

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2018**

**COUNCILLORS**

**PRESENT** Derek Levy, Huseyin Akpinar, Susan Erbil, Gina Needs, Lee David-Sanders, Edward Smith and Hass Yusuf

**STATUTORY CO-OPTES:** *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:** Fay Hammond (Director of Finance), Nicky Fiedler (Commercial Director), Kari Manovitch (Acting Director, Customer Experience & Change), Garry Knights (Head of Housing Property Services), Nick Martin (Head of Temporary Accommodation & Procurement), Harriet Potemkin (Strategy & Policy Hub Manager), Linda Hughes, Head of Service, Looked After Children, Susan O'Connell (Governance & Scrutiny Officer), Stacey Gilmour, (Governance & Scrutiny Secretary).

**Also Attending:** Councillor Dino Lemonides (Cabinet Member, Housing), Councillor Mary Maguire (Cabinet Member, Finance & Procurement), Councillor Tolga Aramaz (Observing), 2 members of the Enfield Youth Parliament.

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**WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

Councillor Levy welcomed all attendees to the meeting. It was noted that Councillor Hass Yusuf was substituting for Councillor Tolga Aramaz. The Chair was delighted however to see Councillor Aramaz in attendance as an observer at the meeting and he was greeted with a warm welcome by all members of the Committee.

Discussions regarding item:7-Children's Social Care Assessment, Linda Hughes, Head of Service, Looked After Children took place at the beginning of the meeting, but for the interests of clarity the minutes are shown in the agenda order.

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**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

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**CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE & PROCUREMENT, COUNCILLOR MARY MAGUIRE**

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The Chair introduced this item and welcomed Councillor Maguire as Cabinet Member for Finance & Procurement. He asked Councillor Maguire to give a brief overview of what she considers to be the key objectives and priorities in respect of the portfolio.

Councillor Maguire thanked Members for the opportunity to attend the meeting and felt that it was a good time to come and talk about what she wants from her role as well as providing an update on progress to date.

She introduced Officers from the key areas of her portfolio; Fay Hammond, Director of Finance, Nicky Fiedler, Commercial Director and Kari Manovitch, Acting Director, Customer Experience & Change.

Councillor Maguire highlighted the following:

- The main area dominating her portfolio at present is the Budget, with the other areas being Procurement & Commissioning, Customer Experience, ICT & Transformation, Revenues & Benefits and Audit & Finance.
- She has asked for a review of all service contracts, looking at quality, control and what works best. It is very important to have control of the commercial levers therefore the preference is to bring services back in house where tighter control can be taken resulting in less time spent dealing with complaints and mapping.
- Reviews are also taking place on the costs of agency staff and consultants. There is currently a big problem with recruitment, but this is being addressed as it is recognised that it is better to have permanent staff committed to delivering to Enfield and its residents. Enfield Council also has a responsibility to grow and develop its own staff and therefore the aim is to provide more apprenticeship and training schemes.
- The Customer Experience Strategy was agreed by Cabinet in September 2018 following input from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. This is therefore in its infancy but the key to the strategy is making sure that the service being provided to customers is the very best it can be.
- A new Head of Service started this month in ICT and important proposals are now being developed. The IT & Digital Strategy will come to OSC before Cabinet in early 2019.
- Market supplements have been introduced to address recruitment and retention challenges and reduce reliance on interims. 5 of 24 posts have currently been filled with a further 19 being advertised.
- There had been problems in Audit with the external Auditors BDO, not completing the sign off of the Council accounts in time. As a result of this a letter of complaint had been sent to the Audit Authority.

Nicky Fiedler, Commercial Director provided some further information on Procurement & Commissioning highlighting the following:

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- 2018/19 work plan
- Contract Reviews- 272 providers relate to 80% spend
- 34 contracts identified and work commencing
- Informed by spend and contract register
- Strategic review of commercial strategies
- Category Strategies – strategic approach to external spend £460m
- Synergy between goods/services
- Synergy in the supplier market
- 30 categories identified.

Councillor Smith raised concerns regarding the current procurement process and felt that this was failing in various areas. He asked who oversaw this area and whether it was a central function.

