

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD ON THURSDAY, 28 MAY 2020**

**COUNCILLORS  
PRESENT**

Susan Erbil (Chair), Achilleas Georgiou, Tolga Aramaz, Sinan Boztas, Doug Taylor, Hass Yusuf, Lee- David Sanders and Edward Smith.

**OFFICERS:**

Fay Hammond (Acting Executive Director Resources, Financial Management Services)  
Doug Wilkinson (Director of Environment & Operational Services)  
Stephen Skinner (Head of Highway Services)  
Jon Sharkey (Head of Public Realm)  
John Grimes (Group Engineer Highways)  
Susan O'Connell (Scrutiny Officer)  
Elaine Huckell (Scrutiny Secretary)

**Also Attending:**

Councillor Nesil Caliskan (Leader of the Council),  
Councillor Guney Dogan (Cabinet Member Environment & Sustainability), Joanne Laban (Leader of the Opposition).

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**WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

Councillor Susan Erbil welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Committee. She said Councillor Achilleas Georgiou would chair the first part of the meeting when the call-in would be considered, and she would then chair the remainder of the meeting. Councillor Yusuf would substitute for her for the call-in.

Apologies had been received from Councillor Lappage and Councillor Doug Taylor would be substituting for her. Councillor Aydin was absent.

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**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Susan Erbil declared a non-pecuniary interest for the call-in item of the agenda. There were no other declarations of interest.

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**CALL-IN- IN-SOURCING OF THE ROAD GULLY CLEANING SERVICE**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Law and Governance outlining details of a call-in received on the decision taken by Cabinet on- 'In-Sourcing of Road Gully Cleaning Service'.

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Councillor Georgiou invited Councillor Laban to give an outline of the reasons for call-in. Councillor Dogan, as Cabinet Member for Environment & Sustainability would answer the points raised.

Councillor Laban stated that the main reason for calling in this decision was the lack of information provided in the original report.

NOTED

Councillor Laban set out the reasons for calling in the decision:

1. The report stated that 20,000 gullies would be cleaned with an in-house team in comparison with the 15,000 that the current contractor carries out. However, there was no evidence given in the report of how many extra gullies could be cleaned by the existing contractor if they were paid the additional sum of £11,000 mentioned.
2. The report states that there would be better performance management achieved by having an in-house team, however as we contract manage Ringway Jacobs for this work, it could be said that some of the problems are our responsibility.
3. The report provides no details of competition for the gully cleaning service. If this was more comprehensive, we should be able to benchmark with other outside providers to see whether having an in-house team would be more cost effective.
4. It has been stated that additional funding required for the service could be contained within our existing budget, however our finances are uncertain at present as a result of Covid 19 and with the possibility of a second wave in future.
5. It is likely that staff would TUPE over from Ringway Jacobs to our in-house team although it has been considered that a poor service had been provided by them. The report does not say how we would ensure that an improved service would be achieved.
6. The report does not explain how bringing the gully cleaning service in house delivers healthier communities, which is a council priority.
7. The council's priority is to build our local economy however, by bringing the service in house it has discounted using local businesses to deliver a service which would support and build the local economy.

Councillor Laban stated that the report was light on detail. She said as members we must ensure that the most cost effective and best value services are delivered.

The proposed alternative action requested by the Councillors calling-in the decision was to refer the report back to Cabinet to review the decision.

Councillor Dogan, Cabinet Member for Environment & Sustainability and officers- Doug Wilkinson (Director of Environment & Operational Services), Stephen Skinner (Head of Highway Services), Jon Sharkey (Head of Public Realm) and John Grimes (Group Engineer Highways) provided information in support of the decision as follows:

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1. The report recommends the in-sourcing of the road gully cleaning service and to deliver the service from within Public Realm Services based at Morson Road Depot. There are approximately 25,000 road gullies in the borough with road gullies on principal roads cleaned twice each year and those on borough roads cleaned once every 3 years.
2. Costs for the in-house team would be met from the wider Highways Services budget and would benefit the council as it would allow us greater flexibility in providing the service.
3. An in-house team can work more urgently in those areas that we consider to be a priority and in future would hopefully be able to provide an additional service for some public/ council buildings and in other areas such as for hospitals.
4. Councillor Dogan said this Council supports in-sourcing as a beneficial way to deliver services.

