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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 22.5.2019

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 22 MAY 2019

COUNCILLORS

PRESENT Susan Erbil, Tolga Aramaz, Guner Aydin, Sinan Boztas, Bernadette Lappage, Achilleas Georgiou, Edward Smith and Lee David-Sanders

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: Joanne Drew (Director of Housing & Regeneration)
Fay Hammond (Acting Executive Director, Resources)
Garry Knights (Head of Housing Property Services)
Susan O'Connell (Secretary)
Stacey Gilmour (Governance & Scrutiny Secretary)

Also Attending: Councillor Nesil Caliskan (Leader of the Council)
Councillor Ian Barnes (Deputy Leader)
Councillor Gina Needs (Cabinet Member, Social Housing)
Councillor Alev Cazimoglu (Cabinet Member, Health & Social Care - Observing)
Councillor Rick Jewel (Cabinet Member, Children's Services - Observing)
Councillor Hass Yusef (Observing)
Simon Allin (Press – Barnet, Enfield & Haringey)

5 WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair, Councillor Susan Erbil welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Sarah Cary, Executive Director of Place.

6 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

Councillor Achilleas Georgiou was elected as Vice Chair for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year.

7

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

8

CABINET PRIORITIES FOR 2019/20

The Chair invited Councillor Caliskan, Leader of the Council to outline the Cabinet's priorities for 2019/20.

Councillor Caliskan congratulated Councillor Susan Erbil on her new role as Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and welcomed all Members to the Committee.

Councillor Caliskan said that having had a year in post, the Administration had now been able to dig deeper into some of the areas that affect the Borough and the Council. There were continued financial pressures on Enfield with more cuts coming down the line therefore the Council would have to look at how it could continue to deliver the best possible services in the hardest of times.

Councillor Caliskan set out the Cabinet's main priorities for the year ahead as follows:

Decent Homes/Regeneration – to include:

- Housing & Growth Strategy - culminating in the next couple of months
- Estate Renewal Programme
- Better Council Homes – addressing infrastructure issues and delivering £41m for planned improvements this year.
- Repairs – insourcing day-to-day repairs services. A report will go to Cabinet in June.

Economic Development

- Economic Development & Growth Strategy
- Focus on boosting growth in the borough's town centres including Enfield Town and Edmonton Green.
- This will involve working with Traders Associations and small businesses to come up with a detailed plan about how the council can support them
- Cultural Strategy- the current strategy ends in 2020 and Councillor Ian Barnes, Deputy Leader, is leading on the development of a new strategy. Cllr Barnes said the strategy would look at broadening access to culture so all people in the borough can have access and benefit from what the borough has to offer. Cllr Barnes outlined some ideas and stated he and officers are at the stage of developing possibilities.

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He said the plan should be ambitious and aspirational. The aim is to make this a transformational strategy, focusing on engagement and communication. Cllr Barnes referred to the Gaming Industry for the borough boosting economic growth by tapping into London's multi-billion-pound creative economy.

Community Safety

- Measures to improve community safety would continue including funding extra police officers.
- Needs to be long term investment for young people in the borough.

Burial Spaces

- Identify long term provision for burial space in the borough.
- Currently a burial consultation.

Tackling Poverty

- There were plans in place for a fully independent Poverty and Equality Commission amid concerns over the rising number of children living in poverty in Enfield.

The following comments/questions were raised:

- The plan to identify long term provision for burial spaces was welcomed.
- Concerns were raised regarding the current level of public engagement/communication and it was felt that as a council we needed to market ourselves better and be smarter about the way we communicate.
- Members welcomed the Poverty and Equality Commission and agreed that this would be a worthwhile piece of work.
- Members were very interested in the Cultural Strategy and were keen to see how this would be developed.
- The Improving Enfield Shopping Areas/Empty Shops Working Group had produced an interim report following its work over the past year and this was discussed.
- In response to a question on where the Administration saw itself in twelve months' time Councillor Caliskan hoped that:
 - the Housing and Cultural Strategies would be in place;
 - the Council's 'Housing MOT' service would be embedded;
 - long term provision for burial space will have been identified as part of Enfield's Local Plan;
 - Improvement to town centres would be underway including a programme plan for more events in Enfield town market square;
 - Detailed plans would set out how the £6m GLA Liveable Neighbourhoods Funding would be spent.

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The Chair thanked Councillor Caliskan and Councillor Barnes for their informative updates which had been most helpful in pointing the Committee towards populating its main Work Programme for 2019/20.

Councillor Caliskan said that having had a year in post, the Administration had now been able to dig deeper into some of the areas that affect the Borough and the Council. There were continued financial pressures on Enfield with more cuts of £40 million coming down the line therefore the Council would have to look at how it could continue to deliver the best possible services in the hardest of times.