Nicky responded by explaining that the service was currently co-managed with Ernst & Young under a five-year contract. Moving forward the service is keen to look more at category strategies and commissioning and this should alleviate the issue of only getting one provider coming forward. The service is firmly looking to move away from a re-active approach.

Discussions took place regarding KPI (Key Performance Indicators) management in line with contract reviews and information was provided on how going forward, KPI's will be utilised at the beginning of the contracts.

Kari Manovitch, Acting Director Customer Experience and Change provided further information on Customer Experience, ICT and Transformation highlighting the following:

- A Customer Experience programme is now underway containing four projects plus the Digital Programme;
- Updates on progress will come back to OSC in February and then future quarterly updates will be provided;
- Customer Services is training staff in multiple service areas to improve performance and resilience, and exploring ways to retain staff and address high turnover;
- In response to whether the retrieval of staff is possible Kari said she would explore this with her Head of Service. However, pay had been stated as an issue by staff who have left Enfield Council;
- It was recognised however that it was cheaper to retain good, experienced staff then recruit from elsewhere. Promotional opportunities should also be looked at for staff as Corporate Policy is to seek to fill vacancies from within the existing workforce
- ICT will shortly undertake a further restructure. There are also significant projects underway within the service including cost reduction via supplier savings, infrastructure programme and new device rollout.
- There are 10 programmes and 43 projects underway within Transformation, delivering on behalf of senior officers on all levels.

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- The service is made of a central team of Programme, Project & Change Management specialist and a lot of activity is currently taking place around existing and new programmes.

The Chair thanked Councillor Maguire, Nicky Fiedler and Kari Manovitch for their informative updates and Members agreed that discussions had been most useful and constructive.

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### **BUDGET PROGRESS UPDATE**

RECEIVED a Budget Progress Update from Fay Hammond, Director of Finance.

NOTED:

- The purpose of the report was to update the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the progress and timetable in setting the Council's budget.
- The budget is set in the context of ensuring the council is financially resilient.
- The budget gap as set out in Cabinet is set at £18m, to date £15.6m of savings have been identified.
- Officers continue to work on options for savings in preparation for finalising the budget in February 2019. A key feature of the savings is to ensure that these are ambitious but achievable.
- The budget consultation is now underway and the results of this will be reported at the Overview & Scrutiny Budget meeting on 31 January 2019.
- It is imperative that Enfield's budget is financially robust to address a number of issues including future funding uncertainty – in 2020/21 the national funding system for all councils will change, the settlement information will not be available until autumn 2019.
- The approach to balancing the budget for 2019/20 and future years will take the form of six work streams focused on the Council's services.
- Each workstream has been set with challenging targets to identify savings, with weightings applied to recognise the difficulties demand led services such as Children's Services will face in finding savings from stretched budgets.
- A series of three Member budget challenge sessions have been set up in November with the administration (Resources, Chief Executive, Place, People). The purpose of these sessions is to provide additional scrutiny to the savings process.
- The Executive Management team also meet every week to review the budget. This takes a collaborative approach which works well.
- 2018/19 overspends will be considered as part of the 2019/20 budget.
- Information was provided on the reserves levels and Fay advised Members that if the budget issues are not addressed and savings found, reserves will run out by March 2020.

The following questions and comments were made:

- Q. Does the £18m target incorporate some of the savings that should have been found this year?
- A. The £18m is a true figure and by February 2019 the budget will be balanced.
- Q. With regards to fairer funding both parties fully support what the council is doing regarding representation to the Government. However, how confident are you that the formula will be revised in our favour?
- A. The pressure we have is the County Councils are marketing very hard in being the poor relations to London Councils. Although lobbying for fairer funding will continue we are not expecting the Government to award additional money to London as a whole.

Fay concluded by advising Members that the current focus remains for Officers to continue to work on options to close the 2019-20 budget gap. For 2020+, the work will start as soon as the budget for 2019-20 is agreed.

The Chair thanked Fay for her informative update and the Committee looked forward to hearing the results of the budget consultation at its meeting in January 2019.

