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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 10.11.2016

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2016

**COUNCILLORS:** Derek Levy (Chair), Abdul Abdullahi, (Vice-Chair), Nneka Keazor, Edward Smith, Toby Simon and Elaine Hayward.  
**PRESENT**

**STATUTORY CO-OPTees** *Mr Tony Murphy (Catholic diocese representative)*  
*Mr Simon Goulden (other faiths/denominations representative), 1 vacancy (Church of England diocese representative, Alicia Meniru & 1 vacancy (Parent Governor representative, Kayah Taylor (EYP Representative), Asiya Warsame (EYP Representative) ) – Italics Denotes absence*

**OFFICERS:** Ian Davis (Director Regeneration & Environment), Ray James (Director HH&ASC)(part), Jonathan Stephenson (Head of Commercial Services, Public Realm), Nicky Fiedler (AD Public Realm, Environment), Gavin Sneddon (Project Manager, Public Realm FR&CS), Philip Webb (Consultation & Resident Engagement Co-Ordinator Chief Exec Office), Matthew Mulvany (Maintenance Programme Manager, Environment), Claire Johnson (Governance & Scrutiny Manager)and Elaine Huckell (Scrutiny Officer)

**Also Attending:** Councillor Joanne Laban, Councillor Daniel Anderson (Cabinet Member, Environment), Councillor Fonyonga (Cabinet Member, Community Safety & Public Health), Councillor Robert Hayward, and Councillor George Savva (part).

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### WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Katherine Chibah and Mr Simon Goulden.

It was noted that Councillor Toby Simon was substituting for Councillor Katherine Chibah and Councillor Elaine Hayward was substituting for Joanne Laban. Councillor Laban was leading on the call-ins for the Green Bin Service Change and the Development of Edmonton Cemetery.

Councillor Levy invited Ray James (Director HH&ASC), to give a brief statement in respect of item 5 on the agenda: Call –In of Report: Refurbishment & Reprovision Work Of Enfield Highway Library Building. (Please see under item 5.)

It was noted that agenda item 4: Call- In of Report: The Development of Edmonton Cemetery would be discussed before agenda item 3: Call-In of Report: Green Bin Service Change.

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## DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Laban stated that in respect of agenda item 4, the ashes of her Grandparents were interred at Edmonton Cemetery. There were no other declarations of interests put forward.

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## CALL IN OF REPORT: GREEN BIN SERVICE CHANGE

The Chair invited Councillor Laban to present the reasons for Call-in.

Councillor Laban said the decision was for a service change that would affect virtually all residents in the borough. She summarised the reasons for Call-In as follows:

- The results of the consultation exercise showed that less than 1% of the Borough's population had responded.
- Of those that had responded, the report stated that the majority preferred the proposed free fortnightly green bin collection, option. It also stated that not many other suggestions were put forward by residents in response to the questionnaire. However, the survey did not lend itself to other options being put forward for other service alternatives.
- The decision does not include a proposal for introducing a seasonal service which many local authorities have.
- Additional savings could be found from reducing contamination of bins.
- For those people who currently have slim- line green bins, they have been given an opportunity to change them for the larger bins however, the period when they can swap the bins is too far away from the proposed change over from weekly to fortnightly collections. Therefore, many people may not realise that they need to arrange for this bin change to be done. This is especially so because more people do gardening in the summer months and the need for a bigger bin may not be apparent to them until after the free change- over period has expired.
- That if bins are much heavier as a result of a fortnightly collection then loads may be rejected, she questioned whether this situation had been scheduled into our service delivery

Councillor Laban requested that the decision be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration of the available options.

The Chair invited Councillor Anderson to respond, which is summarised as follows:

- This consultation had one of the highest response rates received, which gave a good cross representation of all types/ demographics for

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the borough. The response was actually 3½% rather than 1% because that was the percentage of households who responded. Of those that responded to the consultation 87% rejected a charge for service.

- It is necessary for the council to make savings. The green bin service is non-statutory. Only 18% of English local authorities still operate a free weekly collection of green waste, other local authorities are also changing/ reducing the service provided.
- The busiest time for green bin usage is in May and therefore people should be aware of the bin swap opportunity.
- There will be an extensive communications programme to inform residents of the change of service in the run-up to the changes coming into effect.
- We are working hard to address the issue of contamination of bins.
- If green bins are particularly heavy this would usually be as a result of rubble or soil being put in the bins rather than green waste.
- The suggestion of making seasonal changes to the green bin collection service would not make the significant savings that are necessary. There were no other themes/ suggestions put forward by respondents during the consultation that could have been considered.

The following questions/ comments were then taken from members of the Committee:

Councillor Smith asked for an explanation of costs/ benefits of the decision. He said as we would be providing larger green bins for free for a period of time for those people who currently have a smaller green bin, this would involve additional cost as would the need for any adaptation of vehicles.

