

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

## 2 JUNE 2020

<b>Chair:</b>	* Councillor Sachin Shah	
<b>Councillors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Dan Anderson</li> <li>* Jeff Anderson</li> <li>* Sarah Butterworth</li> <li>* Stephen Greek</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Honey Jamie</li> <li>* Jean Lammiman</li> <li>* Chris Mote</li> <li>* Kanti Rabadia</li> </ul>
<b>Voting Co-opted:</b>	(Voluntary Aided)	(Parent Governors)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Mr N Ransley</li> <li>* Reverend P Reece</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mr M Chandran</li> <li>* Ms M Trivedi</li> </ul>
<b>Non-voting Co-opted:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Harrow Youth Parliament Representative [Thomas O'Hare – Leader of Harrow Youth Parliament]</li> </ul>	
<b>In attendance: (Councillors)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ghazanfar Ali</li> <li>Graham Henson</li> <li>Dr Lesline Lewinson</li> <li>Vina Mithani</li> <li>Pritesh Patel</li> <li>Natasha Proctor</li> <li>Kiran Ramchandani</li> <li>Rekha Shah</li> <li>Adam Swersky</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minutes 108 and 117</li> <li>Minute 117</li> </ul>

\* Denotes Member present

## 106. A Welcome and Notification of a Replacement of a Councillor on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Chair welcomed all present to the first virtual meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and made some general announcements. He informed the Committee that the meeting would be audio and video recorded and would be available on the Council's website. Also present at the meeting were Members of the Scrutiny Sub-Committees who had been invited to the meeting to participate in the Question and Answer Session.

The Chair also welcomed Councillor Stephen Greek to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 1.5, he advised that Councillor Stephen Greek had replaced Councillor Richard Almond on the Committee. On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked Councillor Almond, a former Vice-Chair of the Committee, for the contributions made to the work of the Committee whilst upholding the spirit in which scrutiny operated by working across party lines.

## 107. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

## 108. Declarations of Interest

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

### Agenda Item 10 - The Council's Response to COVID 19 - Question and Answer Session with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive

Councillor Sarah Butterworth, a member of the Committee, declared non-pecuniary interests in that she was:

- a teacher at an Academy High School in Harrow
- a member of the NEU and the GMB
- a school NEU Representative
- a member of the Harrow NEU Committee
- a member of the NEU Councillor Network
- an assistant to the Portfolio Holder for Young People and Schools with the remit of 'youth initiatives'
- a local authority appointed governor at Whitmore High School.

She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Councillor Jean Lammiman, a member of the Committee, declared non-pecuniary interests in that she was Chair of Governors at Shaftesbury High School and a Trustee of Harrow Association of Disabled People (HAD). She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Councillor Stephen Greek, a member of the Committee, declared non-pecuniary interests in that he was employed by the London Assembly and that

he was a governor of Weald Rise Primary School. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Councillor Dan Anderson, a member of the Committee, declared a non-pecuniary interests in that:

- in his employment, he had helped to raise funds for Northwick Park Hospital;
- he was an assistant to the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement and Accessibility with the remit of 'engagement with local groups' and would not participate in the question and answer session relating to the community and voluntary sector.

He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Councillor Chris Mote, a member of the Committee, declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he was 'shielding' due to the coronavirus pandemic and that, to date, he had not sought or received any support from the Council but that he might require assistance in the future. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Mr Ransley, a co-opted Member of the Committee, declared non-pecuniary interests in that he was Chair of St John Fisher Catholic Primary Academy, Vice-Chair of the Blessed Holy Family Catholic Academy Trust and a governor of St Dominic's 6th Form College in Harrow. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered.

Councillor Jeff Anderson, a member of the Committee, declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he was 'shielding' due to the coronavirus pandemic and that he was in receipt of services from the Council. He added that he was a Director of Harrow Labour Hall Wealdstone Trust. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Ms Mandeep Trivedi, a co-opted member of the Committee, declared an interest in that she was a governor of Stanburn Primary School. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered.