## **839**

### **PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS IN ENFIELD**

The Chair, Councillor Levy introduced the Preventing Homelessness in Enfield 2018-2023 Draft Strategy and welcomed Harriet Potemkin, Head of Service & Policy Hub Manager, and Nick Martin, Head of Temporary Accommodation & Procurement to the meeting. The Strategy will be presented to Cabinet by April 2019, the actual date is yet to be confirmed. As a subject of pre-decision scrutiny, the views of Overview & Scrutiny were requested.

The Chair reminded Members that tonight's meeting was for the Committee to play the role of critical friend and to make comments, observations and constructive criticism. The primary intention however is to assist and guide Officers and the Cabinet Member on how best to present this report to Cabinet in the future.

The strategy sets out Enfield's ambitions in preventing homelessness in Enfield and its proactive approach in delivering a high-quality service that will support the needs of all homeless applicants.

The following was highlighted:

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- This is a very early draft of the strategy and over the next couple of months there will be cross council and partner engagement to further develop the draft document.
- The new Director of Housing has taken up post this week and has stated that she is keen to develop a new ambitious approach to homelessness.
- Officers welcomed questions and input from Members to help guide a more ambitious strategy.
- Since Enfield's last strategy was produced in 2013, homelessness has increased across the country, and at a significant rate locally. At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018, there were 3,323 households in temporary accommodation in Enfield, a 70% rise from 2012. Enfield is now the second highest provider of temporary accommodation in England.
- In a climate of increased demand for services, increased costs of homelessness and cuts to public spending it is ever more challenging to provide effective services that are value for money. This makes it essential to share knowledge, expertise and pool resources with our partners in order to meet that challenge.
- Partnership working is key to successfully delivering housing options and advice services that are value for money. It is essential that all partners ensure their role in preventing and tackling homelessness in Enfield remains a priority.
- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places more emphasis on early identification and prevention work to tackle homelessness
- Enfield's Preventing Homelessness Strategy contributes towards its wider strategic aims of good homes in well-connected neighbourhoods; sustaining strong and healthy communities; and building the local economy to create a thriving place.

In-depth discussions took place on the draft strategy and the following issues were raised:

- It was suggested that the strategy includes more of a focus around landlord licensing and housing responsibilities for landlords.
- It was also felt that there was not enough reference in the document regarding the financial context and it was hoped that this would be addressed in the final strategy.
- Members also felt that it was important to see more detail around the supply and demand of properties in the document, in particular looking at placing homeless households out of the borough as it was felt that this was a big part of the solution.
- Following on from this point Councillor Smith questioned why 56% of Temporary Accommodation in Enfield is taken by other boroughs. This net figure is key, and it was hoped that this issue would be reflected more clearly in the strategy.
- The strategy needs to ensure that the right support and advice is provided to residents to prevent homelessness and empower them to make positive choices about where they live.

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- The vision must enable people to make informed choices so that they access housing that meets their needs and they can afford. The key is sitting down and talking to people about their personal circumstances and, with council support, raising the issue of moving to private sector housing.
- Nick Martin, Head of Temporary Accommodation & Procurement spoke about the new 'move on project' which involved conversation with residents with a view to moving into private sector housing. There had been a big response to this project; 100 reviews had currently taken place which had resulted in 23 families moving to private sector housing during October 2018. The drive to move people into private sector housing will continue.
- Concerns were raised regarding the lack of social housing in Enfield and Members questioned how this was being addressed. Nick advised that Enfield have developed a brand called 'Enfield Lets' and to date 31 properties have been procured via this scheme. The hope is to potentially scope this as an entity.
- Discussions took place regarding 'Capital Letters', a collaborative Pan London Procurement Initiative and the impact if any, this would have on Enfield.
- In reference to page 10 of the draft strategy Councillor Needs was interested to hear what was meant by 'comparatively low numbers of rough sleepers in Enfield'. She asked for clarification on these figures, how they were recorded, and how this compared to neighbouring boroughs.  
Nick agreed to find out this information and feedback to the committee.  
**Action: Nick Martin/Susan O'Connell**
- Councillor Needs expressed her thanks and congratulated officers at John Wilkes House on the professional and helpful way they continue to deal with the day to day issues that Councillors go to them with.

