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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 12.10.2017

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2017

COUNCILLORS

PRESENT Derek Levy, Abdul Abdullahi, Guney Dogan, Nneka Keazor
Dogan Delman and Michael Rye OBE

ABSENT Edward Smith

**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: Gary Barnes, (Executive Director of Regeneration &
Environment), Peter George, (Assistant Director,
Regeneration & Environment), Susan O'Connell, (Scrutiny &
Improvement Officer), Stacey Gilmour, (Governance & Scrutiny
Officer)

Also Attending: Councillor Alan Sitkin (Cabinet Member for Economic
Regeneration & Business Development)

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WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting. Apologies for absence had
been received from Alicia Meniru and Simon Goulden.

It was noted that Councillor Dogan Delman was substituting for Councillor
Edward Smith. It was also noted that Councillor Nneka Keazor would be
leaving the meeting early due to prior commitments.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

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UPDATE ON MERIDIAN WATER

The Chair moved this item for discussion under Part 2.

RECEIVED an update report on Meridian Waters provided by Peter George,
Assistant Director, Regeneration & Environment.

Discussions were focused on the contract and the progression of the
development to date.

It was agreed that further reports on this matter would come back to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee as and when new information became available.

Councillor Keazor left the meeting at this point.

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RETAIL IN TOWN CENTRES

RECEIVED an update from Councillor Alan Sitkin, Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and Business Development:

NOTED that:

- (i) It was recognised that there were currently major issues with retail in Church Street Enfield EN1, with many units now vacant. It was however pointed out that these empty units were not council properties but are in fact owned by private landlords which means that there are restraints on what the council can/are doing;
- (ii) It is known that the changing face of retail has impacted on high street shopping, in particular the introduction of more and more retail outlets as well as internet shopping. These are issues that have been discussed at previous Overview & Scrutiny meetings;
- (iii) Various ideas had been tried and tested in an attempt to increase the footfall in Enfield Town Centre. This included the French and Italian Markets which, although these had proven to be a success, it was accepted that more revolutionary ideas were needed in order to address the problem;
- (iv) Research and work has taken place in an attempt to bring the higher end businesses and retailers into the borough. However this research has shown that one of the main reasons that Enfield is unable to attract these retailers to our shopping centres and high streets is due to the fact that there is not enough people with disposable income to spend therefore creating a situation of too many shops with not enough people using the. (e.g. supply and demand);
- (v) It would seem that retailers and businesses feel that they cannot make enough money in Enfield. The question was therefore, 'how do we change 'the market's' mind'? Put simply, Enfield needs more people with more money to spend;

Peter George, Assistant Director, Regeneration & Environment added the following comments:

- He has made dressing the void shops in the high street one of his division's top priorities;
- It was recognised that Enfield Council has Planning Policies that are out of date as these policies are encouraging 'A' class retail on to our high streets and restricting other uses getting planning. We

need to be promoting A3 property usage which in turn would hopefully result in a better night-time economy and increasing the footfall in our town centres.

- Councillor Rye added that retailers and businesses need to be informed that it is within the power of the Planning Committee to agree 'A3' usage and we should be proactive in encouraging offers for 'A3' usage;
- The Planning Enforcement Team is currently undertaking work to enforce against the retailers whose empty units are blighting our high streets. There is also a working group looking at the evidence base and working on an Enfield Town prospectus. This will be proactive in articulating and promoting the opportunities that exist for Enfield Town with a view to attracting more businesses into the area;
- The Enfield Town Master Plan includes a plan for the development of over one thousand new homes in the borough which will again increase the footfall in our town centres and high streets. However, Enfield Council's Planning Team have been advised that they need to get the existing voids down before further new retail opportunities are considered as part of the Master Plan;
- A report on the Town Centre Implementation Plan will go to Cabinet in January 2018. This report will include information on what can be done to encourage enhancement in our town centres as well as explaining how we are going to bring forward additional improvements to our town centres.

Following Peter's update the following questions/comments were raised:

- Q. We do not see high street blight in Palmers Green and Southgate. Why is this?
- A. Councillor Sitkin replied that this was due to a different demographic of people in this area.
- Q. Local businesses do want to invest in our high streets but the rents are too high. The priority should therefore be reducing the rents in our high streets and town centres.
- A. Councillor Sitkin explained that the vast majority of void properties are privately owned. Unfortunately the council has very little power to influence the rents charged by private landlords.
- Q. Edmonton Green Shopping Centre is also seeing an increase in rents and parking charges. Can anything be done about this?
- A. Again the council does not have any control over rent increases as the centre is owned and managed by St Modwen Development (Edmonton) Ltd. However our Property Team has regular dialogue with St Modwen's regarding council ownership and therefore clarification would be sought regarding any increase to parking charges.

The Chair raised concerns about the shop signage along the A1010 in Enfield Wash and Enfield Highway. He felt that the area is beginning to

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look very run down with a 'hotch potch' of signs on display. He asked if any public realm improvements could be made. Councillor Rye added that although the area was very vibrant with very few empty units he did agree that some of the signage was indeed antique and felt that there needed to be some sort of uniformity when it comes to signage.

The Chair thanked Councillor Sitkin and Peter for their informative updates and hoped Members agreed that the subsequent discussions had been most useful. This issue would continue to be monitored by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at future meetings.

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MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

AGREED the minutes of the meetings held on 6 September 2017.

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DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

NOTED the date of the next meeting as follows:

Wednesday 8 November 2017 – Joint O&SC & Health Scrutiny Standing Workstream Meeting.

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EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED in accordance with the principles of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of the Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006).

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PART 2 AGENDA- MERIDIAN WATER UPDATE

See Item 268.