Nicky Fiedler (AD Public Realm, Environment) explained that the decision was for a redirection of capital expenditure, funded through existing borrowing of up to £377k to implement the service change. There would be vehicle savings resulting from a reduction of four rounds, and revenue savings would be made by the release of 4 vehicles and the release of agency staff. She referred to table 4 in the report which sets out the financial model showing costs, savings and capital borrowing for the forthcoming few years.

Councillor Smith was concerned that people who may require the larger scale green bin would not realise that they should make a request for this in time for an upgrade. He asked if there was scope to extend this period?

It was stated that we would accept requests until next June, however it was pointed out that it was more efficient to deliver the new bins to residents altogether rather than a piecemeal approach..

Q: Could you tell if more than one person responded from a household?

A: It is possible to identify if more than one response has been received from a household, 'cookies' are used for on line questionnaires to ensure you can only complete the survey once. The 3½% response rate is relatively good.

Q: Do you think there may have been some confusion over the question where you asked respondents for any suggestions?

A: We thought it was important to keep the question open and not to lead people in the answers they gave.

Q: Is it correct that if at present a resident requests an additional large green bin, then they are charged a yearly fee for this?

A: Yes a charge of £51 a year is charged for this

Q: If there are plans to separate food and green waste in future, should this change have taken place now?

A: This was considered but the capital cost of doing so is not cost effective at present, however in future this may become more viable.

Q: The 3½% response rate on the consultation seems small, do we have a minimal threshold for responses?

A: We would like to receive a 10% and above response rate but this does not tend to happen. It is most important that the data is of high quality, and this is the case for this consultation. The response rate was a good reflection of demographics and represented both the east and west sides of the borough.

It was confirmed that the communications programme would commence in November and will include different versions of calendars. It was agreed that there were contamination issues that are to be addressed.

Councillor Laban said that with regard to the communications campaign we should be more flexible and allow a longer period of time for the take up of free green bin upgrades.

Councillor Anderson said if there is not a big take-up after the first tranche we have the flexibility to review the strategy to allow for a longer period if this is thought appropriate.

Councillor Smith and Councillor Hayward were concerned that this major service change would lead to great frustration by residents. Councillor Smith also said he did not think the financial model was clear.

The Committee then voted on the decision as follows:

Councillors Simon, Abdullahi, and Keazor voted in favour of the above decision.

Councillors Smith and Hayward voted to refer back to Cabinet.

The Chair therefore **CONFIRMED** the decision.

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## **CALL IN OF REPORT: THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDMONTON CEMETERY**

The Chair invited Councillor Laban to present the reasons for Call-In.

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Councillor Laban said there has been a long time desire to expand the cemetery and there had been various press reports. She highlighted the key issues as follows:

- This decision would mean that 10 of the 14 current tennis courts at the location (by the A10), would be removed. This would mean the removal of free sports facilities for the borough.
- At the last meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee concerns were raised regarding the general health of the public and the high obesity rates in Enfield especially for children. This is particularly so in poorer areas, and Edmonton is one of the poorest constituencies in London. The proposal goes against the 'Move More' Enfield campaign.
- Although the report refers to a sum of £250,000 being invested into the development of the remaining courts and other tennis sites in Enfield, this is not a vast sum of money and it will mean people will have to go a further distance to reach other tennis courts. The current condition of the courts, at this location are in a poor state of repair especially compared to others in the borough. Councillor Laban questioned whether this was intentional.
- The Council is borrowing at unprecedented levels and the decision includes capital investment, which would mean interest charges would need to be paid.
- The study to measure usage of the tennis courts was taken in May and early June, however the busiest time that tennis courts are used is during the Wimbledon tournament period.
- Although reference was made in the report to one of the reasons the tennis courts not being used more was due to their location near to the A10, this is contrary to a recent decision made for an artificial football pitch at Enfield Playing Fields adjacent to the A10.
- If the tennis courts were not being used then the Public Health team and Leisure teams should have questioned why this was the case.
- The Council is looking at borrowing high levels of funding and the decision does not explore the longer term idea of looking for cemetery space outside of the borough which may be a cheaper option for the future. She referred to the use of Trent Park cemetery for LB Islington.
- Demand levels may change in the future as demographics and people's choices change.
- We will be losing 10 tennis courts for some of our poorer people.
- The decision has not looked at enough alternatives.
- There has been no consultation with residents

Councillor Laban requested that the decision be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration of the available options.

The Chair invited Councillor Fonyonga (Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Public Health) and Councillor Anderson (Cabinet Member for Environment) to respond. Their comments are given as follows:

Councillor Fonyonga -

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- Councillor Fonyonga said she agreed with Councillor Laban that at the last business meeting of Overview and Scrutiny, obesity was raised as an area of concern and especially childhood obesity. She said it is a subject that we are prioritising and we are therefore careful in the decisions we are taking. It is therefore intended to invest £250K into existing tennis facilities in the borough and also to support the development of this sport across the borough. .
- She said by looking at the number of people using the (A10) tennis courts, it was found that only 4 courts were being used, therefore by removing 10 of the courts this should have little effect on participation rates.
- Cllr Fonyonga would prefer tennis courts to be used throughout the year and the best way of achieving this is by securing investment for the sport. This proposal is supported by Sports England and the Lawn Tennis Association. She said she was confident that this will increase participation and encourage more people to take up exercise as part of the 'Move more' campaign.