In conclusion the Chair thanked Harriet and Nick for an informative and encouraging report.

AGREED that:

- Councillor Smith would, if necessary draft some further comments/questions on the strategy and forward these to Officers accordingly.
- If there were any further points of clarification resulting from today's discussions Officers should please forward these to members of the Committee.
- Officers to take away the points and suggestions made and look at including them in the strategy.

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## HOUSING REPAIRS - PERFORMANCE UPDATE AND FUTURE OPTIONS

Garry Knights, Head of Housing Property Services presented this report which sets out the progress to date in improving the customer experience for

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responsive repairs and a timeline for a full options appraisal of future delivery models, and a recommendation to Cabinet based on the outcome of that analysis.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee were asked to review the report and provide feedback.

The following was highlighted:

- The Housing Service in Enfield carries out circa. 54,000 repairs and services annually to the borough's housing stock through a total of 4 external contractors (2 for Responsive Repairs, 2 for Mechanical and Electrical (M&E) works. All of these 5-year contracts are due to expire in March 2020, with the option of extensions for a further year or more.
- In light of concerns about current performance, an improvement plan is currently in place, and consideration is being given to how these functions can best be delivered.
- In order to tackle the issue of poor performance Council Housing has put in place a repairs task force, with member involvement, and working closely with staff in the Transformation team who have identified housing repairs as a key process for improvement in the Customer Experience Strategy.
- To supplement these intensive efforts to improve delivery through the contracts in the short term, a decision has now been taken to set up an internal 'property MOT' team to drive improvements and to test the operation of a 'hybrid' model for the stock in which contractors and directly employed staff each have an operational role.
- This is a cyclical maintenance approach aimed at reducing the high cost and high resident impact of day to day responsive repairs.
- The plan is to engage 3 teams of two multiskilled in-house operatives, plus 1 planner/manager to oversee the programme. Recruitment is due to commence shortly. The team will be fully funded from existing Housing Revenue Account budgets. There is confidence that these additional staffing costs will over time be wholly offset by a reduction in revenue spend, as fewer repairs need to be carried out by contractors and funded from the same budget source.
- Following discussions with members, in the coming months a full options appraisal will be conducted to arrive at recommendations for the best future service model. This will include analysis of benchmarking data, visits to other boroughs are also envisaged, as well as a robust analysis of all local intelligence and data to arrive at a fully considered view of the best way forward.
- In November 2017 the Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommended as part of their repairs workstream report that a feasibility study should be carried out into bringing the repairs service in-house. This study will form part of the options appraisal described above and can now incorporate consideration of the property MOT team as a partial in-house model.
- The issues with the current repairs service have been further exacerbated by procuring all repairs, compliance and major works



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contracts at the same time and with the same contract durations. It has therefore been proposed to consider staggering any procurement of these contracts in future. This change was recommended by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in their report on repairs in November 2017.

The following issues were raised:

- Councillor Needs praised Garry Knights for the progress that had been made to housing repairs since he had joined the council and thanked him and his team for their hard work and determination.
- Discussions took place regarding Appendix A of the report – Ridge Property & Construction Consultants – Repairs and Maintenance Options report, draft for discussions. Members commented that this report was dated February 2017 and Officers agreed to investigate this and feedback accordingly.

### **Action: Garry Knights/Susan O'Connell**

- OSC acknowledged the relevance of the content, and how it very clearly and reassuringly had influenced some of the development work to date and will robustly inform the options analyses going forward.
- There needs to be a very honest look at the options available and full consideration given in relation to statutory requirements. The various options need to be considered with a view to 'honing in' on fewer options that tick all the boxes by looking at what is needed and what are the key criteria for the service.
- Councillor Lemonides, Cabinet Member, Housing reassured members that the task force were carefully considering all options and to date nothing had been ruled in and nothing had been ruled out. Guidance would be sought from reports such as the one produced by Ridge Property & Construction Consultants.
- The approach of allowing sufficient time to undertake a fuller options appraisals exercise and allowing a suitable mobilisation/conversion period is recommended to achieve the optimum model.
- Garry reminded members that the key isn't just about the model but also about the management as both these factors need to work.
- In reply to a question regarding the implementation of an MOT service, Garry advised members that he had successfully delivered MOT services elsewhere and was confident that this could be achieved here at Enfield. He also explained that the Key Risk in the report to Cabinet relates only to timelines and not the MOT service itself.

