

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes

8 November 2022

Present:

Chair: Councillor Amir Moshenson

Councillors: Dan Anderson
June Baxter
Dean Gilligan
Matthew Goodwin-Freeman
Eden Kulig
Vipin Mithani
Phillip O'Dell
Samir Sumaria

Apologies received: Govind Bharadia

Absent: Harrow Youth Parliament
Representative
Reverend P Reece
Ms M Trivedi

1. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

Ordinary Member

Reserve Member

Councillor Govind Bharadia

Councillor Matthew Goodman-Freeman

9. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

Ordinary Member

Reserve Member

Councillor Govind Bharadia

Councillor Matthew Goodman-Freeman

10. Declarations of Interest

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

11. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the special meeting held on 17 October 2022 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

12. Public Questions

There were none.

13. Petitions

There were none.

14. References from Council/Cabinet

There were none.

Recommended Items

15. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2022-2026

The Committee received the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme, a report of the Acting Corporate Director, Resources which set out scrutiny work programme for 2022-26, as devised by the Scrutiny Leadership Group and provided an outline of the key areas of focus for the scrutiny function until the next whole-borough elections in 2026.

The officer informed Members that Council directorates and NHS partners were asked for advice on scrutiny's proposals for its work programme, on timing, feasibility and approach. As part of the engagement on the draft scrutiny work programme discussions were also held with CSB (Corporate Strategic Board) and DMTs (Directorate Management Teams).

The Scrutiny Leadership Group would provide steer for the work programme and have quarterly reviews to prioritise items and consider emerging topical issues that warranted attention during the course of the year.

The work programme was divided into the following three categories:

- the work Scrutiny Leads could pursue through scrutiny leads responsibilities,
- the reports that could be listed on the agenda of Committee for input
- work areas that warranted more in-depth scrutiny through review work.

The officer informed Members the following review areas had been that identified for immediate start from 2022 to 2024, once the work programme was approved:

- customer experience strategy – immediate start
- childhood immunisations – immediate start
- climate change strategy development - 2023
- enforcement strategy development - 2023
- implementation of the adult social care reform provisions – 2023/24.

The officer suggested that as there were several new Members in the Scrutiny Committee, an induction, or a briefing on the different available approaches in terms of taking identified topic areas forward might be helpful.

Members agreed that induction sessions would prove useful to both old and new Members and expressed a desire for them to be scheduled as soon as possible. The Chair commented that although the Committee Members had gone through an induction session previously, additional sessions would be welcomed.

A Member questioned about the time scales for the Committee's review of the implementation of a new customer experience strategy as stated on page five of the Programme and if scoping meetings would be held before the report was produced.

The officer explained that customer experience strategy reports to Cabinet could be listed on the Committee's agenda for the next meeting for Members' input and scoping would begin once the work programme was approved.

Resolved to RECOMMEND:

That the Scrutiny Work Programme 2022-26 be approved and referred to Council for endorsement.

Resolved Items

16. Harrow Strategic Development Partnership - Review and Progress

Following a brief introduction by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration Councillor Marilyn Ashton, the Committee received the report of the Corporate Director, Place which set out review results and progress on the HSDP.

Members asked questions as follows:

- A Member questioned if homes for private sale were freehold or leasehold and if any thought had been given to present financial difficulties and people obtaining mortgages to purchase these homes in the future. The Interim Director for Commercial Development responded that the flats would have a 250-year lease and there was no

intention to transfer the freehold but with the houses, the freehold would be transferred. He confirmed that current issues had been considered and the partnership would look to take advantage of whatever products may be available to help in the future. Mortgage difficulties would not help the sales rate which was important to the HSDP. However, the sales were not due to take place for some time and by then the situation may be different.

- A Member questioned about the availability of grant funding for Phases two and three of Grange Farm. Alison Pegg, the Director for Regeneration responded that there was no grant funding. The Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF), which was available to the Council as long as the whole development continued, had been paid. Phases two and three would be funded entirely by the Council.
- A Member questioned if vacant properties in phase three of Grange Farm would be used as temporary accommodation as was done in phase one and the Director for Regeneration confirmed that phase three properties would be used as temporary accommodation for as long as possible, and there were plans to enable people currently living in phase two temporary accommodation to move to phase three so they could continue living in Harrow.
- Members questioned about the availability of public parking on the site for the Town Hall and the possibility of hiring out the council chamber and the large committee rooms to generate income for the Council. Interim Director for Commercial Development confirmed that 60 car parking spaces were intended to be dedicated to the Town Hall. It was early in the design process and there were a number of options available to the Council which would be considered in terms of what would go on site including car parking, subject to consideration by the planners. The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration stated that the construction of the Town Hall so that the building that could balance being a democratic hub and also be flexible enough to be hired out to generate income for the Council was an option.
- Members welcomed the fact that a decision had been made about the Peel Road site and the removal of the Civic Centre as the decision had been pending for many years. They also welcomed the proposal for the location of the Town Hall as they felt it would make the Town Hall a focal point and be a boost for both businesses and residents.
- A member questioned whether efforts would be made to market the homes for private sale to local residents. The Interim Director for Commercial Development confirmed that in the first period, the initial marketing would be targeted at local residents. It was subsequently confirmed to the Committee that this period was three months. It was also confirmed that the definition of local connection for this purpose was *'living, working, have family living within LB Harrow or have a connection with LB Harrow acceptable to the Council.'*

- A Member questioned if any homes were reserved for local residents that work in the public sector and essential services and Interim Director for Commercial Development responded that at present there was no prioritisation for public sector or essential services workers as affordable housing at Grange Farm was initially for the residents who were moving from demolished, homes and those on the local housing register, and there were no plans for additional prioritisation of market sale homes. Alison Pegg, the Head of Housing Regeneration confirmed that where the Council markets shared ownership properties priority is given to those groups
- A Member questioned about the impact of development of a car park such as the loss of parking to businesses and residents and reduction in parking revenue. The Interim Director for Commercial Development responded that there would be loss of car parking as a result of the proposed developments, but as had previously been discussed at the Committee, parking at the Greenhill Way site may be more defensible than at other centres, having regard of course to the London Plan. The site would need to be looked at as a whole and discussion take place.
- A Member questioned about the time scales for the development of Greenhill Way and the certainty of delivery. The Interim Director for Commercial Development explained that at this stage the timetable was indicative. The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration Councillor Marilyn Ashton stated that there was a commitment from the present administration that it would be built in a timely manner.

The Committee then excluded the press and public for the part 2 discussion of Appendix 1 – Grange Farm Business Plan. Members asked questions.

The Chair thanked the Interim Director for Commercial Development for the report and the following three recommendations were proposed.

- **Proposed Recommendation 1**

That Cabinet consider the early prioritisation of public sector workers in the allocation of new affordable homes or the marketing of homes for sale. This was put to the vote and was declared lost.

- **Proposed Recommendation 2**

That Cabinet review and attempt to maximise available car parking spaces on the development. This was put to vote and declared lost.

- **Proposed Recommendation 3**

That Cabinet consider the production of a report on the economic impact of the proposals for the Greenhill Way site. This was put to the vote and declared **passed**.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet consider the production of a report on the economic impact of the proposals for the Greenhill Way site.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced 6.30 pm, closed at 8.02 pm).

(Signed) Councillor Amir Moshenson
Chair