

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON THURSDAY, 10 FEBRUARY 2022**

COUNCILLORS

PRESENT (Chair) Susan Erbil, Margaret Greer, Lee David-Sanders, Birsen Demirel, Mahmut Aksanoglu, Elif Erbil, James Hockney and Derek Levy

OFFICERS:

Also Attending: Councillor Nesil Caliskan (Leader of the Council)

**1
WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

Councillor Susan Erbil (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Mahmut Aksanoglu.

**2
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3
MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meetings were agreed.

**4
TOWN CENTRES**

Andrew Catcheside, Town Centre Development Manager introduced the report and highlighted the key points to note.

1. The action plans respond in context to the Council plan to support an economy that works for everyone, develop town centres that are vibrant safe and inclusive.
2. The action plans are designed to be live documents which will be updated on a quarterly basis and as ongoing community engagement brings forward opportunities and ideas.
3. Officers' welcome members feedback and comments

In response the following comments were made by panel members:

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 10.2.2022

1. The Chair asked for clarity on how informed residents are being kept on the changes. Officers commented that they will feedback to crosstree to ensure residents are kept informed. This is a pre ap opposed to a planning stage, so it has not been formally published yet. We recognised that the plan for Edmonton needs to articulate better that there are major changes in the pipeline.
2. Cllr Greer commented that the plans were discussed at the last Regeneration & Economic Development Scrutiny Panel. It was requested that goals for each town centre could be reported back.
3. Cllr Levy commented that the plans are more of a vision statement and do not have specific deliverables. Southgate is a great transport hub which provides great opportunity. The Leader clarified that the plans are resident facing documents which are set out to be clear and accessible, behind them we have the data and detail which can be shared with members if requested. Southgate is difficult to manage as we do not own much of the property there. Officers have been encouraged to reach out to potential buyers of the Police building. TFL have been difficult to work with.
4. Cllr Levy noted that Southgate has no community hub and the Alan Pullinger Centre needs to be developed into a mixed use venue with possible housing above. Andrew Catcheside confirmed that there a number of interest on the high street which could provide community opportunities. The Southgate hub provides assets to allow the community to gather.
5. Cllr Demirel sought clarity on how the public engagement has helped form the action plans. Regarding Enfield Town vacancies, how are we encouraging landlords to take on new approaches? The Leader explained that each of the town centres have been engaged in different ways, Palmers Green was highly driven by residents. We are building the relationship with Angel Edmonton residents who are clear that they want to fix smaller problems before looking at longer term investments. Our planning policy will be to see ground floor used as office place or retail.
6. Cllr Hockney asked if we had learnt from other town centres. Andrew confirmed that we are linked with the GLA in adapting high street strategies. We are looking at the work in Hackney on creating workspaces to influence Edmonton, Fore Street. Officers are in groups at various levels sharing what works locally, regionally, and nationally.
7. Cllr Hockney sought clarity on the vison post the pandemic. Andrew clarified they are focused on bringing people back into town centres making people feel safe. In the long term we look to have a more diverse high street, micro and small business are important in Enfield.
8. Cllr Levy asked if Edmonton Green and Angel Edmonton would be more connected and is the vision for residents to move around the borough? The Leader confirmed that they would encourage residents to move around the borough as each town centre hold different values and have their own history. We have more to gain from them being different, every town centres has its own needs which residents can utilise.

5

COMPLAINTS, MEQS AND FOIS

Fay Hammond (Executive Director- Resources), clarified that the service has moved to resources which has provided the chance to review the structure of the team and processes.

Elanor Brown, Head of Transformation, presented this item and highlighted the following points:

- The report appendix covers April 2020- March 2021
- The complaints process has switched from a 3 stage process to 2 stage in line with best practice from the Local Government and Housing ombudsman.
- 80% of first stage complaints were completed on time, 65% were completed on time at the final stage which we would like to improve.
- GPC received the annual ombudsmen report. We have now received the final decision of the 4 investigated complaints 3 were upheld and 1 was not.
- FOIs numbers have reduced by 6% compared to 2019/20 and 84% were responded to on time. 11 FOIs were referred to ICO.
- Subject Access Requests (SARs) have stayed the same and response times have improved marginally.
- The volume of MEQs have increased by 1.3% and the amount responded to in time has increased by 5%.
- 154 compliments were received largely from the People and Place departments which are the most customer facing.
- We will be improving processes through guidance and training, reviewing structures, replacing the technological capability, and generating improved data insight. The annual report content will be revamped and its timeliness improved.

In response the following comments were made by panel members:

- Officers clarified the new reports would be finalised and brought to committees by Q2 of the next financial year.
- The chair raised concerns on automated responses from IT systems being late and asked what the proposed improvement would be. It was explained that a MEQs, complaints and FOIs are sent into a generic inbox, manually put into the CRM system, and allocated to service areas. The new system will automatically populate them to service areas which will reduce time.
- Cllr Levy commented that MEQ response date shows the date it was logged manually rather than the date submitted so the 8 day response time is wrong. Officers confirmed that this delay will be further reduced and streamlined through the new system.
- Cllr David-Sanders sought clarity on if officers tracked how many MEQs go into FOIs, how can we avoid duplication and track member satisfaction. Fay clarified that the focus is to look at why people contact us rather than how the process is going and noted this is good feedback for improving the system. The new system has a function for members to reject a response they are not happy with.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 10.2.2022

- Cllr Aksanoglu raised issues with the initial responses through MEQ assuming that queries have been resolved and not always receiving responses back from officers. A follow up response, especially for a repair would be useful.
- Officers confirmed the quickest and best route for councillors to raise concerns is through an MEQ.
- Cllr Greer sought more detail on what happens if a complaint is upheld. Officers explained it depended on the nature of the complaint, the ombudsmen will direct what they want us to do, and we keep a record of this.
- Officers confirmed that if deadlines are missed to email Eleanor or Fay, they will track why the deadline was missed and it will help them to improve on the service.
- Following Cllr Greer's query, officers confirmed that staff case work is in specific departments but there is allowance for crossover.
- Cllr Greer sought what apology was given in the response to complaints and officers explained it was an apology for the need for them to complain.
- Cllr Levy asked what steps had been taken since the ombudsmen criticised the council in July 2021. Officers confirmed improvements had been put in place around relationship management and timely responses.
- In relation to Cllr Hockeys question on the challenges with the CRM system, officers explained the existing system has issues with how data is recorded as it is not categorised.

AGREED:

For officers to analyse data thereby identifying high performing areas and those requiring improvement.

For Annual Complaints Report to come to Overview & Scrutiny Committee annually in Q2.

6

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meetings will be held on:

28 February 2022 (call-in)

21 March 2022