Issues raised by members and responded to by Councillor Dogan and officers as follows:

*Q1. Why was it considered that Ringway Jacobs were not performing?*

A gully cleaning service that is managed in house will ensure that all of Enfield's highway gully network and associated highway drainage is cleaned appropriately and any flooding responded to promptly. It will give us greater flexibility. In the past we carried out some work for industrial areas and we are looking at possibility of doing this in future more on a commercial basis to bring additional income into the Council.

The contract with Ringway Jacobs for highway services has had mixed performance overall over the years, as with all contracts it can be varied.

*Q2. You mention that extra gullies could be cleaned but working on a 'per gully' basis it looks like this would be cheaper if done by Ringway Jacobs?*

The cost per gully clean would come down when service is in house – at present we pay for each gully clean. Some cleans are more involved with more time spent on gullies which are problematic.

Ringway Jacobs also carries out work for other authorities such as LB Haringey and TfL and priorities determined by them, so the reality is, there are times when the service is not available or working on Enfield roads. Under our control we would be able to provide an immediate service for Enfield when necessary for example during a flash flood.

*Q3. What are the costs to bring this service 'in house'? A cost has been given for the IT system which had been allowed for in the cost model.*

*It has been mentioned that there would be extra benefits to having an in-house team which would be able to provide additional services, do we know how much income could be made or saved? Has this been calculated? Is there a business plan for taking this forward?*

The opportunities for expansion have not been fully costed yet as we would want to deliver a response to the 20,000 gully cleans a year first. The purpose

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of this report is to bring the service back in-house. The report sets out that by doing this there will be further opportunities to commercialize the service and any business case will be produced on a case by case basis to test viability. This would enable us to have an 'outcome specification' where intelligence can be fed back from site. This will allow for better management and better value for money however this is difficult to benchmark with other local authorities, it is commercially sensitive and other authorities would not provide this information

*Q4. Para 3.7 of the report states that 'At times Highway Inspectors may still need to employ a contractor to undertake more extensive investigatory and repair work...' what is this and why would we be unable to do this? and Para 5.1 of the report refers to 'opportunities for the gully service to operate more commercially.....develop a drainage service on housing land, educational premises, private developments and privately managed industrial estates' have there been consultations with Housing Services?*

Councillor Dogan said early intervention of gully problems is essential and investigatory work is needed to do this. He referred to a discussion with residents in Edmonton about a flooding problem which caused great distress and said that was why it was necessary for the team to react to problems promptly by sending down more complex cameras or specialist equipment where necessary to avert these problems. This happens now and is not unusual for this service.

It was noted that the proposal had been developed in consultation with Public Realm Services and Housing Services which were agreeable..

*Q5. There does not appear to be clear comparisons showing competition, also information about income generation is lacking. During this time (Covid 19), I think an extra look is needed re this proposal?  
Is there a Business Plan for income generation?*

Regarding commercial opportunities as set out in a previous response - this will be in two stages. The first is this report which is to bring the service 'in house' and then to explore future opportunities. We will need to ensure there is a solid foundation first for the service carrying out gully cleans for highways, before the second stage when we would look at opportunities for example for private estates and Housing Services grounds. The service will need to be embedded first.

With reference to the Covid 19 situation regarding financial uncertainties – by bringing the gully cleaning service in house this will provide for greater stability and resilience.. Initially it will comprise two people and a truck – the whole service would be more resilient because we have more drivers who could be used when needed. It should also lead to a more joined up approach as gullies may need extensive work rather than just a scheduled clean, being under the Public Realm service we would be able to use intelligence to undertake a better risk- based approach.