Councillor Honey Jamie, a member of the Committee, declared a non-pecuniary interest in that she was 'shielding' due to the coronavirus pandemic and that, to date, she had not sought or received any support from the Council. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Councillor Kantilal Rabadia, a member of the Committee, declared non-pecuniary interests in that he was a governor of an early years educational setting and that his son was a pupil at St. Dominic's College in Harrow. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Councillor Ghazanfar Ali, who was not a member of the Committee, declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he was a governor of Norbury Primary School.

He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Councillor Rekha Shah, who was not a member of the Committee, declared a non-pecuniary interest in that she was 'shielding' due to the coronavirus pandemic. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered.

Councillor Natasha Proctor, who was not a member of the Committee, declared a non-pecuniary interest in that she had been 'shielding' which had ended on 1 June 2020. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered.

Councillor Dr Lesline Lewinson, who was not a member of the Committee, declared a non-pecuniary interest in that her father was being cared for in a Care Home in Harrow. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered.

Councillor Vina Mithani, who was not a member of the Committee, declared a non-pecuniary interest in that, by virtue of her employment, she had been involved in the work relating to Covid-19. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered.

Councillor Graham Henson, who was not a member of the Committee, declared non-pecuniary interests in that he was a governor of Alexandra School and a member of the GMB (General, Municipal, Boilermakers) Trade Union.

**109. Minutes of the special meeting held on 23 January 2020**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the special meeting held on 23 January 2020, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

**110. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2020**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 11 February 2020, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

**111. Appointment of Vice-Chair**

**RESOLVED:** To appoint Councillor Stephen Greek as Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

**112. Public Questions**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions were received.

**113. Petitions**

**RESOLVED:** To note that no petitions had been received.

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

None received.

### **RESOLVED ITEMS**

#### **115. Establishment of Sub-Committees 2020/21**

**RESOLVED:** That the Sub-Committees of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be established for the Municipal Year 2020/21 with the memberships and Chairs detailed in Appendix I to these minutes.

#### **116. Appointment of Scrutiny Leads 2020/21**

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

#### **117. The Council's Response to COVID 19 - Question and Answer Session with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive**

The Committee received a report of the Chief Executive setting out the Council's response to Covid 19 which had been considered by Cabinet on 21 May 2020. The Committee also received a presentation from the Council's Chief Executive which had been circulated with the supplemental agenda, which provided an overview of the national and London position, an update on Harrow Services such as the Community Hub/Hardship Fund/Business Grants, the position in relation to Care Homes, the availability of PPE, central government's Test, Track and Trace programme, the Council's budget position and the restart and recovery phase.

The Chair welcomed the Chief Executive and his Corporate Strategy Board to the meeting. He also welcomed the Leader of the Council, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, Councillors and advisors serving on the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee and the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee. He stated that the Committee would focus their questions on the following areas: Health, Finance, Business Grants, Schools and the New Normal.

The Chief Executive referred to his report and presentation and paid tributes to staff and Councillors for their hard work to meet the challenges brought about by the Coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19). The Leader of the Council also paid a tribute to the Voluntary Sector which had risen to the challenges and had helped the Council to put services together from scratch. He was saddened to report that, as at 5 May 2020, the number of Harrow residents who had lost their lives due to Coronavirus was 359.

The Chief Executive added that his career in local government had spanned 30 years but the challenges brought about by the pandemic had been the most demanding. The Council had performed well in difficult circumstances but there were lessons to be learnt. As London had now passed the peak in

infections, the focus would be on the New Normal, the Recovery and how best to restore Council services.

The Chief Executive reported that, given the pressures, Council services were performing well, including Adult Social Care. The Council had set up two new services such as the Community Hub and the Hardship Fund which had brought about additional challenges in the distribution of Business Grants. The pandemic had also resulted in a significant loss of income for the Council thereby increasing the existing budget gaps for 2020/21 and beyond. The emergency funding of £30m received from central government would only cover costs for a period of four months and he hoped that additional money would be provided to local authorities. He invited questions from Members.

