

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda

Date: Tuesday 14 September 2021

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Virtual Meeting - Online

Membership (Quorum 4)

Chair: Councillor Sachin Shah

Labour Councillors: Dan Anderson
Jeff Anderson
Sarah Butterworth
Ajay Maru

Conservative Councillors: Stephen Greek (VC)
Jean Lammiman
Kanti Rabadia

Representatives of Voluntary Aided Sector: Mr N Ransley / Reverend P Reece

Representatives of Parent Governors: Mr M Chandran / Ms M Trivedi

(Note: Where there is a matter relating to the Council's education functions, the "church" and parent governor representatives have attendance, speaking and voting rights. They are entitled to speak but not vote on any other matter.)

Representative of Harrow Youth Parliament

Labour Reserve Members:

1. James Lee
2. Jerry Miles
3. Chloe Smith
4. Angella Murphy-Strachan
5. Sasi Suresh

Conservative Reserve Members:

1. Philip Benjamin
2. Stephen Wright
3. Norman Stevenson
4. Ramji Chauhan

Contact: Andrew Seaman, Senior Democratic & Electoral Services Officer
E-mail: andrew.seaman@harrow.gov.uk

Scan this code for the electronic agenda:



Useful Information

Meeting details

This meeting is open to the press and public and can be viewed on www.harrow.gov.uk/virtualmeeting

Filming / recording of meetings

Please note that proceedings at this meeting may be recorded or filmed. If you choose to attend, you will be deemed to have consented to being recorded and/or filmed.

The recording will be made available on the Council website following the meeting.

Agenda publication date: Monday 6 September 2021

Agenda - Part I

1. Attendance by Reserve Members

To note the attendance at this meeting of any duly appointed Reserve Members.

Reserve Members may attend meetings:-

- (i) to take the place of an ordinary Member for whom they are a reserve;
- (ii) where the ordinary Member will be absent for the **whole** of the meeting; and
- (iii) the meeting notes at the start of the meeting at the item 'Reserves' that the Reserve Member is or will be attending as a reserve;
- (iv) if a Reserve Member whose intention to attend has been noted arrives after the commencement of the meeting, then that Reserve Member can only act as a Member from the start of the next item of business on the agenda after his/her arrival.

2. Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary or non pecuniary interests, arising from business to be transacted at this meeting, from:

- (a) all Members of the Committee;
- (b) all other Members present.

3. Minutes

3(a) Minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2021: (Pages 7 - 10)

That the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 20 April 2021 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

3(b) Minutes of the meeting held on 5 May 2021: (Pages 11 - 16)

That the minutes of the special meeting held on 5 May 2021 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

3(c) Minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2021: (Pages 17 - 24)

That the minutes of the special meeting held on 17 May 2021 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

3(d) Minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2021: (Pages 25 - 36)

That the minutes of the special meeting held on 1 July 2021 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

3(e) Minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2021: (To Follow)

That the minutes of the special meeting held on 12 July 2021 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

4. Public Questions *

To receive any public questions received in accordance with Committee Procedure Rule 17 (Part 4B of the Constitution).

Questions will be asked in the order in which they were received. There will be a time limit of 15 minutes for the asking and answering of public questions.

[The deadline for receipt of public questions is 3.00 pm, 9 September 2021. Questions should be sent to publicquestions@harrow.gov.uk

No person may submit more than one question].

5. **Petitions**

To receive petitions (if any) submitted by members of the public/Councillors under the provisions of Committee Procedure Rule 15 (Part 4B of the Constitution).

6. **References from Council/Cabinet**

(if any).

7. **Race Equality in Harrow Council (To Follow)**

Report of the Chief Executive.

8. **Any Other Business**

Which cannot otherwise be dealt with.

Agenda - Part II - Nil

*** Data Protection Act Notice**

The Council will audio record item 4 (Public Questions) and will place the audio recording on the Council's website, which will be accessible to all.

[Note: The questions and answers will not be reproduced in the minutes.]

Deadline for questions	3.00 pm on Thursday 9 September 2021
------------------------	---

This page is intentionally left blank



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes

20 April 2021

Present:

Chair: Councillor Sachin Shah

Councillors: Dan Anderson
Sarah Butterworth
Stephen Greek
Honey Jamie
Jean Lammiman
Chris Mote
Kanti Rabadia

Absent: Councillor Jeff Anderson
Mr M Chandran
Harrow Youth Parliament
Representative
Mr N Ransley
Reverend P Reece
Ms M Trivedi

149. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance.

150. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that

- (1) the Declarations of Interests published in advance of the meeting on the Council's website were taken as read;
- (2) Members of the Committee and Co-opted Members who had declared interests remained in the virtual meeting whilst the matters were considered and voted upon.

151. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2021 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

152. Public Questions

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were received.

153. Petitions

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions had been received.

154. References from Council/Cabinet

RESOLVED: To note that no references were received.

Resolved Items

155. Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-2021

The Committee received the Scrutiny annual report 2020/21.

The Chair introduced the report and noted that due to the pandemic the report could not be done in the format as the previous year, but thanked the officers for delivering a good report.

