

# Public Document Pack



## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 12 June 2018 at 7.30 pm  
Room 6, Civic Centre, Silver Street, Enfield,  
EN1 3XA

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Councillors : Derek Levy (Chair), Huseyin Akpinar, Tolga Aramaz, Susan Erbil,  
Gina Needs, Lee David-Sanders and Edward Smith

Education Statutory Co-optees: 1 vacancy (Church of England diocese representative), Simon Goulden (other faiths/denominations representative), Tony Murphy (Catholic diocese representative), Alicia Meniru & 1 vacancy (Parent Governor Representative).

Enfield Youth Parliament Co-optees (2)  
Support Officer – Susan O’Connell (Governance & Scrutiny Officer)  
Elaine Huckell (Governance & Scrutiny Officer)

## AGENDA

### 1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

### 2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

To elect the Vice Chair of the Committee.

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Council are invited to identify any disclosable pecuniary, other pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests relevant to items on the agenda.

### 4. GENOTIN ROAD CAR PARK, ENFIELD TOWN (Pages 1 - 8)

To receive a report from Sarah Cary, Executive Director of Place.

### 5. WORK PROGRAMME & WORK STREAMS 2018/19

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Anderson, to outline the Cabinet’s priorities for 2018/19.

The Committee to discuss Work Programme items and new workstreams for 2018/19.

**6. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 APRIL 2018 (Pages 9 - 16)**

To agree the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2018.

**7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

To note the dates of future meetings as follows:

Provisional Call-Ins

Tuesday 19 June, 2018  
Thursday 9 August, 2018  
Thursday 13 September, 2018  
Thursday 11 October, 2018  
Thursday 8 November, 2018  
Thursday 6 December, 2018  
Thursday 20 December, 2018  
Thursday 7 February 2019  
Tuesday 12 March 2019  
Tuesday 26 March, 2019  
Thursday 11 April, 2019

Please note, the business meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee will be held on:

Thursday 12 July, 2018  
Wednesday 5 September, 2018  
Wednesday 7 November, 2018  
Tuesday 12 February, 2019  
Wednesday 3 April, 2019

The Overview & Scrutiny Budget Meeting will be held on:

Tuesday 15 January, 2019

**8. EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC**

To consider, if necessary, passing a resolution under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 excluding the press and public from the meeting for the item of business listed in Part 2 of the agenda on the grounds that it will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs of Part 1 Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation) Order 2006), as are listed on the agenda (Please note there is not a Part 2 agenda).



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**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2018/2019 REPORT NO.****MEETING TITLE AND DATE:**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
12<sup>th</sup> June 2018 and  
Cabinet 4<sup>th</sup> July 2018

**REPORT OF:**

Executive Director Place

Contact officer and telephone number:

Sarah Cary : 0208 379 3500

E mail: sarah.cary@enfield.gov.uk

<b>Agenda – Part: 1</b>	<b>Item:</b>
<b>Subject: Genotin Road Car Park, Enfield Town</b>	
<b>Wards: Town Key Decision No: KD 4567</b>	
<b>Cabinet Member consulted: Cllr Ahmet Oykenner</b>	

<b>1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>
<p>1.1 This paper follows from a Cabinet report (no.93) on the strategy for Genotin Road Car Park in November 2017.</p> <p>1.1.1 The Council and Metaswitch have engaged in discussions over the past 18 months as they have outgrown their existing premises. In an effort to retain Metaswitch in Enfield the Council and external agents have undertaken a rigorous site process to identify a site within Enfield Town or in the vicinity for them to relocate to. Genotin Road Car Park is the only site that satisfies their space and time requirements.</p> <p>1.1.2 Cabinet supported the retention of Metaswitch in the Borough and noted the development of a new office for them would support Enfield Town renewal and deliver positive outcomes for the whole borough.</p> <p>1.1.3 Cabinet delegated authority to officers to progress final terms of the Option Agreement for the identified site of the Genotin Road Car Park. The delegation required a further report to Cabinet prior to any Option Agreement being entered into.</p> <p>1.2 The aim of this report is for Cabinet to enable the Council to fund development of, and to grant an institutional lease for, a grade A office building to Metaswitch Networks Limited at an acceptable rate of return, whilst retaining this major employer and business in Enfield Town</p> <p>1.3 This transaction will allow the company, in partnership with the Council, to bring forward a new Global &amp; European Headquarters building in Enfield. The development will be subject to planning committee approval.</p> <p>1.4 Retaining a global company and major employer in the borough sends a clear message that the Council is 'open' for business. It also will give greater confidence to future occupiers whom we hope to attract to the Town Centre in light of the new Town Centre Masterplan.</p>

