that the Plan included examples of more recent emphasis. The Committee was advised that generally the workforce reflected the Borough and Community and that in the medium term strategies with regard to representation higher in the management hierarchy would be investigated. The Committee requested that Cabinet include specific reference to equality for gender and BAME staff in the Corporate Plan with targets.

In response to a question relating to Harrow Homes for Harrow People and confusion by residents at the different definitions of affordable homes such as London Affordable Rent, London Living Rent, and the mention of affordable and rent in the Plan, the Leader of the Council explained that the affordability criteria varied between different sites and he undertook to request the officers to circulate the affordable housing list. The Chief Executive added that the list would be helpful due to the quarterly numbers not being included in the Corporate Plan yet as it was the start of the corporate plan process. In addition, when an activity was reported it could indicate the category of the affordable homes. The Divisional Director, Strategic Commissioning further undertook to include a footnote to the Build a Better Harrow section of the Plan to indicate which definition of affordability applied.

With regard to housing, a Member asked for clarification on the numbers of homes as there was reference in different parts of the Plan to: 5500 new homes, £32 million from City Hall to build 614 new council homes, delivering 2000+ new homes on council owned land and mention of 500 homes over the next two years by the Leader when he had spoken to the Committee in January about the draft budget. He asked how many homes would be provided in the next eight to ten years and whether they were all in addition to any private sector building. In addition he asked what the target number of homes was for the Mayor's Homes for Londoners Programme. The Leader of the Council responded that government funding through London Councils was for over 5 years and was a target of 1500 rolling programme. Some sites were Council owned and some provided by developers. The HRA finance would be for 600 homes on infill sites and the Grange Farm development. It was agreed that details of how the different figures given in the report fitted together would be circulated. With regard to the Mayor's Homes for Londoners programme the Council had challenged the basis of one bedroom accommodation as the requirement was for larger properties. The Divisional Director, Strategic Commissioning stated that it was a London target rather than an ambition set by the Council.

A Member suggested that with regard to 16-24 year olds whilst prevention initiatives were programmed there was not much for this age range to do to occupy their time. The Leader of the Council provided examples of projects by the Harrow Young Foundation and social clubs and events across the borough and questioned whether it might not be the range and location of activities but a lack of advertisement. In addition voluntary organisations were doing exceptionally well looking for gaps in the market and putting in bids for funding. He stated that the challenge was to work better together to stop young people getting into the fringes of gangs. A Member commented that

social clubs were not seen as 'cool' or considered to be for those with mental health problems. The Divisional Director, Strategic Commissioning referred to a needs analysis and the piloting of a system to indicate the location of activities by postcode. The general view of the Committee was that engagement and communications were lacking and this should be taken up with voluntary partners. It was noted that some groups were always difficult to engage with.

Members raised a number of questions and received responses as follows:

- Community Infrastructure Levy monies remained in the bank accounts until it was used for a project. There were proposals to simplify the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy;
- the inclusion of additional context and data had to be balanced against readability and the risk that the document became unwieldy. A quarterly Corporate Scorecard report containing RAG (red, amber, green) indicators and quantitative indicators would be submitted to Cabinet. This information could also be included for the Committee in future;
- the aim was to use Harrow People to communicate the high pressures on Adult Services particularly with regard to the health element. There was a need to review how this was communicated;
- with regard to the proposal to reduce the number of Councillors in Harrow to 55, it could not be put forward as an achievement of the Administration for which it had been aimed as it had opposed it and been forced into it. The Leader replied that the Local Government Boundary Commission had made a proposal and as there was no appeal the Council was considering the implementation. An officer stated that the position would be made clear in the narrative.

**Resolved to RECOMMEND:** (to Cabinet)

That the comments from the Committee on the Corporate Plan be referred to Cabinet.

## **RESOLVED ITEMS**

### **46. Flytipping**

The Committee considered a report which contained an overview of fly-tipping in Harrow and the current and future actions being taken to address it in the Borough.

The Head of Service (Community and Public Protection) introduced the report and drew particular attention to the legislation and factors that contributed to fly-tipping in Harrow. The Committee was informed of the mapping of reports of incidences of fly-tipping by Ward which indicated that the lowest was 154 and the highest 850. However there could have been multiple reporting of

sites. It was agreed that copies would be circulated to Ward Councillors as it was important that Members understood the impact on their areas.