## **Democratic Accountability**

### **Questions:**

**To what extent had democracy in Harrow stopped? On the basis that more decisions would have been taken by officers, what impact had there been on politicians being able to pursue policy? To-date, there had been no real engagement with the Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and given its statutory function to hold the Executive to account, how would this change given that a second wave of the infection was expected?**

The Chief Executive stated that, due the emergency, the decisions and actions taken had been exercised under the powers delegated to officers. Both the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition had been kept informed. The pace at which the changes had to be implemented had been phenomenal and officers had engaged with Cabinet Members during this period. More recently, democratic accountability had been restored and formal decision-making bodies were now meeting virtually supported by changes in legislation.

The Leader of the Council added that after the lockdown on 23 March 2020, officers worked extended hours to put measures in place in order to deliver priority services only. Cabinet Members became more involved during the lockdown and he assured the Committee that there had been democratic oversight from the outset. The new IT facilities had helped virtual meetings to take place and ensure democratic oversight was in place in the manner Councillors were accustomed to. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources added that the level of engagement between Councillors and officers had increased albeit on an informal basis and that the majority of the decisions had been made by central government and Councils had been tasked with their implementation. More recently, lead Councillors had been fully involved in providing a political steer, particularly in relation to parks to ensure that they remained open whilst social distancing being observed.

Additional questions were asked on the need to maintain democratic accountability, particularly if there was a second wave of infection. The Leader of the Council stated that all Councillors had been kept informed by emails and officer attendance at virtual political Group meetings. His was of

the view that different or additional measures were not required to be put in place. The Chief Executive assured the Committee that meetings would continue to be held but virtually. They added that the Council was in a better position to deal with a second wave as relationships with the CCG and hospitals had continued to improve, including work across party lines. The Gold Command Model ought to be applauded.

The Chief Executive undertook to discuss the future involvement of the Committee and its Sub-Committees with the Scrutiny Leadership Group and he was open to suggestions on how the scrutiny process could add value. The Leader added that, following the lockdown, staff in Democratic Services had been allocated different work areas but with the new technology now in place, formal decision-making bodies were now meeting. A Member pointed out that Scrutiny Councillors ought to be invited to the meetings held by the Leader with the CCG.

## **Business Grants**

### **Questions:**

**Why was there a disparity in figures in businesses eligible for grants in Harrow? The Chief Executive's report mentioned 2500 but his presentation made reference to a figure of 2800 whilst central government's figure was 2050. What was the correct figure?**

**Why were the figures so low when Harrow had a large number of small businesses?**

**Why was the Council in the lowest quartile in London in terms of the grants given? What was the average length of time that it took to process the applications and make the payments?**

The Corporate Director of Resources reported that the currently estimated number of businesses eligible for the grant in Harrow was 2050 and the money the Council had expected to allocate was based on that figure. This was lower than the amount of money central government had initially estimated that the Council would allocate. However, the Council had received more applications than 2050 and the number of applications had risen over time resulting in the two different figures quoted in the question. There had also been a number of duplicate applications which had also changed the 'total applications number'. The latest figures had been sent out weekly to Members in the Covid-19 update brief.

The Corporate Director added that Harrow had a large number of micro businesses, but many were not registered on a Council database. He reminded Members of the brief recently sent out to all Members, as part of the Covid-19 weekly updates, which had outlined the challenges specific to Harrow Council in processing the grants. He explained that there were several stages to processing an application and that they were done in batches.

Members asked a number of follow up questions – was it acceptable to take two months to process applications, why was the Council in the lower quartile

when other local authorities that had received more applications to process had performed better than Harrow, was the IT a challenge for the Council, what would happen to businesses that had gone into administration/liquidation as a result of the delay and what was the reputational impact on the Council?

