

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

CABINET – 16 NOVEMBER 2017

REFERENCE FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 7 NOVEMBER 2017

Financing of the Regeneration Programme - Scrutiny Review Panel Report

Councillor Macleod-Cullinane, the Chair of the Scrutiny Challenge Panel, introduced the report, confirming that he would provide a foreword. He underlined that the proposed remodelling of the Council's regeneration programme was due to be reported to Cabinet in December and it had therefore not been possible for the Challenge Panel to consider this significant development. He suggested that a further report be produced in the early Spring to address the implications for the remodelling arrangements. Turning to the report's recommendations, Councillor Macleod-Cullinane emphasised that the thrust was to promote a more coordinated and wide-ranging approach to strategic direction and risk management both across the Council and with partner organisations. He considered that the current predominant focus on housing supply could carry risks and that a more holistic vision, as evidenced in many of the other regeneration schemes investigated by the Panel, would be more effective and secure. He thanked the Vice-Chair of the Challenge Panel, Councillor Barry Kendler, other Panel members, and the support officers, particularly Shumaila Dar and Rebecka Steven in the Policy Unit, for their work on the review.

In response to a query from the Chair, Councillor Macleod-Cullinane considered that the options for further work following the remodelling of the regeneration programme, included a standalone scrutiny panel or perhaps discussions at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the Policy and Finance Sub-Committee. He felt that it would be important for the senior political leadership to attend these sessions and give a direct face-to-face account, particularly in view of the proximity of the local elections in May 2018.

The Chair acknowledged the need to address the implication of financial remodelling of the programme.

A Member suggested that a more structured approach to managing risks and mitigations was required; for example, through the use of Gantt charts and RAG ratings. The Chair pointed to the connections to the role of the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee in the risk management elements of the Challenge Panel's recommendations.

The Harrow Youth Parliament representative argued that the report should make specific reference to the risks to vulnerable people in alterations to the regeneration programme and to specific ways in which the Council could respond; for example, by considering the option for re-opening youth facilities to help tackle issues of unemployment and crime. He considered that Cabinet should build in contingency plans to address these areas.

The Vice-Chair of the Challenge Panel confirmed that the Panel members had registered concerns over the pressures coming from central and regional government to increase social housing supply and how this might lead to an imbalance with other aspects of coordinated regeneration; for example, the need to address the capacity of public services and infrastructure impacts. Through its recommendations, the Panel had sought to achieve a better balance in this respect.

The Chair of the Challenge Panel suggested that he consult the Panel Vice-Chair about strengthening the report's proposals on infrastructure implications. In view of this, the intention to remodel the regeneration programme and the fact that a foreword was to be added, the Chair of the Committee proposed that the Panel's report be approved as an "interim" report at this stage, and that he agree the final version following consultation with the Panel Chair and Vice-Chair.

RESOLVED:

- a) note and endorse the report from the Regeneration Scrutiny Review Panel as an interim report, with updates to be agreed by the Committee Chair;
- b) to acknowledge that the substantive Cabinet response to the interim report will be available in January 2018;
- c) to refer the Challenge Panel's report and recommendations to Cabinet for consideration.**

FOR CONSIDERATION

Background Documents:

Agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 7 November 2017:
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