The Committee thanked the officers for the report and be proud of what was achieved given the circumstances. The Committee noted that it outlined the past year well and gave a good insight into scrutiny.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be considered and agreed;
- (2) the report be submitted to Full Council for endorsement..

156. Scrutiny Work Programme 2021-2022

The Committee received the Scrutiny Work Programme 2021/22.

The Chair introduced the report and noted this was a focus of what would happen over the next year, with some key topics to come to scrutiny.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be considered and approved;
- (2) the report be submitted to Full Council for endorsement.

157. Shared Services Scrutiny Review Report

Members received a report which presented the findings and recommendations from the Shared Services Scrutiny Review. The review had commenced in late 2019 but had to conclude early in March 2020, as the Covid-19 pandemic diverted resources and continued to stretch organisational capacity.

A member of the Committee presented the report and highlighted the following:

- the review had been carried out in the midst of the pandemic which had been challenging and whilst not all objectives had been met, the report highlighted some positives;
- feasibility study appraisals should support Council decisions on future shared services, with risks being able to be identified and mitigated;
- it was crucial that contracts and agreements in shared services had exit strategies included.

The Committee raised a number of points including that the opportunity to revisit this issue in the future would be welcomed.

The Chair and Committee thanked the officers and review panel for their work and agreed that this should be included on the Scrutiny Work Programme

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Shared Services Scrutiny Review be endorsed;
- (2) the review's report and recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration and response;
- (3) in line with Rule 25.1.1 of the Council's Committee Procedure Rules, Rule 40.2 be suspended, to allow the Executive a longer timeframe within which to respond to the Review, in recognition of current stretch in organisational capacity and that the response be provided by September 2021.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.41 pm, closed at 7.06 pm).

(Signed) Councillor Sachin Shah
Chair

This page is intentionally left blank



Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Special)

Minutes

5 May 2021

Present:

Chair: Councillor Sachin Shah

Councillors: Dan Anderson
Jeff Anderson
Sarah Butterworth
Stephen Greek
Jean Lammiman
Ajay Maru
Chris Mote
Kanti Rabadia

158. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance.

159. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of interests made by Members.

Resolved Items

160. Appointment of Vice-Chair

RESOLVED: To appoint Councillor Stephen Greek as Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

161. Establishment of Sub-Committees 2021/22

RESOLVED: That the Sub-Committees of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be established for the Municipal Year 2021/22 with the memberships and Chairs detailed in Appendix I to these minutes.

162. Appointment of Scrutiny Leads 2021/22

RESOLVED: That the Scrutiny Lead Members and their areas of responsibility, as set out in Appendix II to these minutes, be agreed.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 8.28 pm, closed at 8.31 pm).

(Signed) Councillor Sachin Shah
Chair

Scrutiny Sub Committees 2021/22

(Membership in order of political group nominations)

(1) Call-In Sub-Committee (5)

(To be selected from the following nominees)

**Labour
(3)****Conservative
(2)****I.
Members**

**Jeff Anderson
Angella Murphy-Strachan (CH)
Chloe Smith**

**Stephen Greek *
Norman Stevenson**

**II.
Reserve
Members**

1. Dan Anderson
2. James Lee
3. Pamela Fitzpatrick

1. Jean Lammiman
2. Lynda Seymour

CH

= Chair

* = Denotes Group Members for consultation on Administrative Matters

(2) Call-In Sub-Committee (Education) (9)

	Labour (5)	Conservative (4)
I. Members	Jeff Anderson (CH) Niraj Dattani Angella Murphy-Strachan Chloe Smith Sasi Suresh	Camilla Bath Ramji Chauhan Janet Mote * Lynda Seymour
II. Reserve Members	1. Pamela Fitzpatrick 2. Dean Gilligan 3. Kareema Marikar 4. Primesh Patel 5. Kiran Ramchandani	1. Marilyn Ashton 2. Jean Lammiman 3. Mina Parmar †4. Norman Stevenson †5. Stephen Wright

Voting Co-opted Members:

- (1) Two representatives of Voluntary Aided Sector
- Mr N Ransley/Reverend P Reece
- (2) Two representatives of Parent Governors
- Ms M Trivedi (Primary)/Mr M Chandran (Secondary)

CH = Chair
* = Denotes Group Members for consultation on Administrative Matters

† **[Note:** The appointed number of Reserves for each Group is in excess of the Committee Procedure Rule 3.2 provision, by virtue of Resolution 17: Overview and Scrutiny Committee (18.7.06).]

(3) Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee (5)

	Labour (3)	Conservative (2)
I. Members	Michael Borio Kareema Marikar Rekha Shah (CH)	Dr Lesline Lewinson Vina Mithani *
II. Reserve Members	1. Niraj Dattani 2. Dan Anderson 3. Chloe Smith	1. Chetna Halai 2. Chris Mote

(4) Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee (5)

	Labour (3)	Conservative (2)
I. Members	Kareema Marikar Ajay Maru Kiran Ramchandani (CH)	Nitesh Hirani Pritesh Patel *
II. Reserve Members	1. Niraj Dattani 2. Dean Gilligan 3. David Perry	1. Ameet Jogia 2. Amir Moshenson