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director Place, and Executive Director Resources to agree final Heads of Terms and enter into a contract on those terms for either :

A) The Council forward funds the development of the office once Metaswitch enter into a 125 year development lease. The Council would charge a ground rent equivalent to the loss of car parking income during the development period. On completion the development would be replaced by an institutional lease for a minimum of 15 years at an acceptable rate of return. The Council would retain the freehold of the property. The car park would be made available for public use at the weekend and some evenings, the maintenance and cost of running the car park would be the liability of the tenant, Metaswitch.

OR

B) In the event that Heads of Terms are not agreed for the preferred option above that Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director Place, and Executive Director, Resources to agree final Heads of Terms pursuant to a freehold disposal of the Genotin Road car park at Market Value and generate a capital receipt. This value will be derived at the time by an external RICS Registered Valuer based upon best alternative use value.

## **3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 Genotin Road car park is one of the largest surface car parks in Enfield with a total of 123 car parking spaces. The proposed development constitutes a new office development for Metaswitch Networks Ltd as well as employee car parking spaces. The proposals indicate that the employee car parking spaces will be made available to the general public at the weekend and selected evenings.

3.2 Metaswitch Ltd is an Enfield success story. The firm has been located in Enfield Town for approximately 26 years, founded in 1981 from an initial workforce of only 7 staff; it now has 400 employees in Enfield and over 700 worldwide. Metaswitch Networks Ltd are a global leading network software provider who provide technical support and software for over 1,000 network operators. Whilst the company's headquarters are currently in Enfield, the company have further offices in the; USA, Mexico, Hong Kong and Singapore.

### **3.3 Initial Cabinet Approval**

3.3.1 On the 15th November 2017 the Cabinet agreed in principle to further work being undertaken in respect of pursuing the following two options:

#### **Option 1: Freehold Disposal**

- A freehold disposal of the Genotin Car Park at Market Value. This value was derived at the time by an external RICS Registered Valuer and was based upon a residential scheme that would provide the Council a higher return as opposed to the land value for an office development.

### **Option 2: Investment**

- The Council forward funds the development of the Office once Metaswitch entered into a 125 year development lease. The Council would charge a ground rent equivalent to the loss of car parking income during the development period. On completion the development agreement would be replaced by an institutional lease for a minimum of 15 years. The Council would retain the freehold of the property. This would result in the car park being available for public use at the weekends and some evenings, the maintenance and cost of running the car park would be liable to the tenant.

3.3.2 Option 2 was considered more favourable for the Council as it would retain partial control of the parking provision at the weekends and some evenings. The Council would also benefit from long term income and would have the ability to sell the asset on the open market in the future.

3.3.3 From a wider socio-economic view, approval was seen as a rare opportunity to retain a key business in the Borough and support the creation of a global HQ building in the London Borough of Enfield. Furthermore, support for the scheme would highlight Enfield Council's commitment to Business and Economic development in the Borough whilst forming part of the regeneration of Enfield Town. The retention and expansion of Metaswitch in the Borough was viewed as providing economic benefits for the wider Enfield business community. Finally the expansion was viewed as a potential catalyst for further employment development in the Town Centre.

### **3.4 Since the Initial Cabinet Approval**

3.4.1 Metaswitch in January 2018 appointed a developer through a formal procurement process resulting in Stoford Developments as the nominated developer.

3.4.2 Stoford Developments subsequently produced architectural designs in conjunction with an Architect and pre planning application discussions have commenced including a public meeting on the design proposals.