In conclusion the Overview & Scrutiny Committee noted the following:

- The establishment of the officer/member repairs task force and the improvements made since its inception, along with the work of the transformation team on repairs.
- The creation of a small in-house 'property MOT' team under delegated authority to work alongside the contractors, improving the quality of stock data and resolving routine repair issues.

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- The options for future delivery now being assessed and Cabinet will be asked to delegate authority to the Director for Housing and Regeneration to consider further these options in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing.
- The timeline and actions shown at para. 7.7 of the report including the presentation of a further paper in April 2019 making recommendations on the future delivery model for repairs.

The Chair thanked Garry for his informative and interesting report.

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### **CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SELF ASSESSMENT**

Linda Hughes, Head of Services for Looked After Children presented this report which provided a summary of the information captured in Enfield's self-evaluation, highlighting to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee the key areas shared with Ofsted in June 2018.

The following was highlighted:

- In Enfield, Children's Social Care services are on a trajectory of continuous improvement with strong, stable leadership in place.
- During 2017/18 there has been considerable progress in many areas of practice for example in the work with for looked after children, care leavers and in fostering and adoption services.
- The changes to the Single Point of Entry and early help services have significantly improved the quality and timeliness of responses to vulnerable children. Early Help services are making a real difference to children and their families.
- Frontline staff, managers and leaders continue to work hard in challenging circumstances, with increasing demand and new pressures.
- Issues and challenges faced include increasing caseloads, high staff turnover in some areas and national difficulties in the recruitment of qualified social workers and managers, particularly in Child Protection.
- Increased number of families without recourse to public funds, homeless families, children with EHCPs (education, health and care plans), SGO's (special guardianship orders).
- New legislative duties requiring the offer of continued support to be extended to all leaving care young people up to the age of 25 years of age from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019

The following issues were raised:

- It was accepted that caseloads in the Referral & Assessment team (R&A) are too high. However, Linda was pleased to report that the number of assessments now approved within the required timescale had increased from 61% to 87%.

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- New investment has also been secured to create extra capacity in the Referral & Assessment team, the recruitment processes are complete, and the new permanent team will be operational from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018, releasing agency staff that were covering posts.
- However, caseloads currently remain too high and the demand for support continues to rise with new cases coming in for assessment reaching 90 per week.
- In response to concerns regarding the recruitment and retention of Social Workers Linda advised that there was a national problem in recruiting Child protection Social Workers. However, in Enfield a Work Force Development Group had been put in place to look at various issues including work life balance. A Cultural Review Audit had been carried out asking staff what they did and did not like about working in Enfield and, based on the feedback from this review a work plan will be implemented.
- The main commitments going forward will be reducing caseloads and managers being better supported in their roles.
- Children's Social Care will maintain a continuous focus upon improvement across all areas to maintain and consolidate Enfield's strong reputation in readiness for the next full Ofsted inspection expected within 6 months.

The Chair and Members thanked Linda for her clear, informative and positive report.

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### **MINUTES OF MEETING 11 OCTOBER 2018**

**AGREED** the minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2018

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### **WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19**

**NOTED** the Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme 2018/19

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### **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Noted the dates as follows:

#### Provisional Call-Ins:

Thursday 6 December, 2018  
Thursday 20 December, 2018  
Tuesday 15 January 2019  
Thursday 7 February 2019  
Tuesday 12 March 2019  
Tuesday 26 March, 2019  
Thursday 11 April, 2019

The following Call-In meetings have now been confirmed:

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Wednesday 14 November 2018 @ 6:00pm  
Monday 19 November 2018 @ 6:15pm

The business meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

Tuesday 12 February, 2019

Wednesday 3 April, 2019

The Overview & Scrutiny Budget Meeting: Thursday 31 January 2019

Councillor Levy thanked everyone for attending the meeting.