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*Q6. Future business opportunities are mentioned in the report. Is it realistic to expect the number of gullies to be cleaned to increase from 60 to 75 per day under new arrangements?*

Expansion opportunities are mentioned in the report and it is thought there are good opportunities for example in schools and Housing Services when we had this service in-house we were exceeding 100 gully cleans a day. It helped that we had local knowledge there should be no problems in carrying out the 70 to 80 gully cleans a day stated and there should be potential for extra time to work in other areas as the teams would not be off doing TfL roads and others as can be the case currently under the current contractor.

*Q7. Can we ensure that any equipment/ vehicles that are purchased follow climate change guidelines and are energy efficient?*

We have a commitment that any replacement vehicles would be the most energy efficient and affordable would explore the use of electric vehicles. Although it must be noted that the large vehicle market for electric vehicles is only starting to mature so those vehicles are very expensive. The small size vehicles are more available and we will explore these as we need to replace.

*Q8. If we are saying that we are not getting good value from the existing gully cleansing contract does this raise questions about Ringway Jacobs?*

We have worked with Ringway Jacobs over many years and there has been a mixed performance from them with some service areas performing better than others at different times. We are constantly challenging and managing their performance across many areas of the contract, gully cleaning is only one small part.

*Q9. The costs reported for bringing this work in-house- does this include call-out charges which are more expensive? It seems strange that you are proposing bringing over this one area of work from Ringway Jacobs now when the whole contract comes to an end next year. Would it not be better to wait until next year? Will there be any financial penalties incurred as a result of this? Would the contract enable whole streets to be cleared of cars before cleaning commences?*

This model does include call outs. Many are simple cleans but we would also be able to accommodate call outs. We are looking at possibility of in-sourcing other contracts, following the end of the contract with Ringway-Jacobs next year. This in-house contract for gully cleaning would be a pilot.

We do have a problem with parked cars when carrying out this service, but it is expected that that it will be easier for us to do this work when it is 'in-house'. There are no financial penalties for coming out of the contract.

Councillor Dogan referred to the IT system for this area of work which he said would be beneficial as it would provide better information for us to allocate staff and ensure an improved quality of service.

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The summing up by Councillor Laban who thanked officers for their responses She referred to

- A lack of detail in the report.
- There was no business plan regarding future opportunities for the service and she did not have any confidence in this going forward.
- There were no comparators to determine whether this was the best way to provide the service. Councillor Laban said there was no reference to who other local authorities used to carry out a gully cleaning service in their boroughs.

Councillor Dogan said LB Newham provides an in-house gully cleaning service which he understands to be doing well. He said by bringing this work 'in-house' it will enable us to carry out early interventions which will have many advantages, and which may also lead to fewer accidents.

Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the reasons provided for the call-in and responses provided Having considered the information the Committee agreed to confirm the original Cabinet decision:

1. To approve the in-sourcing of the road gully cleaning service and deliver the service from within Public Realm Services based at Morson Road with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020, or as soon as practicable after this date.
2. To develop the business as set out in this report to be the provider for gully and drainage services to Housing Services.

Councillors Aramaz, Boztas, Georgiou, Taylor and Yusuf voted in favour of the above decision. Councillors David-Sanders and Smith voted against.

The original Cabinet decision was therefore agreed.

From this point Councillor Erbil took over from Councillor Georgiou to chair the meeting.

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#### **UPDATE ON COMMUNITY RESILIENCE WORK UNDERTAKEN DURING COVID 19**

Councillor Caliskan introduced an item on the Community Resilience Work undertaken during the Covid 19 period - the 'Enfield Stands Together Programme'.

The aim of the programme created by Enfield Council and Enfield Voluntary Action was to bring together key local partners and organisations to co-ordinate efforts across the borough to organise volunteers and get help to those people who needed it during the Covid crisis.

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A presentation was given by Fay Hammond (Acting Executive Director Resources, Financial Management Services) which set out the methods of communication used and explained how the programme evolved and the services provided. It also explained the governance of the programme and its budget.