3.4.3 During April and May 2018, Cushman & Wakefield (appointed agents to Metaswitch/Stoford) approached the Council seeking to agree terms on the basis of a forward funding of the development.

3.4.4 The Council have appointed GVA to provide advice on the structure and terms have been agreed on the following basis.

### **3.5 Proposal and Structure**

3.5.1 The Council will enter into legal agreements to enable the funding of the building development by Stoford. and subsequent letting to Metaswitch. The original proposal for an option agreement has now fallen away and has been replaced by terms for a conditional contract subject to planning consent with a subsequent requirement for completion of a funding agreement , a building lease and institutional (occupational ) lease.

3.5.3 The terms include a requirement for the car park associated with the Metaswich development to be available for public use during evenings and weekends.

### **3.6 The Development**

Construction of the proposed office building will be subject to planning processes including approval by committee.

## **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 Not seeking retain Metaswitch Networks Ltd in the Town Centre is likely to see Metaswitch relocate outside the borough. This would result in the loss of 370 jobs and a lost opportunity to enhance the Town Centre.

4.2 A further option which retains Metaswitch is to sell the Car Park land freehold to Metaswitch, who will finance the proposed office development separately. This results in a one-off cash receipt of to the council. Officers do not recommend this as it harms the Council's ability to shape the Town Centre over time as well as loses out on a valuable property investment opportunity.

## **5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1 The development of a new grade A office building and pre-letting to a local business represents a solid financial investment opportunity for the Council. The council will receive ongoing rental income significantly above the car park income and make a reasonable return on the expenditure to build the development.

5.2 It also retains a key business in the borough and support the expansion of a significant employer to create a global HQ building in the London Borough of Enfield. It could help act as a catalyst for further employment development in the Town Centre.

## **6. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, RESOURCES AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS**

### **6.1 Financial Implications**

The Council currently receives an income from the existing car park. This income would be lost should the site be disposed of or if the site was given an alternative



use. However, the lost income would be replaced by a lease rent for an office building (funded by the Council) significantly above the car park income. Final Financial Implications are also reserved pending receipt of full and agreed Heads of Terms.

## **6.2 Legal Implications TBC pending final recommendation]**

- 6.2.1 By Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 (“S.123 of the LGA”) and Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 the Council has the power to dispose of land in any manner it wishes, subject to certain conditions.
- 6.2.3 The Council has a statutory duty to obtain the best price reasonably obtainable, subject to certain exemptions.
- 6.2.4 In accordance with the Council's Property Procedure Rules the inclusion of property on the disposals programme requires approval either by the appropriate Cabinet member or by Cabinet itself.
- 6.2.5 The Property Procedure Rules require all disposals to be made on a competitive basis, unless justified and approved otherwise.
- 6.2.6 In this particular case, as the intended transaction is to be on a non-competitive basis, a valuation report will be required in order to justify the disposal on the terms proposed, and in particular that it achieves best value.
- 6.2.7 Final legal implications are also reserved pending receipt of full and final Heads of Terms.

## **6.3 Property Implications**

- 6.3.1 External consultants (GVA Grimley) have undertaken valuations that estimate the market value of the land at the Genotin Road.
- 6.3.2 The Council is of the opinion that the disposal is in line with the Council Property Procedure Rules and the Council have obtained best value under s123 of the LGA (1972); the valuation received confirms the price offered for the land.

## **7. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The legal agreements will have deadlines and dates for both Metaswitch and the Council to adhere to and will be managed accordingly.

## **8. KEY RISKS**

In undertaking a commercial property investment transaction there are risks to consider and further risks to consider in respect of a development project, these include the following:-

### Commercial Property Investment Risk

**Market Risk** Commercial Property Yields increase and decrease depending on market conditions. Commercial Property Yields are relatively low at present but this transaction will provide a yield on cost which is higher than the average commercial property office yield measured by the IPD data base.

**Covenant Risk** The lease is secured on the covenant of Metaswitch Networks Ltd who have reported a turnover of £152,653,000 and pre-tax profits of £6,223,000. The company was first established in 1981 and employs over 700 people (the majority of whom are based in Enfield).

The Council as part of their due diligence will appoint an independent financial advisor to comment on the covenant.