The Committee was informed that the large scale dumping of waste had diminished and been replaced by smaller, more household waste fly tips. In Harrow reports of fly tipping from 2011 to 2015 had increased by 5% but the tonnage had decreased. Only 4% of fly-tipping had been identified as commercial waste, which was considered to result from the inspection regime. A lot of black bags were left next to bins in the knowledge that they would be removed by Council operatives.

In addition, the Committee noted the increased number of HMOs (Homes in Multiple Occupation) with a 72% increase in 4 years and a 376% increase in suspected HMOs in the same period. From December 2017 a mandatory condition on all HMOs stipulated that Council policy must be adhered to, for example on how many bins were provided.

Examples of the current approach to tackling fly-tipping were noted including:

- selective licensing to place specific conditions on licences for private rented accommodation regarding waste storage and disposal;
- work in conjunction with Kingdom regarding environmental enforcement and joint work with the London Fire Brigade;
- a 2018 Keep Tidy initiative of which 10 out of the 19 recommendations made were communication based;
- a Lean Review of Fly-tipping which examined the fact that an intelligence led approach was the best means, hitting the areas of main concern and clearing the others without delay;
- visits were made to schools and it was recognised that in addition to pupils being educated on the issue they put pressure on parents to dispose of litter and waste appropriately.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment stated that by accompanying the teams, she had seen the large amount of work undertaken on the issue. With regard to questions on the work of the night riders, she informed Members that a report was generated during the day and outstanding work handed over to those on night duty.

In response to reference to fly-tipping issues at communal premises such as the alleyways behind shops, for example in Central Harrow, Members were informed that such areas were targeted but it was sometimes difficult to identify the perpetrators. The Commercial Safety Team targeted the issue in conjunction with inspections but it took time due to the available resources. Initiatives included hot spot work in particular Wards to identify businesses that were involved. Sometimes the extension of premises resulted in insufficient rubbish storage, a difficulty that was being investigated by an enforcement and waste review.

In response to a question concerning the frustration of residents with regard to fly-tipping on service roads, alleyways and flats, Members noted that there was a lack of understanding that although Environmental Compliance investigated any fly tip whether on public or private land, it did not have a legal responsibility with regard to private land. An example was a service road in Edgware parts of which were owned by 34 people and as the Council collected the rubbish residents blamed the Council for the mess. As it had been difficult to identify the perpetrators, a Community Protection Order had been served on all 34 owners and costs would be recovered for any future rubbish removal.

Regarding whether removal on private land would set a precedent for clearing rubbish, after the first instance residents do not take action as they think the Council will. The Committee was informed of the setting up of a Fly-tipping Strategy and operational Plan with the aim to provide a sustainable approach. The Strategy would be submitted to Cabinet and Council and would take into account all relevant parties including households, private landowners, property landowners, business owners and communities to tackle fly-tipping with the aim for it to be seen as a crime that took up resources.

A Member expressed concern that CCTV warning signs had been erected at sites where a camera was not visible. Members were advised that covert cameras were harder to identify and some cameras moved around the borough as required. Any concerns notified by Members would be responded to.

A Member stated that figures for fly-tipping in the report were different to those quoted in the Corporate Plan and requested that the information be consistent.

In response to questions from Members, the Committee was informed that::

- a bin review was undertaken for any areas identified as a hotspot which included whether insufficient capacity of bins was a factor;
- leafletting took place when an area was targeted and the officers would extend the distribution if appropriate. It was agreed that the leaflets be circulated to Ward Councillors. Officers would ensure that future leaflets included details of the reporting app;
- the need to recognise the different languages spoken in an area was important when considering who to target when communicating in a target area;
- officers would follow up Members' concern that whilst the app for reporting fly-tipping was useful, its existence was not widely known, particularly as it was not mentioned on the website;



- the suggestion of a temporary review of the charge for disposal of mattresses on a single item basis provided ownership was proved would be considered. It was stated that amnesty days had taken place in the past but the Council did not want people to anticipate it;

The officer was thanked for an interesting in depth report and agreed to provide an update.

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

#### **47. Termination of the Meeting**

In accordance with the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 14 (Part 4B of the Constitution) it was

**RESOLVED:** At 9.55 pm to continue to 10.10 pm.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 10.10 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR JEFF ANDERSON  
Chair