CH = Chair
* = Denotes Group Members for consultation on Administrative Matters

Scrutiny Lead Members 2021 – 2022

Lead Member	Councillor 2021/22
Community	Councillor Kareema Marikar Councillor Jean Lammiman
Health	Councillor Michael Borio Councillor Vina Mithani
People	Councillor Jerry Miles Councillor Janet Mote
Resources	Councillor Dan Anderson Councillor Kanti Rabadia



Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Special)

Minutes

17 May 2021

Present:

Chair: Councillor Sachin Shah

Councillors: Dan Anderson
Sarah Butterworth
Stephen Greek
Jerry Miles
Jean Lammiman
Chris Mote
Kanti Rabadia
James Lee

Voting Co-opted: (Voluntary Aided)
Mr N Ransley
Reverend P Reece

Non-voting Co-opted: Harrow Youth Parliament
Representative

Apologies received: Councillor Jeff Anderson
Councillor Ajay Maru

Absent: Mr M Chandran
Harrow Youth Parliament
Representative
Mr N Ransley
Reverend P Reece
Ms M Trivedi

163. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: That Cllr Jerry Miles is reserving for Cllr Jeff Anderson and that Cllr James Lee is reserving for Cllr Ajay Maru.

164. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that

- (1) the Declarations of Interests published in advance of the meeting on the Council's website were taken as read;
- (2) Members of the Committee and Co-opted Members who had declared interests remained in the virtual meeting whilst the matters were considered and voted upon.

Resolved Items

165. The Council's Accommodation Strategy and the Harrow New Civic Centre

Members received a report which presented the proposed approach to the Council's future accommodation, outlined the reasons for this and sought the necessary approvals for carrying out works to the Forward Drive Depot, incorporating the proposals in the Harrow Strategic Development Partnership Business Plan. The Committee were asked to consider the report prior to its submission to Cabinet.

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and highlighted the following:

- Like many organisations, since the pandemic there had been a shift in the way the Council worked with an increased move towards online and remote working. This emphasised that the need for future office-based work had reduced.
- Staff surveys had revealed that being able to work remotely had created a better working environment for many of our staff.
- The current Civic Centre was no longer fit for purpose due to substantial financial costs and approaching the end of life. The Depot site would be able to accommodate all the required staff working in an agile environment.
- 40 carpark spaces were the maximum achievable at the new Civic Centre space.
- The proposals provided the opportunity for more affordable housing as well as staff to being able to work in a more modern working environment.

The Interim Director of Commercial Development advised:

- This was the second of three reports for finalising the establishment of the Harrow Strategic Development Partnership. The first report was the appointment of Wates as preferred bidder and the key part of this report had been for the accommodation strategy to be agreed and the

HNC in particular. The recommendations would then inform the final business plan for setting up the partnership.

- The report set out the change of situation, the learning from the wider market, the development of the flexible futures programme and the experience of the pandemic which changed the Council's requirements.
- The Forward Drive Depot was available for high quality offices. There were constraints on the depot letting and noted that it would nevertheless be an improvement on the existing buildings.
- As the Forward Drive Depot was not necessarily an appropriate space, the report also addressed the identification of ancillary spaces.

The Director of Finance highlighted the financial implications of the report including:

- The accommodation strategy, fitting out the Forward Drive Depot for staff which would cost circa £7.6m in terms of capital which had already been accounted for in the Council's capital programme. This meant that no extra capital would need to be added to the existing budget.
- There was an associated revenue cost of £725,000 which was primarily for ancillary spaces which had been accounted for in the 2020/21 outturn report.
- The financial implications for the Council in relation to the Harrow Strategic Development Partnership, highlighted that, based on the current Business Plan model, there would be no impact on the general fund.
- The Council's total capital investment over the initial 12-year period of the scheme would be £48.6m. This covered the Council's investment in the Harrow Strategic Development Partnership and the new Civic Centre. The financial model also showed that the Council would receive capital receipts from the Harrow Strategic Development Partnership which would cover the Council's capital investment leaving the Council with a net borrowing requirement estimated at £10.2m.
- The Council would receive a series of interest payments from the Harrow Strategic Development Partnership to cover capital financing cost.
- Consideration should be given to using dividends received from the arrangement and will be used to clear any debt from this arrangement.

Members asked questions and had a discussion in relation to the following areas:

- The content in the exempt section of the report should be reviewed as it may be possible to make it available to the public.
- Appropriate facilities for services were required. Queries were raised about where various essential front desk services would be located across the borough and how permanent this would be. Concerns were also raised about the level of detail and consistency being provided, and whether the strategy fully met the needs of future service provision.
- Flexible working should meet the needs of the Council. Queries were raised about whether the long-term impact of partial remote working was being considered and accounted for, and the flexibility for any future changes in work patterns. Also, how confidentiality could be maintained in a more open and flexible work setting.
- In response to concerns raised regarding public safety for journeys home in the evening, given the level of parking at the new Civic Centre, it was noted that measures would need to be put in place for staff, Members and residents to ensure this was maintained.
- The planned split between the Council's democratic functions at the new Civic Centre and administrative functions at Forward Drive, the impact on accountability and future running of the council, and where senior officers would be based.
- Financial issues and queries were raised, including the level of borrowing and financial returns, the additional costs of fitting out Forward Drive, the cumulative costs of the new Civic Centre and Forward Drive schemes, and when a business plan would be available to support the Accommodation Strategy.
- The level of parking provision, including whether 40 spaces at the new Civic Centre would be sufficient to support its planned use, and how this would affect its accessibility to members, officers and the local community.