**Building Risk** The proposed development will be a new Grade A HQ office building with an excellent car parking ratio situated adjacent to Enfield Town railway station. As part of our due diligence we will be seeking commentary via our property advisors on the building flexibility (letting on a floor by floor basis, future expansion of the site) to limit future risk of maintaining on income stream.

**Rental Risk** The transaction has been structured to provide the tenant with an “economic rent” below the headline market rent for a building of this specification.

The lease to Metaswitch Networks Ltd is geared to inflation with linked rent reviews. Assuming Retail Price Index increases, the lease will be subject to rental fixes every 5 years regardless of market growth.

### Commercial Property Development Risk

**Professional Team** The main risk is the main contractor. Financial due diligence will be undertaken on the proposed main contractor ahead of unconditional exchange. The Development Agreement will shortlist a number of main contractors and the appointed main contractor will be approved by the Council.

**Financial Risk** The Council’s financial obligation will be limited to the Maximum Commitment sum. Any costs overruns or delays will be responsibility of the main contractor and/or developer, which may result in the erosion of some or all of

the development profit.

**Fund Monitoring Surveyor** The Council will appoint an independent Fund Monitoring Surveyor to oversee the development, make representation to the developer/professional team and verify all financial payments.

**Development Agreement** This will cater for any disputes between parties but will also provide “step in” rights to finalise the development if necessary in the event of default. The profit cover is deemed to be an acceptable amount for a development of this nature.

**Ground Conditions** Prior to development commencing detailed ground condition surveys will be undertaken to ensure there is no unexpected ground conditions (including environmental). These reports will be readdressed to the Council.

**Warranties** Collateral warranties will be provided by all members of the professional team particularly those with direct input and the main contractor.

## **9. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Not required for this report.

## **10. PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

Not required for this Report

## **11. IMPACT ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

### **11.1 Fairness for All**

By retaining Metaswitch in the Borough, families are not uprooted and moved and the local economy is not damaged with the long term future of Enfield Town secured.

### **11.2 Growth and Sustainability**

The development of the office and global headquarters building will confirm to the wider arena that Enfield is about opportunity, creation and retention of jobs and business friendly which will lead to onward supply chains seeking to relocate to Enfield thereby creating jobs and prosperity.

### **11.3 Strong Communities**

Metaswitch are a community company with over 52% of the workforce residing in Enfield. The Company are also very charitable with donations to local charities and hospices high on their agenda every year. Together this company has been part of Enfield since its conception and it would be a sad day for Enfield if they were to leave the Borough.

## **12. HR IMPLICATIONS**

Delivering this development scheme within the tight time constraints together with various other complex projects and schemes in the pipeline will require additional resources, initially will be met from within existing sources, however specialist areas where delivery is concerned may need to be met from external sources.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

## OVERVIEW &amp; SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 11.4.2018

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 11 APRIL 2018**

**COUNCILLORS**

**PRESENT** Derek Levy, Abdul Abdullahi, Michael Rye OBE and Edward Smith

**ABSENT** Guney Dogan and Nneka Keazor

**STATUTORY CO-OPTTEES:** *1 vacancy (Church of England diocese representative), Mr Simon Goulden (other faiths/denominations representative), Mr Tony Murphy (Catholic diocese representative), Alicia Meniru & 1 vacancy (Parent Governor representative) - Italics Denotes absence*

**OFFICERS:** Paul Sutton (AD, Youth & Service Development), Joseph Fitzgerald (Families & Adolescent Support Team Manager), Lee Shelsher (Head of Customer Experience & Libraries), Nicholas Foster (Complaints & Access to Information Manager), Dionne Grant (Statutory Complaints Manager), Susan O'Connell (Scrutiny Officer), Stacey Gilmour (Committee Secretary)

**Also Attending:** Lily Hassan (Enfield Youth Parliament)

**546****WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

Councillor Levy welcomed all attendees to the meeting and extended a special welcome to the Enfield Youth Parliament attendee. Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Nneka Keazor and Tony Murphy, Co-opted Member. It was noted that Councillor Toby Simon was substituting for Councillor Nneka Keazor. Apologies for lateness had been received from Councillor Michael Rye.