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Economic Development

- Economic Development Strategy
- Focus on boosting growth in the borough's town centres including Enfield Town and Edmonton Green.
- This will involve working with trading associations and small businesses to come up with a detailed plan about how the council can support them
- Cultural Strategy- the current strategy ends in 2020 and Councillor Ian Barnes, Deputy Leader, is leading on drafting a new strategy. Cllr Barnes said the strategy would look at broadening access to culture so people from more disadvantaged backgrounds could benefit from what the borough has to offer. He went on to say that 'it is a wildly ambitious strategy, but I think we should be really bold and radical with our aspirations'. The aim is to make this a transformational strategy, focusing on engagement and communication. The question has to be asked as to why industries such as the gaming industry aren't lured into Enfield and what would it take to entice them? These industries like gaming, film and television would boost economic growth in Enfield by tapping into London's multi-billion-pound creative economy.

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- In response to a question on where the Administration saw itself in twelve months' time Councillor Caliskan hoped that:
 - the Housing and Cultural Strategies would be in place;
 - the Council's 'Housing MOT' service would be embedded;
 - long term provision for burial space will have been identified as part of Enfield's Local Plan;
 - Improvement to town centres would be underway including a programme plan for more events in Enfield town market square;
 - some of the £6m GLA Liveable Neighbourhoods Funding would have been spent to rejuvenate and regenerate Enfield.

The Chair thanked Councillor Caliskan and Councillor Barnes for their informative updates which had been most helpful in pointing the Committee towards populating its main Work Programme for 2019/20.

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FUTURE OF THE RESPONSIVE REPAIRS SERVICE

RECEIVED the report of Joanne Drew, Director of Housing & Regeneration.

Councillor Gina Needs, Cabinet Member, Social Housing introduced the report highlighting the following:

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- i) The Councils current contracts delivering day to day repairs and compliance contracts to Council houses are due to end in April 2020. It is therefore time to consider the most appropriate approach for delivering the services going forward, with an aim to:
 - provide improved value in terms of enhanced resident satisfaction,
 - support the local community and local supply chain and
 - effectively improve the condition of our properties.
- ii) The day-to-day repairs service has seen an improvement in customer and technical performance over the past 6 months. However, there remains room for continued improvement and greater flexibility as we improve the condition of stock through investment.
- iii) The report identifies and recommends a solution which seeks to manage risk, secure the continuing improvement of the service whilst providing value for money. It includes:
 - A phased approach to insourcing the day to day repairs service whilst continuing to outsource compliance services;
 - Proposed transitional arrangements for the gradual insourcing of repairs services whilst securing back up provision from existing contractors including beyond the end of existing contracts in April 2020 as necessary;
 - Procurement of compliance, cyclical maintenance and major works, but with a view to consider bringing these in house in the future;
 - The development of in-house capacity to ensure the commercial management of the in-house service and effective client-side arrangements for the mixed delivery model;
- iv) Key priorities for a new service model have been identified and is set out in full in the report.
- v) A stock condition survey is currently in progress and this will provide the information to develop long term investment strategies which will also inform the nature of the intermediate repairs.
- vi) The Council is committed to investing in its stock and has developed the Better Council Homes programme, which will see some £41m investment in the stock during 2019/20.
- vii) Recommendations in the report include:
 - The creation of a multi-disciplinary Operational Board which will report on progress to the Repairs Task Force;
 - Approve budget of £1.2 million, allocated over 2 years, funded from HRA repairs reserve;
 - Note that a 5-year business plan will come forward as part of the annual HRA budget cycle for 2020/21

Comments and questions were raised, and responses provided by Officers were as follows:

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- The move comes amid concerns that many repairs are not done properly first time and money is being spent on fixing follow-up problems.
- It is hoped that the proposed model will deliver better value for money, provide jobs for local people and boost local businesses in the supply chain.
- The cost of setting up the in-house team has been estimated at £1.2 million, while the ongoing costs are expected to be within the £4.8 million per year already spent on repairs.
- If the proposals are given the go ahead by Cabinet, day to day repairs will gradually be brought in-house as the current contracts with private firms ends in April next year.
- Under the new approach, a team directly employed by the Council would be responsible for emergency, urgent and routine repairs work, including small electrical and plumbing works.
- Compliance works, major work programmes and voids would continue to be dealt with by contractors.
- The Council's 'Housing MOT' service, an in-house team set up to carry out yearly checks on the boroughs' social housing would continue to operate alongside the other repairs services.
- Feedback from residents had been obtained in many ways including on the job, analysing complaints and Customer Voice. Members said they would like to see feedback from Customer Voice included in the report.
- Savings are anticipated over time as a result of lower volumes of repair work as the service model aims to deliver the right repair including renewal and replacement.
- Many residents were currently coming to Councillors' surgeries complaining about continuous works being carried out on the same issues. General opinion was that this was due to outsourcing as it was often difficult to hold contractors to account.
- Members expressed concerns about plans to raise awareness among residents of how to complete minor jobs that are part of the day-to-day responsibility of renting a home. It was felt that this could lead to extra costs if people tried to carry out repairs themselves but ended up causing further problems. Garry Knights, Head of Housing Property Services said that this would relate to basic maintenance such as decorating, unblocking sinks etc. It was very much about empowering people and information; guidance and advice would be provided in a range of formats.
- The new service model would offer the ability to deliver a repair 'plus' service which would help identify vulnerable tenants and meet their immediate needs whilst supporting and signposting to additional help.
- An Opposition Member state that there were serious reservations about the proposals. It was pointed out that there had already been significant improvements to the current model, with the number of first-time fixes rising from 26% to 76%. Concerns were also raised that the Council could be hit by extra costs, for example, having to spend money on things such as storage depots. Garry explained that in terms of depots there is a contingency in the business plan to allow for that. He went on

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to advise that the initial consideration is to use third-party suppliers therefore there will not be the need for significant investment in infrastructure.

- Members were concerned that the Equalities Impact Implications had been omitted from the report and, although the committee welcomed the idea of pre-decision scrutiny, they felt that it was imperative for the committee to receive at least completed draft reports if, as a Scrutiny Committee, it was to hold Cabinet reports to account.

AGREED that the Equalities Impact Implications for this report would be circulated to OSC members within the next couple of days.

Action: Joanne Drew/Susan O'Connell.

The Chair thanked Officers for their informative report.

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WORK PROGRAMME & WORK STREAMS 2019/20

NOTED the Chairs for the Crime and Health Scrutiny Panels as follows:

- Councillor Lee David-Sanders was elected as Chair for the Crime Scrutiny Panel for the municipal year 2019/20.
- Councillor Sinan Boztas was elected as Chair for the Health Scrutiny Panel for the municipal year 2019/20.

The committee discussed Work Programme items and potential work streams for 2019/20.

The following suggestions were made:

- Continue with Empty Shops workstream – period of workstream to be defined;
- HR issues –
 - Sickness, why losing staff and why recruiting
 - Employment of BME, gender -at what grades, stats, have we improved, are we attracting and recruiting black people, women returning to work- is this successful
 - Council's policy of reducing the number of external consultants and agency staff
- ACM's to be invited to future OSC meeting to discuss roles and responsibilities
- Cultural Strategy – if timing fits in with the Work Programme
- Exclusions – possible workstream, 70% of all exclusions are BAME? Also, not in school or where they should be.
- Procurement process – possible workstream – lack of clarity over process/whose responsibility is this? Is this a service issue?

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- Temporary Accommodation – how this is managed and costs and mechanism for managing. Including Housing Gateway and the future role of this.
- Meridian Water – possible workstream – concern regarding number of jobs and Strategic Industrial Land (SIL)
- Customer Experience (this is already a carry forward item on the Work Programme). Members wanted to include how do we engage with residents and how this affects the council's reputation
- Planning and Enforcement – Work Programme – Cllr Aramaz said that his Empty Shops workstream had looked at this and recommendations had been included in the interim report.
- Report on population growth and housing targets, assumptions around this- possible item for the Work Programme.
- Members were happy for last year's Work Programme standing items to remain as appropriate.

The Chair advised that the Work Programme and work streams would not be agreed today. However, following this evening's discussions and the above suggestions a draft Work Programme and list of potential workstreams for consideration will come to the next meeting of OSC on in June 2019.

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MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 11 APRIL & 23 APRIL 2019

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on 11 and 23 April 2019.

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DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

NOTED the dates of future meetings as follows:

Provisional Call-Ins

Thursday 20 June, 2019
Wednesday 3 July, 2019
Thursday 8 August, 2019
Thursday 19 September, 2019
Thursday 31 October, 2019
Thursday 28 November, 2019
Thursday 19 December, 2019
Thursday 30 January, 2020
Thursday 6 February, 2020
Wednesday 4 March, 2020
Thursday 26 March, 2020
Tuesday 28 April, 2020

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NOTED the business meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee will be held on:

Tuesday 18 June, 2019
Tuesday 23 July, 2019
Wednesday 4 September, 2019
Thursday 7 November, 2019
Thursday 13 February, 2020
Thursday 2 April, 2020

The Overview & Scrutiny Budget Meeting will be held on:

Wednesday 15 January, 2020