Members went on to discuss and question specific details of the Council's Accommodation Strategy and the Harrow New Civic Centre as follows:

- In response to the challenge that some services had not yet been assigned a designated location from which to operate, Members were advised that this was largely down to delays caused by the pandemic, but that space was available to accommodate them. Locations were being considered which would make services such as homelessness more accessible. Time was available for the optimum scenarios to be considered. It was noted that the current Civic Centre would remain until October 2022.

- Regarding concerns over the practicality of using Libraries and the Art's Centre for council front desk services, it was noted that these facilities had available rooms that had previously been used to deliver services. Children services access points would be designated to an appropriate location with various options available for consideration. Libraries would be considered for services such as housing benefits and Council Tax.
- The Committee questioned how the needs of staff would be met once the move occurred, an officer advised that focus groups had been collecting information with engagement taking place at several levels of the organisation to ensure accessibility was addressed. The Civic Centre was being used as a pilot prior to the opening of Forward Drive.
- Concern was expressed in relation to the protection of data and was advised that protection for data held electronically had been enhanced with the recent improvements to devices, software and storage. With the reduction in photocopying and printed that had happened through remote working, the risk of a breach for data recorded on paper had also reduced. Officers would work with focus groups to look at further ways data protection could be enhanced in an agile working environment.
- The Committee emphasised the importance of public engagement and the need to ensure that it was still at the forefront, especially in view of the significant changes since the previous civic centre proposals. It was noted that publicity and engagement with the public on this project had started in 2014 and the Council would make sure that services would be accessible.
- Regarding how services would be designated across Harrow, it was highlighted that existing services were already stationed at multiple locations.
- Members sought reassurance as to how the agile working strategy would suit Harrow and its delivery of priorities as well as how the change in attitude towards working from would affect the strategy. It was noted that time worked in the office had been under significant consideration which concluded that 50% would be an optimal ambition. It was found that staff would want the flexibility of working from home but would not want to be completely remote. For this reason, it was planned to reopen the current Civic Centre as the Civic Hub as soon as possible. It was also noted that prior to the Pandemic the Civic Centre had been occupied at a 50-60% capacity. The Volterra report noted that there had been a steady reduction in workspace and suggested 50% time in the office would be optimal.

- In response to the concern that the interaction between Members and Senior Staff would be more difficult maintained when split between two main locations, the Committee were advised that it would be possible for Members and Officers to work from both the Forward Drive Depot as well as the new Harrow Civic Centre. It was expected with this fluidity and the use of hybrid and virtual meetings, interaction would be increased.
- The point of communication was raised as a potential issue, and the Committee were informed that communication with senior staff had improved since the Council moved to more remote and electronic forms of communication. The arrangement of meetings should not be an issue. It was noted that there would be multiple ways of interacting from desk space, private meeting rooms and public Café space.
- Regarding the concerns over the longevity of the strategy, an officer advised that working remotely had been proven to work during the past year, but that it had highlighted that there were improvements that could be made for staff hence why it would be made possible for staff to work in an office for 2-3 days of week. This would be tested via the Civic Hub.
- Clarification was sought in relation to the location of services in the Borough. In response, it was advised that for many years the Council has had a strategy of moving services on-line which has led to fewer residents visiting the Civic Centre. However, there was a commitment to make sure that services could still be accessible for residents in person from other locations across the Borough.
- Clarification of details within the business plan were requested and the Interim Director of Commercial Development explained that further due diligence would be undertaken with the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) before the costs were agreed, as the current assumptions made by the HSDP (Wates) exceeded the Greater London Authority (GLA) assumed costs.
- In response to a Member's comments that increased understanding of the HRA was required, the Director of Finance explained that the HRA business plan had assumed an average unit price of £325,000 per affordable housing unit. However, the current financial viability model gives a costing of £345,000 per affordable housing unit. This report had highlighted this difference and that due diligence would need to be done to reconcile these unit prices before a decision could be made.
- The Committee challenged how the Borough would handle the taxation of this partnership. The Director of Finance advised that the dividends were defined as the money received from the HSDP as units are sold by the partnership, which would be a share of the sales made. The taxes had been accounted for with the LLP having been set up in the most tax efficient way.

- The Committee sought further explanation/ a breakdown of the fit-out costs for the Forward Drive Depot. The costs broken down covered: local area network arrangements, audio and visual requirements, moving costs and costs for ancillary spaces. The building included 38,000 square feet, this included: furniture, a café, welfare facilities, reception area, IT and audio, a CCTV room, toilets, showers, muster rooms, building management software and mechanical and electrical fittings.
- It was also noted through discussion that the fit-out costs for Harrow New Civic would include fixtures, fittings and equipment.
- Concern was expressed in relation to parking and the accessibility and safety for visitors. An officer responded that the HNC car park had been planned to provide six accessible spaces on the ground floor with an additional 40 spaces within the basement carpark for visitors, staff and Members. The Harrow New Civic had an excellent rating for Public Transport Accessibility.
- The Committee questioned the commercial prospects at Forward Drive as there were café spaces which had the possibility of being commercially let as well as other units which could be, and in many cases already were being commercially let. Similar considerations applied to the Café at HNC.
- As a result of concerns raised over the issue of public safety the Committee highlighted this as a priority that required serious consideration. In response, Members were advised that commitment to the safety of staff and residents had been taken seriously with options such as taxis provided as a way for those attending evening meetings to travel home safely. Daytime meetings could also be considered. Works in Wealdstone itself had improved public safety.
- In response to a request for clarification in relation to the the funds for Poet's Corner, the Director of Finance explained that the funding for Poet's Corner had already been provided for through the capital programme and any borrowing required would be paid back through the returns of the Harrow Strategic Development Partnership.