As it was the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2017/18 and before the Local Election on 3 May 2018, the Chair Councillor Levy thanked all participants of the Committee, past and present, for their hard work and for keeping the committee fully formed over the past four years, three of which had been in his care as Chair.

He advised that all reports from the Working Groups were now being concluded and would come forward to a future meeting.

**547****DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

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**HOMELESS 16/17 YEAR OLDS**

**RECEIVED** a report from Paul Sutton, Assistant Director, Youth & Service Development and Joseph Fitzgerald, Families & Adolescent Support Team Manager.

**NOTED:**

- i) The Family and Adolescent Support Team's (FAST) primary objective is to promote and safeguard the well-being of the young person and prevent family breakdown and homelessness.
- ii) The service focuses on two main areas of work: Firstly, it aims to provide a rapid family support service to vulnerable young people aged 11 to 15 and their families, where there is a risk of family breakdown. In this aspect of its work the team undertakes intensive work with families for up to 9 months.
- iii) Secondly in regard to 16 and 17 year olds it tries to prevent homelessness through use of mediation etc. and if young people cannot stay at home then support them into independent living.
- iv) The overarching principle of the FAST is that children and young people are best looked after within their families and it endeavours to ensure families stay together and fundamental to that work is building individual and family resilience.
- v) Joseph went on to speak a bit more about the service and advised that the FAST is a small team, made up of three social workers and a triage officer.
- vi) The key to this service is mediation and in view of this case loads are kept low in order to carry our intensive and targeted work.
- vii) The number of referrals into FAST has reduced significantly in the last year. This is firstly as a result of significantly reduced capacity to a change in the way the service is now set up. Secondly there has been a significant decrease in the numbers of young people approaching FAST for accommodation. The reason for this is that FAST has been delivering a consistent message to young people and families; that a full and comprehensive assessment of the young person and family's needs will be carried out before any decision is made on eligibility for supported accommodation
- viii) The service has got much better at targeting the appropriate young people effectively and is now focusing much more on family work. The team is not turning young people away but is working well to keep more young people at home within the family unit, which is a very positive outcome as evidence shows that young people do much better at home. Where however this is not possible the young people are closely supported into independent living.
- ix) Charts were provided within the report detailing information on the numbers of referrals to the FAST over the past three years, and the resulting outcomes of these referrals as a result of the work undertaken by FAST.

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- x) The Adolescent Support Team (AST) is currently looking to create another team to focus solely on the 11 to 15 year olds, leaving Joseph and his small team to concentrate solely on the 16 and 17 year olds.
- xi) 16 and 17 year olds who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness can self-refer to FAST or can be referred from other agencies e.g. Colleges, Youth Offending Unit and Single Point of Entry (SPOE) etc.
- xii) 11 to 15 year olds can be referred to FAST by Children's Services Referral and Assessment Team, once an assessment has been undertaken if it is assessed that there is a risk of family breakdown which could lead to a young person entering the care system.
- xiii) As can be seen from the data provided, the FAS Team are successful and becoming increasingly so in preventing family breakdown and ensuring young people remain at home.
- xiv) Case studies were provided as an illustration of the type of work FAST undertake with young people and their families at risk of homelessness in order to support them to live at home (as in case study 1), or to return home to the care of their families after a period of time in supported accommodation (as in case study 2). Discussions took place around the case studies and it was agreed that the information provided was most interesting.

The following questions/comments were raised:

- Q. How do you manage young people who are desperate to get out of home but aren't really able to?
  - A. The young person is treated as a child in need. We work with them in an aim to increase their independent living skills. We work closely with their social workers and assessments are reviewed every six months.
  
- Q. How do you filter which referrals you accept, given the fact that with reduced resources you no doubt have to be more stringent in this process?
  - A. All 16-17 year olds who self-referred are accepted. With regards to 11-15 year olds these young people will be referred through the SPOE (Single Point of Entry) Assessment Team. Where the referral has not been accepted as a social worker case mediation has been agreed for the younger groups. We have become much better with our data so we are now better assisted to refer the right people to the right place at the right time.
  