The Corporate Director of Resources added that he was not aware of any businesses in Harrow having to go into administration/liquidation as a result of not receiving a grant on time, but he asked Members to send him details of any that they felt had been so affected.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance explained the process of grant giving adopted by the Council in that it was important to ensure that:

- the grant given was to the correct business;
- in many cases, the businesses had intermediaries who were trying to take a significant share of the grant;
- the name of the applicant and the bank account details had not always tallied resulting in further checks having to be made. Some businesses had been taken over and others had not had their leases in place. He requested that any queries from businesses be sent to him so that they could be investigated.

The Portfolio Holder accepted that businesses may have found the process frustrating, but it was important to recognise that central government had only opened the application process at the beginning of April 2020 and that the Council had made excellent progress during a short space of time. He acknowledged that the Council's decision to apply the central government's recommended level of scrutiny, when allocating grants, had attracted negative publicity. However, it had been the best way to ensure that the money went to the right businesses and people, and to ensure the Council's budget would not be adversely affected if/when the Council had to repay, to central government, grants incorrectly issued. The Corporate Director of Resources stated that he was confident that central government's proposed future audit in this area would show that the Council's approach would be commended.

The Chief Executive clarified that the Council was expecting to pay £31m in grants and that 92% of the grant money received had been paid to businesses. The number of businesses that were eligible for a grant was in the region of 2000 and not 3000. Certain factors, some within the Council's control and others beyond its control, had hindered the process. The Leader of the Council added that although the Council had made great strides to improve remote working enforced upon us by Covid-19, the Council's IT suffered from many years of underfunding as result of central government cuts. Moreover, it was important to ensure that the principles of 'best value' were applied when allocating grants for what essentially was money belonging to tax payers.

The Chair of the Committee reported that the Scrutiny Leadership Group was in the process of discussing whether to conduct a Scrutiny Challenge Panel of this area.

## **The Financial Impact of Covid 19 on the Council**

### **Questions:**

**The Leader of the Council had written to central government to highlight the financial impact of the pandemic on the Council and the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee would examine the Council's financial situation in detail. What had been the impact on the Council's finances and how concerned should politician be?**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources responded as follows:

- the Council's financial situation had deteriorated and was worrying, which stemmed from the central government's dictum that we were all in this together and that support to local government would be provided. Councils had played a major role in delivering the agenda set by central government but it had not kept its promise;
- £13m had been awarded to the Council but this money did not cover the loss of income from fees and charges, including Council Tax which the Council largely depended on and which had dropped materially. Some local authorities appeared to be considering the issuing of Section 114 Notices – a formal notice that there was not enough money in the system to provide adequate public services – but the Council was not currently in that situation. Councils were expected to help deliver the Track and Trace programme but this was at risk if adequate funding was not provided. Central government needed to cover the Council's losses; otherwise many proposals would need to be shelved and the Council would not be able to cover its costs in the near future.

The Chief Executive confirmed the financial position, including the implications for future years if additional funding was not made available. The Director of Finance added that there would significant gaps in the budget in future years if costs were not met by central government.

In response to additional questions on the budget, the Chief Executive added that he would be commencing discussions on the options available to the Council. A report on the Council's finances would be submitted to the July 2020 meeting of Cabinet and it would be irresponsible to wait until the financial situation had become irretrievable.

A Member was of the view that it was disingenuous to blame all of the Council's financial situation on Covid 19 when it had suspended some of its services unnecessarily, such as waste recycling. This had led to an increase in fly tipping which had resulted in increased costs to the Council. Such wastage was impacting on the Council's budget and he questioned why the issue of additional costs had not been considered when popular and income generating services were being closed/shut.

The Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources explained that waste recycling services across the country had had to be shut due to the pandemic and the budget situation was not wholly being blamed on Covid 19. The planning by central government of local government finance was poor and the government had not provided money to the Council to cover the loss of income of £23m, excluding the existing gaps in the budget prior to the pandemic. The garden waste service had recommenced but had had to be closed initially due to staffing issues.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance concluded by responding to the final question on the proportion of fees and charges that the Council had lost. He stated that income lost from car parking charges and property rent was significant.