The Chair thanked Members for their contributions and questions and officers for their presentation and responses.

RESOLVED: That the Committee's comments in relation to the Council's Accommodation Strategy and the Harrow New Civic Centre be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.30 pm, closed at 9.06 pm).

(Signed) Councillor Sachin Shah
Chair



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes

1 July 2021

Present:

Chair: Councillor Sachin Shah

Councillors: Dan Anderson
Jeff Anderson
Sarah Butterworth
Stephen Greek
Jean Lammiman
Chris Mote
Angella Murphy-Strachan
Kanti Rabadia

In attendance (Councillors): Graham Henson
Natasha Proctor
For Minute 168
For Minute 168

Apologies received: Ajay Maru

Absent: Mr M Chandran
Harrow Youth Parliament
Representative
Mr N Ransley
Reverend P Reece
Ms M Trivedi

166. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

Ordinary Member

Reserve Member

Councillor Ajay Maru

Councillor Angella Murphy-Strachan

167. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that

- (1) the Declarations of Interests published in advance of the meeting on the Council's website were taken as read;
- (2) Members of the Committee and Co-opted Members who had declared interests remained in the virtual meeting whilst the matters were considered and voted upon.

Resolved Items

168. Harrow Strategic Development Partnership Contract Close and Establishment

Members received a report which presented the final report to the procurement process for the Harrow Strategic Development Partnership (HSDP). The report proposed the set -up of the partnership and sought the approval for execution of the suite of legal documents which would facilitate the establishment of the HSDP and to approve the initial Business Plan which would form the early work programme.

The Chair invited questions from Members under the following topics:

Operational Matter relating to Wates.

Q1. Regarding staffing such as external support, the core team, and the development management team. Would it be right to say they would all be Wates staff?

An officer explained that they were members of Wates staff. With management teams and development managers dedicated to each site individually. They would be supported by experts in particular fields such as finance analysis, sales and marketing as well as input and advise at the early stage from the construction delivery teams.

Wates' staff would be advising the board, it would seem that the advisers would all be coming from Wates. How would you ensure the advice would be impartial?

An Officer explained that the advisers were there to enable Wates to fulfil the services that Wates were obliged to fill under the development management agreement, as they were the appointed development manager. For example, some of that evidence on sales revenue would also be further supported by independent advice on the benchmarking of various bits of data from the wider marketplace. Therefore, Wates would be fulfilling its development management services.

What staff would the Council provide to advise the Board?

The Interim Commercial Director outlined that some partnerships would be staffed by directly employed staff, however this approach was not chosen by the Council and instead the Council decided that Wates, in a development management role would resource the HSDP. It was reassured that relevant Council Officers would be advising the board and it was still being considered

whether commercial advice would be retained by the Council. It should not be felt that Wates were the only ones advising board.

Q2. Regarding the Middlesex window glass and tiles, what would Wates be do with these and had it been costed into the move?

The designs were still to be developed for the civic centre and it was understood that there were a number of items in the Civic Centre to be retained and integrated into the new design of the new Civic Centre. Designs made would incorporate the stained glass and tile mural and be presented once completed.

How would the costs of preserving these artifacts impact the project?

As designs were worked through the cost impacts of including these features would be accounted for during the development of the design.

Q3. Wates were chosen for their commitment to work being done by local contractors in the community. What sort of commitments still stand and how would Wates identify and uphold these commitments?

Those commitments made at the bid stage still stand and some of those commitments were outlined in the business plan. Local spend had been committed to during the construction process for each of the three core sites. But in addition, there would be commitment around employment, skills training, support of local businesses. Wates' involvement with local businesses would go further to support business skills and workshops.

Would it be possible to incorporate an analysis on local spend in the reporting?

It was confirmed that this would be incorporated into the reporting, teams from Wates were already working with the Council for more detailed actions plans to be developed on a site-by-site basis.

Q4. Regarding the Middlesex guildhall art collection. Had any contact been made with the secretary of the trust regarding having an appropriate cabinet for the silverware? Where would the civic portraits go?

Wates were aware that there was a need to have the silverware collection displayed and for the civic portraits to be incorporated into the design. It was acknowledged that there was a need to reflect the heritage of Harrow and for these items to be fully integrated. Wates would want to work with the appropriate people within the Council to ensure that the designs that come forward incorporated these elements in a suitable manner.

The interim Commercial Director noted that the design process would have extensive engagement with the Committee and would be an ongoing process. The Chief Executive also noted that preserving the history of the buildings would need to be reflected in the new building.