- Q. Is the gender/ethnicity of the Social Workers important when working with and engaging with the young people? For example would a female young person find it easier to talk to a female Social Worker?
  - A. Yes this is an important issue as often a young person will find it easier to talk to a Social Worker from a different ethnic origin than their own. This also applies to male/female Social Workers when a young person might feel more comfortable discussing their issues with someone of their own sex, or vice-versa. The engagement that takes place is very much relationship based social work so this is a key aspect.

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- Q. What do you feel has attributed to the reduction in 16-17 year olds being placed in supported accommodation?
- A. A few years ago it was recognised that the cultural message was that a 16-17 year old could just turn up at the Council and get housed. The system in place was viewed as a way of getting accommodation. The message is now clear to young people that, although they can still refer themselves to the service we will listen but we will also talk to their parents, offer support, mediation and other intervention measures before offering supported accommodation. This has very much helped change the cultural way of thinking amongst young people.
- Q. Councillor Levy felt confident that the current model is working well. However are there any concerns that Councillors should look at going forward or any particular challenges where member support is needed?
- A. We have a good equilibrium at the moment. Judicial reviews had posed a difficulty in the past but we now have far better assessments in place and far better recording of information. This has enabled us to demonstrate that a young person had made an informed decision regarding their situation and the offers of support that had been made when they were 16/17 years old. This has greatly assisted in addressing the issues around judicial reviews.
- Q. What does the service need to ensure that no young people fall through the net?
- A. Any young person coming into care is very costly therefore realistically it is in our interest to keep young people in the family home, which evidence proves results in much better outcomes.

The Chair thanked Paul and Joseph for a broadly very positive report.

**549**

**ANNUAL CORPORATE COMPLAINTS**

**RECEIVED** a report from Nicholas Foster, Complaints Manager HHASC.

**NOTED:**

- i) The report provided an update of complaints handling between October 2016 – December 2017 regarding complaints handled under the Council's corporate complaints scheme.
- ii) There has been a marked improvement to the service since the last report to OSC in February 2017. There had been some real challenges since the Enfield 2017 online systems were implemented but these had now been addressed and accessible and transparent systems are now in place to listen to customers and residents via the website, phone, email and face to face.
- iii) Enfield Council are now moving to a more resolution driven approach and the process is geared at solving complaints as early as possible and as informally as possible as a result of which formal complaints are decreasing.



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- iv) More than 90% of complaints are resolved at First Stage and the numbers of complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman have also reduced.
- v) Further information was provided on the complaints procedure. Complaints are handled by the central Complaints and Access to Information Team. The team is also responsible for co-ordinating all members' enquiries, school appeals and statutory requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act or Data Protection Act.
- vi) The Council aims to resolve concerns and complaints as soon as possible, therefore contact from customers is initially presented to the team or person responsible for delivering the service where dissatisfaction has arisen, so that the matter can be addressed.
- vii) Where attempts for resolution have been unsuccessful, the complaint will be handled under the two-stages. Information was provided on the First and Final stage of the process.
- viii) The complaints policy promotes early resolution of complaints. This approach ensures that swift action is taken to resolve the matter for complainants with the need to go through the formal complaints procedure. The Council aims to deal with informal complaints within 5 working days.
- ix) Charts were included in the report providing a quarterly breakdown of complaints and concerns that were resolved informally during October 2016 – December 2017.
- x) Information was provided on the Complaint Themes and Causes. These included council tax, housing benefits, waste – missed collections/recycling, highways and housing repairs.
- xi) Further discussions took place in relation to the Local Government Ombudsman. The Complaints and Access to Information Team work in partnership with services to ensure that timely responses are made to Ombudsman's enquiries and appropriate settlements are negotiated to achieve resolution.
- xii) Positive outcomes within the service have contributed to a decrease in the numbers of complaints escalated to the Ombudsman. During 2016/17 there were 135 complaints dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman. This compares with 157 in 2015/16 and 154 in 2014/15. The numbers of Ombudsman complaints in Enfield are low when compared with our closest neighbours.
- xiii) It was also noted that in some instances, complainants prematurely contact the Ombudsman without having gone through the Council's internal processes. In these circumstances the Ombudsman would refer the matter to the Council to be dealt with.
- xiv) The Ombudsman usually highlights significant issues of concern within their annual letter. It was noted that, unlike some Councils, no concerns were raised within the letter to Enfield.
- xv) Moving forward the team aims to build on its current successes by:
  - Working with ICT to improve the functionality of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) electronic system to improve efficiency in the end to end process;