Councillor Levy requested clarification on when the survey was undertaken to measure usage of the tennis courts at this location. It was confirmed that an independent survey was undertaken in May and June with a further follow up by officers in August.

Councillor Anderson –

- The survey showing participation rates are relevant for the whole year and not just for the Wimbledon tournament period.
- This decision/ report is about the expansion of Edmonton Cemetery.
- The capital investment is not new, it is being redirected from existing approved resources and will not lead to additional financial pressures and is good for the borough.
- When looking at the location of the cemetery and costs for land, it should be remembered that the demand for spaces is coming from within the borough. The cost of land is very expensive either for residential land or for green belt land which would also entail planning issues. He said we are trying to deal with problems of land requirements for the forthcoming years.
- The proposals for the cemetery will also allow greater choice to be available. He said we have to try to meet the demands of our community at the best value and this is what we are doing. This decision will allow us to meet demand, it will also bring in a revenue stream and will make best use of our tennis courts.

The following questions/ comments were then taken from Members of the Committee

Councillor Keazor welcomed the comments from the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Health on how it is intended to make best use of resources for the improvement of tennis courts /facilities in the borough. She was pleased that in respect of cemetery facilities we would be looking to provide for the needs of our diverse community.

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Q: How often are the tennis court facilities being used and are they used more during the summer holidays?

A: The survey of tennis court usage was undertaken in May, which also included the half term holiday. Further visits were carried out in the last three weeks of the school holidays, which showed a limited number of courts were being used (1 or 2 courts being used at one time). Some users of the courts were asked for their comments and they said they were happy with the courts provided. It was noted that people were more inclined to use tennis courts provided in parks than those located at other locations.

Councillor Smith commented that the Council wants to remove the 10 tennis courts at this location because of the demand for cemetery space. It is necessary to balance the loss of this facility to the community, with the potential to make approximately £4 to £5 million over a 20 year period for the cemetery space. However this would only be for approximately another 1700 plots and far more space would be needed for the future. Also we need to know what sort of tennis facility is to be provided on the remaining site and what changes are anticipated for other sites.

Councillor Fonyonga did not agree that the proposals would be a loss for the community. The report outlines the various measures/ proposals for courts which includes the enhancement of the existing 4 courts and investment in other courts. Also there is to be an outreach programme to encourage people to take up tennis as coaching would be provided.

Q: In future how would you measure whether the investment of funds for tennis has been successful?

A: We should be able to see a higher use made of tennis courts. Sport England would require that we are able to show this through surveys undertaken.

Q: What is the timescale for the project?

A: We would be looking at development of the cemetery in approximately 18 months to 2 years' time.

Councillor Simon commented that when he cycles past the tennis courts on the A10 the courts are hardly used, he thought 4 courts should satisfy demand.

The Chair commented that there had been concerns raised at the loss of facilities however, the Lawn Tennis Association and Sports England have been involved in proposals.

Councillor Laban did not wish to make any further comments

Councillor Anderson said the Council was looking at the best investment going forward for this site.

The Committee then voted on the decision as follows:

Councillors Simon, Abdullahi, Keazor and Levy voted in favour of the above decision.

Councillors Smith and Hayward abstained.

The Chair **CONFIRMED** the decision.

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**CALL IN OF REPORT: REFURBISHMENT & REPROVISION WORK OF ENFIELD HIGHWAY LIBRARY BUILDING**

At the beginning of the meeting Ray James, Director HH&ASC, gave a statement that officers were recommending the referral of the decision back to Cabinet. In light of this, Councillor Dogan Delman who had called in the decision had left a message that he was happy the matter was now being referred back to Cabinet. As this was the outcome that he had sought, he accepted that there was no need for a debate on this item and he would therefore not be attending Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting this evening.

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**CALL IN OF REPORT: QUARTERLY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT**

It was noted that the procedure for call-in relates to decisions made by the Cabinet or a sub-committee of the Cabinet, an individual Cabinet member, or a key decision made by an officer. As this report was one for Cabinet to note at its meeting of the 19 October 2016, rather than a decision taken, it was decided that this subject – ‘Corporate Performance report’ – be discussed at a future business meeting of Overview and Scrutiny. This should follow the publication of the second quarter of performance data.

The Chair clarified that reports considered by Cabinet ‘for noting’ do not prevent or restrict Scrutiny from looking at the issue through its normal business meetings or through a one-off specially called meeting. The Governance and Scrutiny Manager would send an email to members of Overview and Scrutiny explaining this further. **ACTION** – Claire Johnson

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 OCTOBER 2016.**

**AGREED** the minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2016 as a correct record.



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**DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Noted the dates of future meetings and provisional call-in dates.

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**EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS & PUBLIC**

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