Finally, Members noted that a further opportunity to scrutinise the finances of the Council would be available at the July 2020 meeting of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Sub-Committee. The Chair stated that, due to the technical difficulties experienced by a Councillor at the meeting, it was noted that the following question would be sent to relevant officers for a response: Would the Committee receive a fully disclosed schedule of budget shortfall encountered thus far, including details of all the funds received from the government and those anticipated, including a contingent plan in case there was a second wave?

## **Health**

### **Questions:**

**What measures would the Council be implementing due to the disproportionate impact of Covid 19 on BAME community?**

**What had been the impact of Covid 19 on the BAME community of Harrow?**

**Did the Council have adequate PPE for staff and care homes? Was there adequate PPE for those working at Northwick Park Hospital?**

**What measures had the Council put in place for BAME staff?**

The Chief Executive reported that this was an important but complicated issue. The Council would need to work with its partners such as the NHS and initially look at the issue in the context of the second wave. Thereafter, the Council would need to address the issue for the medium and long term in terms of the overall health of the BAME population in Harrow and the inequalities they suffered. He was pleased to report that the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 24 June 2020 would be moving this issue forward.

In terms of the impact on the BAME community in Harrow, the granularity of information was awaited and, once the data was received, it would be analysed and shared with Members.

The Committee were informed that there was a good supply of PPE, which had been purchased through the West London Alliance. At the meeting on 24 June 2020, Members might want to address the issue of the availability of

PPE at Northwick Park Hospital and the challenges it had faced, including those faced by Care Homes.

The Corporate Director of Resources reported that the majority of the Council's staff were working from home and vulnerable staff had been advised that they should not work in the Civic Centre. Staff who were unable to work would continue to receive their salaries. The health and well-being of the staff was of paramount importance and guidance for managers to support staff was constantly being developed and updated. The pressures of working from home were understood.

There would be a watching brief in respect of the Track and Trace programme and measures would need to be put in place if there was an outbreak in any particular community. A number of people had been identified for contact tracing but the cases of infection in London were low.

In conclusion, the Leader of the Council stated that communication was a key issue and the Council would examine at how it ought to communicate public health information to the BAME community.

## **Schools**

### **Questions:**

**What was the position of the schools in Harrow?**

**With the requirement to clean schools on a continuous basis and the expense that this would incur, particularly when all schools were required to open, what support had been and would be provided by the Council?**

**What would happen to teachers who had tested positive for coronavirus?**

**What support was being provided to school governors?**

**The priority of getting children into the school and in a safe environment was key. Had reassurances been provided to Year 6 pupils, how was the Council dealing with Admission Appeals and what measures were being put in place for Year 11 pupils? How would the cuts in subsidies by TfL (Transport for London) impact on those affected and would level of Council support be provided to them?**

**As more schools start to open, what support had been and will be provided to teachers and other staff to return to work, including HR (Human Resources) support?**

**What were the Council's concerns in respect of children who were not at school when they were expected to be, including those in the vulnerable category?**

The Corporate Director of People reported that the schools in Harrow had not closed and had continued to educate the children of key workers and those that were vulnerable.

Following the requirement to open schools – Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, pupils from 1 June 2020, 25 of the 40 primary schools in Harrow had opened and the number of children attending was expected to increase. The data gathered would be shared in due course.

The Corporate Director added that schools were responsible for managing their own cleaning but the Council would help with any procurement proposals and provide access to PPE. The Council would also help with any other requirements, including procurement of science equipment which had been donated by the schools.