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- Using intelligence from complaints and other forms of customer feedback to proactively resolve concerns before they become complaints and improve Council services by addressing the underlying causes of complaints.

The following questions/concerns were raised:

- Q. Of the 135 complaints to the Ombudsman how many of these were premature? It would have been useful to have seen a breakdown of these statistics and a copy of the Ombudsman's letter.
- A. Nicholas apologised for not including this information in the report but agreed to forward this to the Scrutiny Officer to include with the minutes. He did however point out that this information was available on the Ombudsman website.

**Action: Nicholas Foster/Susan O'Connell**

- Q. It would also have been useful to have seen data on the average amount of time a complaint takes to go through the process. Without this information we cannot say how efficient this process is.
- A. This data can be provided. However, it should also be recognised that an indicator of success is not how quickly we send a letter but more importantly whether the complaint has satisfactorily been resolved.
- Q. Out of interest what are the Council Housing complaints usual about, and do these come from leaseholders or tenants?
- A. The complaints do come from the leaseholders but are usually from the tenants and are generally related to repairs not being completed satisfactorily or on time. They have been some ongoing challenges with current contractors, but these contracts are now up for review and a bigger piece of work is taking place around this issue. It was acknowledged that there was not a good history regarding the procurement of this out of house service, and the suggestion was that it is often beneficial to bring a service back in house therefore having people accountable.
- Q. When does a complaint end? If it starts again and is the same issue from the same resident how is this managed and dealt with?
- A. Repeat complaints of the same issue are not logged as a new complaint. We would however chase the appropriate service for a resolution.

The Chair thanked Nicholas for his interesting and informative report.

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**OSC WORKSTREAMS FOR 2018/19**

Discussions took place regarding the OSC Workstreams for 2018/19 and the following comments were made:

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- i) It was felt that the resource is currently insufficient to fully support OSC and the workstreams and this needs to be addressed going forward.
- ii) Members agreed that the level of engagement on both sides had been somewhat indifferent this past year especially with regards to interest in and attendance at workstreams.
- iii) It was also suggested that OSC had been too ambitious this past year, with too many workstreams which had put added pressure on Officers. It was felt that for 2018/19 there should be less workstreams, these should then be advertised so that members could then put their names forward for what they were interested in which would hopefully result in better member engagement.
- iv) The Chair, Councillor Levy said that scrutiny is a very vital part of the process and it would therefore be sad to see ambition relaxed as he felt that this would weaken the process. He agreed that an increase in resource was needed to support OSC and the future workstreams.
- v) Councillor Abdullahi suggested that meeting attendance should be recorded and published on the website.
- vi) All members agreed that the role of scrutiny needs to be flagged up very strongly during the induction process for new Councillors.
- vii) Councillor Smith said that in his opinion, the current Leader of the Council does not view the role of scrutiny highly enough. Services and Officers need to be interrogated continuously to ensure improvements and better services.
- viii) Councillor Rye said that in his twenty years on the council he has never known such a lack of interest and engagement from back benchers. He felt that the groups needed Whip and leadership support from their relevant parties.

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**WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18**

Councillor Levy felt that the Work Programme for 2017/18 had worked well and more OSC meetings had taken place during 2017/18 in order to accommodate items which were important for the Committee to address.

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 22 FEBRUARY 2018 AND 13 MARCH 2018**

**AGREED** the minutes of the meetings held on 22 February 2018 and 13 March 2018.

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**DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**NOTED** that the provisional Call-In meeting scheduled to take place on the 19 April 2018 had been cancelled.

The dates of future meetings will be agreed at the meeting of Annual Council on 23 May 2018.