Q5. Regarding a culture of no surprises. Were you satisfied from Wates' and the Council's point of view that there would not likely to be any surprises in the future?

An officer from Wates noted that they were satisfied that there would not likely be surprises. There was the HSDP Board in place that would meet on a monthly basis along with delegation policies put into place for key decision making. In addition, the partnership was there to work together and noted that there would be challenges but it would be how challenges were resolved in order to work for both parties.

The Chief Executive noted that it would be likely that challenges would present themselves but at this stage, to forecast these challenges would be difficult. It would be important for the Council and Wates to operate in a transparent way so that unnecessary issues would not be created.

Less than a year away from local elections, this could result in changes to the Council's priorities and the way the Council operates and potentially how the Council wants to operate towards this partnership. What flexibility would there be within this arrangement to account for what might happen at next year's election?

There were flexibilities within the legal documents and it would be possible to change the business plan and the arrangements of what would be proposed to be delivered at a particular site. However, fundamental changes would incur costs and consent would be required.

The Chief Executive reassured that Wates understood the context of the elections and that the result of those elections could mean a change in priorities.

Changes do not actually seem to be easily made and that if the Council decided to dissolve the partnership there would be a penalty cost. Therefore, the Council would likely have to continue with the plan or face huge costs.

The timing of the choice would have an impact on this. Some changes would be harder to reverse, such as construction. Changes would likely be made before the conditions had been met and assets had been transferred. Costs of changes made would be less before planning applications were made.

Q6. Who would be leading the review on the client-side structure to ensure necessary skills and abilities to monitor performance? When would the review be complete? Who would be responsible for actions necessary if training were needed? Would Councillors be involved in the continued training in order for councillors to continue to scrutinise performance?

The review would be led by the Chief Executive and the new Communities Director and would be expected to conclude at the beginning of 2022. Member training would be continued due to importance of having scrutiny within the committee and the HSDP Board.

Q7. Was there any safeguarding in place, due to the uncertainty of next year's election, no planning permission, and no clear plan? Would the transfer of assets be until these were in place?

The Interim Commercial Director noted that the transfer of assets would be unlikely to take place before May 2022. The planning application for Byron would likely be in the early part of Quarter 1 for 2022. The planning application for Peel would then follow in Quarter 2 of 2022. Due to the first condition being the need for viable planning permission it would therefore be unlikely that assets would be transferred before next year's election.

Was planning permission the main condition or were there other conditions to meet that would trigger the process?

There were a number of conditions that would trigger the process examples included: the Council would need to give vacant possession of the site and that there would have to be a funded scheme. It was emphasised that all were important.

Governance and structure

Q1. Could there be comments on the HSDP Board being an all-male and almost all white board?

Councillor Keith Ferry and Councillor Ajay Maru were nominated by the Council and there was a Member panel to recruit an independent person from those that had applied for the role. Regarding Wates' side there had been a few changes recently to the board Members, however it was worth noting that the overall development management team was a diverse team.

A Member stated that equalities, diversity, and inclusion were not reflected in the HSDP board makeup, with more effort should be made to recruit a more diverse board.

Q2. If residents or Councillors were concerned about the way representatives on the HSDP board vote or take actions. Would there be a mechanism to challenge these?

The delegation policy outlined that any major decisions would be taken by the Council. Other significant decisions would go to the Council at various levels or would go to the HSDP Board with the appropriate approvals and safeguards. It was noted that Board Members could be changed if it were necessary.

The Leader of the Council highlighted that a number of Councillors were appointed to external bodies and were acting as representatives of the Council and therefore would be under the governance procedures and conduct procedures set out in the constitution. This would mean if a complaint was heard it would be heard through that practice.

Would there be any protocol for how our board Members should operate or how the Council manage the decisions made within the context of the HSDP?

A protocol of this nature was not currently in place, but the Council could put this into place. It was noted that this would not be a controlled company and should not be treated as such.

Would the partnership be in any way subject to freedom of information act, equality duties and the same standards expected from the Council?

The partnership would not be subjected to the Freedom of Information Act and the other disclosure requirements to which the Council is. Information coming in and from the Council with the partnership would be subject to the Freedom of Information act. However, certain information would be commercially sensitive.

The Chief Executive highlighted that not all interactions would be through the HSDP Board and that there would be opportunities to hold the partnership to account outside of the HSDP Board.

Q3. How were those chosen to be on the HSDP board made?

A Member raised concern over the equality impact the partnership would be subject to which was followed by a response from the interim Commercial Director who noted that the partnership would not be under the same equality duties as the Council. However, the partnership would be subject to the law and the partnership had committed to comply with legislation in all aspects, and this would include carrying out Equalities Impact assessments in the way that the Council would.

The independent position on the board was publicly advertised and publicly applied for and a Member Panel carried out the interviews and chose the candidate.

The Leader of the Council mentioned that one Member was an engineer and town planner with qualifications and experience that supported this. The other Member had emphasised their value when it came to community engagement.

An officer from Wates explained that the board Members brought with them a range of different skill sets, this included Wates' Finance Director, Production Director and Head of Partnerships.