The Director of Public Health reported that the Council was working closely with Public Health England and a Local Plan for Schools would be available soon. It would set out the various requirements for teachers, including the need to isolate if they had the symptoms of coronavirus or had been identified as having been affected as part of the Track and Trace programme. There were no plans to test those asymptomatic but there would be surveillance in light of the issues experienced at a school in Derby. The Chief Executive added that with the Test/Trace/Track programme, it should be assumed that schools and other settings, such as local authorities, might have to implement partial closures.

The Corporate Director of People addressed the issue of the support provided to school governors. He explained that a great deal of time had been spent by officers in providing general guidance, including public health guidance. Assistance was provided on how best schools could communicate with the wider community and a document had been shared by the Portfolio Holder for Young People and Schools in this regard.

A Member of the Committee paid tribute to the Director of Public Health and the Corporate Director of People for the assistance their staff had provided to a special needs school of which she was a governor. She highlighted the challenges that parents would have faced at home and asked how these had been addressed. In response, the Corporate Director of People stated that officers had augmented what schools already had in place and supported the different ways of learning, including putting in place any bespoke arrangements required. The demands placed on officers had been significant but they had risen to the challenges and prepared strategies to assist whilst continuing with the dialogue with parents.

The Corporate Director added that a large number of Year 6 pupils had attended school during the first two days than had been anticipated. His Directorate would continue to work on their transition to secondary schools by working with the pupils and their parents/guardians. The Council had delivered on the National Day for School Appeals and that the appeal process would be conducted virtually. The government was looking to 'introduce' face to face meetings with Year 11 pupils before the summer holiday and schools were already reaching out and liaising with pupils/parents/guardians.

The Corporate Director reported that a great deal of work would be required to understand the implications of the cut in subsidies by the TfL, including the associated risks. The Council would examine its statutory duty to support

children as it was expected that this proposal would impact on approximately 6,000 students. Risk and impact assessments would need to be carried out to ensure that children were not adversely affected by this proposal. The Council was working on the detail of the proposal in collaboration with parents/guardians.

The Corporate Director concluded that schools were primarily responsible for their staff but the Council would assist in any area. The Council was collaborating with schools and providing leadership and support. He assured the Committee that the number of vulnerable children and those of key workers attending school in the relevant years had risen. Vulnerable children were supported by key staff who had carried out risk assessments and, where appropriate, distance learning was being provided.

## **The New Normal**

### **Questions:**

**What plans did the Council have for encouraging increased cycling and walking? Had Councillors been consulted in this regard?**

**How would the Council be supporting the borough's High Streets – Town and District Centres?**

**What the position in relation to rough sleepers?**

**What had been the impact of Covid 19 on the Council's Regeneration Scheme and the timetable previously put in place?**

**Would the Council be reviewing its planning policies in light of Covid 19 to help families overcome overcrowding issues - in the context of the Local and London Plans in order to meet the needs of the people of Harrow?**

**What plans were in place to support places of worship, particularly those that were not well resourced?**

**How would the Council continue to safeguard the vulnerable adult population of Harrow?**

The Corporate Director of Community reported that the TfL had allocated £45m towards the widening of pavements, increasing cycling and walking, including the provision of safer walking routes and had invited bids from local authorities. The Council had submitted its plans to the TfL and his Directorate would involve Ward Councillors once responses had been received and the funding available. The Corporate Director undertook to share the bids with Members of the Committee.

The Corporate Director explained that £20k had been awarded to the Council for use in the opening of the Town and District Centres, queuing arrangements for shops and associated traffic measures. The Council was working with the TfL, the police and the public protection team to allow to put measures in place by 15 June 2020 when many businesses were expected to open. The Chief Executive reported that, to date, essential retail shops in Harrow had opened but some had chosen to remain shut. A big shift was expected from 15 June when non-retail essential shops had been given the

go ahead by central government to re-open and the Council was planning forward.

The Council had accommodated 21 rough sleepers across the borough and was developing a strategy to ensure that they did not return back to the streets when the funding stopped at the end of June 2020. This was being done in collaboration with the ongoing London-wide campaign on this issue.