The following was highlighted:

- The initial meeting of the Community Resilience Forum was held on the 19 March 2020 which set out the terms of reference of the unit as a time limited task focused group established to assist the local authority with the help of key strategic community partners in managing the response to the coronavirus pandemic.
- We have worked with core partners including - Age UK Enfield, Citizens Advice, Enfield Voluntary Action, NHS, North Enfield food Bank, The Felix Project, Healthwatch and many more.
- A call centre was set up using #1966, an inbound call centre which went live on 25 March. An on-line form is also available. Calls could be for a request for food, support picking up prescriptions also expanded to include financial hardship referrals.
- Outbound calls made which initially targeted the NHS shielded list for Enfield residents. Letters sent to all over 70's in the borough letting them know of the telephone line.
- The food distribution warehouse was opened on the 31 March and 645 food parcels were delivered in less than a week. Within the first week the call centre contacted all those who needed medication.
- The community pantry was set up in partnership with the Felix project. It allows groups and charities who support their communities with cooked meals to pick up essential food supplies and ingredients.
- All shielded residents have been called. It was noted that many people were not previously known to us as vulnerable.
- Members of staff who were taking calls were given 'strength-based training' and experienced managers worked with them. It was necessary to ensure help could be provided from colleagues for those who called with mental health issues. It was essential that the correct people were placed in appropriate positions and that they had the necessary skills needed. Volunteers who already had DBS checks also provided help.
- The highest number of shielded residents were found in Enfield Highway and Turkey Street wards. The wards with the most deprived residents tended to have the most food packages delivered.
- Up to 5 May over 1,700 friendly phone calls were made to support people feeling isolated. In the long term it is hoped that help may be sustained for these residents through the voluntary sector.
- Small grants for cooked food programme was launched – worth £20k to help local communities get cooked food to those who were isolated.
- The Internal Project management board were meeting daily and the Enfield Standard Together report and updates sent to Gold and Silver. Updates were sent to Cabinet Member for Finance, the Leader and the Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance. A 'JustGiving' donations page

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was launched with a separate bank account – money allocated for food – currently donations of £32k received.

- The estimate is now approximately £2 million, as reported to Cabinet. This includes £220,000 rent and other building costs and £60,000 staffing costs.

Councillor Erbil thanked all community groups, volunteers, councillors and officers for the help they have provided for the Enfield Stands Together Programme. She was proud of the way the community had come together to provide support in response to the Covid19.

The following questions/ issues were raised and answers provided:

*Q1. Although we do not know how long the pandemic will last are you able to tell me what future plans there are for this programme?*

It is difficult to state our future plans because whilst the initial peak for the pandemic appears to have passed there are still many deaths from Covid reported every day and there may be a second wave in future therefore our support needs to remain.

*Q2. Regarding the food package deliveries, we make I understand there are also Government food packages, do we have support from the Government to supply both?*

The food packages from Government was just one pallet of quite poor quality. We started the process of supplying food 3 weeks before the government supplies were received – it was crucial that residents received our deliveries early to ensure that they stayed in their own homes as they needed to isolate. It was also stated that the government packages were very standard they did not allow for particular dietary requirements and was only for one person - insufficient for families

*Q3. What were the challenges we met in contacting the 'shielded' list of residents that had been provided by the NHS?*

The main challenge we faced was that the initial list of 3000 to 4000 residents on the NHS shielded list often did not give contact details. It was therefore necessary for outbound calls to be made and letters sent to ensure everyone was contacted as quickly as possible.

*Q4. The small grants for cooked food programme to help local communities get cooked food where has this money come from?*

The council had set aside £3 million of its reserves to create a Covid-19 Fund. It was estimated that the costs of the pandemic to the council is approximately £68m. Total funding from Government is £17.9m. Communities had been able to provide a lot of food for a relatively small sum of money.

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*Q5. An exit strategy is needed – what conditions will you set to decide whether existing efforts are eventually wound down?*

Those people who are shielded still need to stay at home, with the easing of lockdown we will assess next steps – It should be remembered that this is an invaluable service for those who may die should they get the virus.