What would be the need to have three other entities under the partnership? Could there be further explanation into why there was an independent nominee for the HSDP board?

An Officer explained that the three nominee companies were common practice for development structures. This would be to establish subsidiaries and enable non-recourse structures in relation to different developmental sites to be delivered through different subsidiaries.

An officer explained that a limited liability partnership (LLP) had to have 2 Members and to be able to incorporate and wholly own a subsidiary, a nominee was needed, which would not have an impact on the governance.

Where were the assets and liabilities being held? Do the subsidiaries have any liabilities, risks, or responsibilities?

An Officer explained that the subsidiaries would have liabilities and obligations but also, the LLP would have liabilities and obligations as funding and profits would be moved to and from the LLP and subsidiaries. It was noted that land ownership would be placed in the subsidiaries. The LLP would have rights over these subsidiaries within this group structure as it would be the holding entity of that structure, it would also have a finance and governance relationship and subsidiaries would not operate independently from the LLP.

Business Planning

Q1. Could not see details of the bedroom numbers of the homes, designs and parking space, was there information on these matters?

An officer from Wates acknowledged that the unit mix was not fully determined, but from the business plan there were some indicative master plans for each of the sites which would be subject to the planning processes, public consultations, and engagement with Council planning officers so that it would be made sure that the each of these schemes were developed in a way that was appropriate.

The Officer also outlined that this would be the case for parking and would be determined once developed and worked through.

With overcrowding being a particular issue, how would we know if the schemes meet the issue of overcoming overcrowding?

A Wates officer explained that more detailed business plans for each of the sites would be brought forward and it should be noted that it was proposed for some houses to be provided at the development on Poets and at Byron and that the Committee's point was noted that the mix developed would need to be appropriate.

These master plans were indicative and would be further developed and worked through with a balance between viability and having the number of units of homes being delivered across the sites.

Would it have been better to have produced planning briefs in advance of the contract being signed?

The Leader of the Council responded by saying that this partnership was designed to do that kind of work. If the Council had continued this project independently it would have required recruiting a high volume of people and incurred a high amount of costs and risk. Whereas this was a partnership with each party bringing particular skillsets to the partnership. The planning briefs and consultations would then take place.

How meaningful would a consultation be after we have signed the contract? Compare to being able to establish certain criteria in advance.

The Leader of the Council mentioned that there would be meaningful scrutiny and consultation at the planning stage, especially when presented to the Planning Committee.

The Chief Executive noted that senior planning officers took part in dialogue and who assessed the bids. This gave reassurance in the context that what had been put forward had a reasonable likelihood of fitting in the London and local planning policy.

The Interim Commercial Director also noted that it was important to have consultation with the Council and Wates both committed to that. It was highlighted that the signing of the contract for this partnership should not be seen as the determining point as to what was built, it would be the viability of the project and for that reason that was why scale and mass was needed. There was flexibility in the project, but changes would affect the land values and the returns.

Q2. How would the partnership know when a consultation had been meaningful? Would there be tracking on where the consultation results came from? Would there be a target to listen to certain groups?

An officer from Wates outlined that a detailed consultation strategy would be put in place, work had already been carried out on the engagement with groups such as businesses, residents, and academic institutions and were engaged with the regeneration and economic development team to make sure lists of who the partnership engages with were comprehensive. Tracking would be put into place to ensure that engagement had been carried out with as wide a spread of the community as possible.

A Member raised that it would be beneficial for the Committee to see those consultation KPIs once developed.

Q3. Why were current residents not mentioned in the partnership charter when it came to consultation? What should the key items be in the business plan? Would it be possible for the flexible parts of the business plan to be highlighted?

There was no intention for existing residents to be excluded. Existing residents would be seen as stakeholders to be engaged with. Future residents had referred to how future residents would be integrated into these developments and for it to be ensured that sustainable and positive communities to be built.

The flexibility of the business plan would be through the annual reviews and also the Councils input into the phased business plans which would ultimately influence the direction of the project.

The interim Commercial Director added that this was the initial business plan, and more detail would be introduced in the next phase of the business plan. The current business plan reflected the Council's ambition and the Partnership's response to those ambitions. The flexibility would be with the Council when key decisions would need to be made.

Q4. Could we get a better understanding as to why the Council's priorities within the borough plan were not shown better in the business plan?

The Leader of the Council noted that the priorities could be seen in previous reports and documents and this particular report was to decide on entering a partnership with Wates. It was acknowledged that the priorities would be better shown throughout the process.

Monitoring, Finance, and the Business Plan

Q1. Why was there a lack of assumptions in the business plan?

The Director of Finance noted that the assumptions were based on the numbers within the business plan, which included contingencies. It would be possible to make this more explicit however, the budget was a financial expression of the business plan.

The interim Commercial Director also noted that there were ranges set within the business plan because there would need to be detailed plans and consultations implemented.

An Avison Young officer noted that Wates had presented an optimum model when their bid was made using the parameters set by the Council. It would give cost neutrality and affordable housing percentages in terms of local policy compliance. Further optimisation would occur once details and designs have been made.

Q2. Would it be possible to get a better understanding as to what the peak debt would actually be?