The Chief Executive responded to the question on the Council's Regeneration Scheme and its timetable. He assured the Committee that the Council would be thorough in its approach to the Regeneration Programme but, if possible, the July 2020 timetable would be met by the holding of a special Cabinet meeting as there was a commitment to make progress in this regard. He assured the Committee that it too would be consulted.

The Chief Executive explained that various issues relating to Covid 19 would need to be addressed both in the short and medium term. A vaccine and a change in behaviour would help with the challenges facing all communities but it was early to make judgements and alter planning policies.

In respect of support for places of worship, the Chief Executive explained that the Council had limited resources but it would support organisations by providing advice.

The Chief Executive reported that, in his capacity as the Chair of the London Safeguarding Board, it had become evident that the pandemic had resulted in new challenges for local authorities, many of which had responded well. During the lockdown, extra vigilance had been required on the subject of abuse. The relaxation of the lockdown rules had resulted in new and additional challenges and work was underway in identifying risks and how these could be addressed.

In concluding the discussion on the New Normal, the following remarks were made by the Chief Executive, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources and the Leader of the Council:

- the challenges brought about by Covid 19 had been intense and complicated but it had also been a learning exercise. New services had been successfully delivered and the silo mentality had been broken down further. Virtual working had been a positive experience;
- the risks associated with climate change needed to be at the forefront of any agenda;
- procurement and the new models put in place to respond to the needs of residents as a result of the pandemic, including IT which had received the biggest investment to allow for a wider transformation, had worked well;
- in relation to criminality, a great deal of work had been undertaken with the police and all reported cases had been followed up. Domestic violence and hidden harm were not at the levels experienced by other

boroughs and the measures put in place previously in the reporting of such incidents had been successful.

Prior to concluding the meeting, the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee thanked the Councillors, Co-opted Members, Harrow Youth Parliament, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member(s), Corporate Strategy Board for attending the meeting. He also thanked IT for facilitating this meeting and staff in Democratic Services for the support provided to him during the meeting.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.00 pm, closed at 8.51 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR SACHIN SHAH  
Chair

**SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEES**

(Membership in order of political group nominations)

**Labour**

**Conservative**

**(1) CALL-IN SUB-COMMITTEE (5)**

**(3)**

**(2)**

**Members**

**Angella Murphy-Strachan (CH)  
Natasha Proctor  
Chloe Smith**

**Stephen Greek \*  
Norman Stevenson**

**II.  
Reserve  
Members**

**1. Jeff 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)**

**(5)**

**(4)**

**Labour**

**Conservative**

### **I. Members**

**Jeff Anderson  
Niraj Dattani  
Angella Murphy-Strachan  
Chloe Smith (CH)  
Sasi Suresh**

**Camilla Bath  
Ramji Chauhan  
Janet Mote \*  
Lynda Seymour**

### **II. Reserve Members**

1. Pamela Fitzpatrick  
2. Primesh Patel  
3. Honey Jamie  
4. Vacancy  
5. Vacancy

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)**

**(3)**

**(2)**

**Labour**

**Conservative**

**I.  
Members**

**Michael Borio  
Natasha Proctor  
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)**

**(3)**

**(2)**

**Labour**

**Conservative**

**I.  
Members**

**Ghazanfar Ali  
Honey Jamie  
Kiran Ramchandani (CH)**

**Nitesh Hirani  
Pritesh Patel \***

**II. Reserve  
Members**

**1. Dean Gilligan  
2. Ajay Maru  
3. David Perry**

**1. Ameet Jogia  
2. Amir Moshenson**

## APPENDIX II

### SCRUTINY LEAD MEMBERS 2020 – 2021

<b>Lead Member</b>	<b>Councillor 2020/21</b>
Community	Councillor Ghazanfar Ali Councillor Jean Lammiman
Health	Councillor Michael Borio Councillor Vina Mithani
People	Councillor Jerry Miles Councillor Janet Mote
Resources	Councillor Honey Jamie Councillor Kanti Rabadia