*Q6. What processes took place when people rang for free food? I understand other local authorities looked to see if there were other people in the house who could go and get supplies and whether they were able to afford to pay for the food?*

We wanted to respond quickly to ensure people stayed at home – we targeted those over 70's and those on the shielded list. Some residents suggested paying for food provided and in those cases we directed them to the 'JustGiving' page.

*Q7. Why was it decided to rent the food hub on Great Cambridge Road?*

We deliberately chose this location as it was where the Felix project is based. They had fresh food here and this has helped in provision of supplies.

*Q8. Will the community pantry continue going forward?*

Providing food packages has been important and this model of supporting community groups with the 'pantry' has been invaluable it is hoped this may continue.

*Q9. Can you elaborate on the training you mention had been provided in supporting people with mental health issues?*

This was an area of concern because some people rang with mental health issues, with some saying they felt suicidal. We needed to be sure we dealt with people in the correct way therefore training was provided to ensure people were put in touch with the correct authority and that those answering calls were given support - 'strength based training' from Adult Social Care colleagues and access to a support from professionals with mental health training specifically procured for the call centre to provide support for staff that were worried or effected by the calls that they had taken.

Councillor Caliskan spoke of the pharmacy prescription service which provided a great service – the service expected from the government was not delivered and therefore we 'filled the gap'.

Cllr Caliskan informed the meeting that she had written to the Secretary of State outlining concerns regarding funding and the fact the government have rowed back from their initial commitment. Cllr Caliskan had invited the leader of the opposition to sign the letter, however she mentioned that Cllr Laban had declined to do this.

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Cllr Caliskan provided clarity regarding why the Supply Centre had moved to running 6 days a week. She addressed a criticism made by Cllr Laban that the decision to move to 6 days a week was costing the council too much money. Cllr Caliskan and Fay Hammond explained that this came with no additional expenditure and that it was necessary in order to be able to allow for time to pack and deliver packages because of the increase in demand.

Councillor Erbil thanked Fay Hammond and officers for the presentation.

Councillor Laban on behalf of the opposition thanked everyone who worked at the food hub and this was shared by all at this meeting.

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#### **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The future meetings of OSC which will be held as virtual meetings at 6:00pm were noted as:

- Thursday 4 June 2020
- Thursday 2 July 2020 and
- Thursday 30 July 2020

Meeting 4 June 2020 – Re-Opening of Primary Schools in Enfield. The ‘to follow’ papers would be published next week

Meeting 2 July 2020 – Public Health – an update should include Covid 19 data for Enfield.

The following issues were raised:

1. Cllr Georgiou said members had requested that the workstream on Meridian Water should go ahead. He asked if we could get a date in the diary for this as soon as possible. We should look at the issue of Covid 19 in relation to this project– and how this might affect the project timescales.
2. Cllr Smith agreed that the Meridian Water workstream should go ahead but also that we should have a timescale for all other major panels including Health Scrutiny and Crime Scrutiny
3. Cllr Aramaz said that the workstream on ‘Empty Shops’ – was nearing completion and he requested that there should be a final meeting and final report on this matter. He also asked how many members of the public had viewed this virtual meeting.
4. Cllr Georgiou suggested members should plan how to re-open some of the workstreams and other panels and discussions should be held with officers about how to take this forward.

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5. Cllr Smith and Cllr Georgiou spoke about the Scrutiny Review. They asked if the report was now available and suggested it would be useful for OSC members to see this before it goes to Cabinet.
6. Cllr Aramaz said presentations for future OSC virtual meetings should be limited to 10 minutes. He also asked that Jeremy Chambers be asked to attend a future OSC meeting regarding ACM's
7. Cllr David-Sanders said he had spoken to the Leader about the Local Control Plan re Covid 19. It would be useful for OSC to have pre-scrutiny of this report before it goes to Cabinet. He suggested this be included on the 2 July 2020 agenda.

The meeting ended at 8:35pm