The Director of Finance explained that the peak debt position was the borrowing that the Council would potentially take on for the investment in the HSDP. The £44m related to the peak debt in the HSDP LLP. There were 2 sets of figures, the financial implications specifically for the Council and then there were the financial implications for the LLP which were both different figures.

Why have no KPIs yet been set?

The draft KPIs were circulated for the construction exclusivity piece which were still under development. In addition, KPIs had not been set as it was important to have KPIs based on the detailed development of each specific site.

Would there not be KPIs set on the outset?

The board were working on setting up their own KPIs and the Committee and Cabinet could suggest KPIs. The Council would ultimately be monitoring the financial performance and monitor the delivery against time and outputs. There would be a customer satisfaction KPI for the new housing as well as KPIs suggested by the Committee to monitor the consultation.

The Chief Executive outlined that the Council had set strategic KPIs and that the detailed KPIs were to follow.

Q3. What had the 2.5% cost inflation rate been based on and what provisions had been put into place as this could change in the future?

An Avison Young officer explained that there was the forecast of inflation Wates received from professional advisers. Both the Council and Wate had worked alongside their advisers to understand additional allowances and for key cost risks to be identified.

Q4. When would public communications go out to inform residents of the details of this partnership?

The Interim Director noted that current reports were in the public domain. Consultation would begin once the design phase had been started which would be in September.

Risk register

Q1. Would it be appropriate for the partnership to be moved ahead when the risk indicators were shown to be amber?

The Interim Commercial Director indicated that it was important to have mitigation in place that could deal with those risks identified, that no development was entirely risk free, and that it was perfectly legitimate to start a project with red risks providing appropriate mitigation was in place.

Q2. Could some of the mitigations be better explained?

The interim Commercial Director noted that these mitigations were in place and summarised and that both sides of the Partnership would understand what would need to happen and be ready to act where appropriate. More detail can always be provided where requested, and the extent of the mitigation will develop as required.

Q3. Would it be a risk not knowing what the public thinks of this project before the partnership went ahead?

The Chief Executive outlined that had been consultations on these schemes at a number of sites previously. That this process had been done within the public domain.

Housing

Q1. Could we get an understanding as to why it had not been mentioned in the report to have a commitment to Council housing?

The Leader of the Council outlined that there had been plans to build Council housing outside of the partnership, some sites might need to be owned by a registered provider. There was a process in the HSDP to determine whether the Council wished to own the housing and the price it would pay. If the Council could afford this following due diligence it could operate this process.

There was always a need to consider the issue of the right to buy which would be detrimental to the Council.

Q2. Once the housing had been built, who would own the freeholds? Would the market homes be sold as freehold or leasehold? Who would manage the private rented sector (PRS) homes?

The interim Commercial Director explained that the freehold of everything except for the houses would be retained by the Council. The house freeholds would be transferred to the end purchaser. The Council's PRS provider would manage and own the PRS homes who would forward fund the development on behalf of the partnership. This provider would be tendered out, procured on the best offer by the partnership.

Accommodation

Q1. How would the partnership provide safe, free access for staff, Members, and residents?

The Chief Executive outlined that it would be difficult to conduct a detailed person-based risk assessment at this time when the building construction would start in 2025. The issue of carparking and for vulnerable people to be looked after would be taken seriously and would need a personalised response and that the safety of people would be taken seriously.

A Member raised concern that 40 carpark spaces and 6 disabled spaces would not be enough to accommodate this risk.

Q2. How would the location of the Depot affect future recruitment?

The Chief Executive highlighted that the Depot would be much better than the current civic centre and had received a lot of positive feedback from staff.

Q3. What would happen to children services during the move between sites?

The Chief Executive explained that the Council would not move sites until there was a viable alternative for children services and housing services.

Q4. Why was there not a business plan for the accommodation strategy?

The Chief Executive outlined that the equivalent could be found through the accommodation strategy and the thorough report on the allocation of finance and resources to support the delivery of the accommodation strategy could be seen. It was acknowledged that this information could be bought into a single place where the progress could be reported to Members.

The Director of Finance raised that this would be reported on quarterly to Cabinet. This would either be in a separate report or incorporated into the quarterly financial monitoring report. The aim would be to get this in the Quarter 2 report for December Cabinet.

Q5. How would the move impact Registrars, IT services and Mayor's Parlour? How would the negative impact on these services be mitigated?

The Chief Executive acknowledged that the interim services would not be perfect. An element of compromise during the move was anticipated and so there had been efforts made to minimise the impact on those compromised services. Additional costs may be needed in order to provide these vital services with the support they need.

The interim Commercial Director noted that visits to the sites were to be arranged for either August or September.

Any other issues

Q1. When would there be an update on the developmental plans for surrounding infrastructure that would be needed alongside the new housing?

The Interim Commercial Director highlighted that Wates had already begun liaising with relevant infrastructure organisations such as flooding and sewer capacity. School implications had already been considered in the plans. An update could be expected when the next set of business plans come forward.

Q2. When could we expect to see the parking strategy?

The interim Commercial Director raised that the options were presented at the accommodation scrutiny meeting and that more detailed plans would come in the next business plan phase.

RESOLVED: That the Committee's comments in relation to the HSDP be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.30 pm, closed at 9.30 pm).

(Signed) Councillor Sachin Shah
Chair