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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 21.10.2020

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2020

COUNCILLORS

PRESENT (Chair) Susan Erbil, Achilleas Georgiou, Edward Smith, Lee David-Sanders, Hass Yusuf, Birsen Demirel, Elif Erbil and Margaret Greer (Vice Chair)

ABSENT

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: Fay Hammond (Acting Executive Director Resources), Lee Shelsher (Head of Customer Experience and Libraries), Ade Aderemi (Head of Customer Operations), Doug Wilkinson (Director of Environment and Operational Services), Richard Eason (Healthy Streets Programme Director), Jeremy Chambers (Director of Law and Governance), Claire Johnson (Head of Governance, Scrutiny and Registration Services), Andy Ellis (Governance and Scrutiny Officer)

Also Attending: Councillor Ian Barnes (Deputy Leader of the Council)
Councillor Mary Maguire (Cabinet Member for Finance)
Councillor Yasmin Brett (Bowes Ward Councillor)
120 Attendees

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WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair, Cllr Susan Erbil welcomed everyone to the meeting and Members introduced themselves.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2020

- 1) Cllr Georgiou stated that minute 10 (vii) contradicts later Cabinet papers which note that the response from Workstream Members to the Leader's letter was permitted to be tabled at the meeting of the

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15 September. The Monitoring Officer, Jeremy Chambers will provide further clarification.

- 2) Minute 9 (vii) - The role of Cllr Yusuf on the Housing Scrutiny Panel was confirmed as Vice-Chair.

The minutes were agreed, subject to amendment as necessary in relation to 1) above.

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PETITION RECEIVED: PETITION FOR ALL WORKS UNDER THE 'BOWES PRIMARY & SURROUNDING STREET QUIETER NEIGHBOURHOOD' PLAN TO BE HALTED UNTIL THERE HAS BEEN A FULL CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL RESIDENTS, AND ENGAGEMENT WITH HARINGEY COUNCIL AND TRANSPORT FOR LONDON (TFL)

The Chair welcomed the Lead Petitioner, Roland Hewes, to the meeting. The format of this item would include a statement from the Lead Petitioner (5 mins), a statement from the Deputy Leader, Cllr Barnes (10 mins), followed by questions from Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and a summary from The Chair.

- i) The Lead Petitioner's statement in support of the petition included that the scheme should be removed and that it is socially regressive. In the Bowes area, a car is a vital, not a life-style choice. With no local facilities, residents are required to travel to high streets in Muswell Hill and Southgate for shopping, medical appointments and places of worship.
- ii) With no cycle network available, potholes in the road, parked cars and increased congestion, cycling isn't a realistic option. Residents are required to navigate congested roads, made worse by dis-placed traffic. If Haringey go-ahead with their own plans for a similar scheme on the borough boundary, local journeys will become even more horrendous.
- iii) The statement also included resident's concerns regarding access for emergency vehicles, the air quality around high density housing schemes and Bowes School on the North Circular Road, potential increased crime levels around dead-end roads and disruption for the disabled, elderly and vulnerable residents in relation to home deliveries and visits from carers and relatives.
- iv) Any reduction in pollution levels should be supported with the production of hard data, indicating before and after levels in the area.
- v) The statement concluded by noting that the Council should start again and work with Haringey Council and Transport for London as It is essential to win the hearts and minds of local residents.

The Chair thanked Mr Hewes for his statement and invited Cllr Barnes to respond.

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- vi) Cllr Barnes stated that he would cover how the Bowes Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) Scheme works and how it came about, the petition itself, the organisation behind the petition and a summary of the consultation going forward.
- vii) A LTN scheme operates by filtering the ends of roads to encourage less use of cars and more pedestrians, cyclists and greater use of public transport. Bowes has several bus routes and an underground station. The filtering system uses planters and cameras to allow cyclists and emergency vehicles to pass through unimpeded.
- viii) Traffic congestion in this area has been a problem for a long time and both the local MP and Bowes Ward councillors have lobbied for improvements.
- ix) Schemes in other parts of London have been successful, for example in Waltham Forest. However, schemes do take a while to bed-in and for behavioural change to take place, which will lead to cleaner air, safety on roads, helping to fight obesity and climate change.
- x) The LTN is a Government funded scheme, however, a time scale of 8 weeks for design and implementation was applied. This reason for this short period of time was to provide increased space for cyclists and pedestrians during the covid-19 pandemic.
- xi) Cllr Barnes commented that the wording on the petition resulted in confusion among some residents and he gave detail on some of the issues raised. Various forms of consultation over several years has identified through traffic in the Bowes area as problematic.
- xii) Consultation will continue and Cllr Barnes would welcome comments, positive or negative from local residents.
- xiii) Cllr Barnes commented that on the website of the Broomfield Home Owners Residents Association (BHORA), there is reference to the level of traffic in the area being a problem. However, as with any scheme of this nature, there are those who are for and those who are against and this is reflected within the BHORA membership.
- xiv) Cllr Barnes concluded by stating that all residents of Bowes must have an opportunity to comment on the scheme, therefore, a 6 month live consultation will be implemented.

The Chair thanked Cllr Barnes for his response and opened the discussion for questions from Members.

- xv) In response to a question on the area covered by the petition, it was confirmed that the petition was open to the whole of the borough but Cllr Barnes raised concerns about residents in another part of Enfield influencing a scheme in Bowes Ward.
- xvi) A question in relation to consultation during the 8 week implementation period confirmed that consultation had taken place with emergency services, TfL and Haringey Council. The emergency services were in agreement with the scheme and will continue to monitor the area.
- xvii) It was confirmed that the consultation period is now live and will continue until March 2021 and it is hoped that as many of the 7,200 residents in the LTN would provide comments.

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- xviii) Charging points for electric cars are being trialled next year, possibly within the Bowes area.
- xix) It was commented that it is important to recognise the feelings of over 1,600 residents who had signed the petition and a question was asked as to how people with mobility issues, the elderly, vulnerable or parents with very young children have been considered. In response, it was hoped that residents who were able would either, walk, cycle or consolidate journeys, reducing congestion for those who have no alternative to using a car.
- xx) Following a question on the responses to consultation, it was stated that residents would be given all the information needed to arrive at a balanced opinion.
- xxi) It was confirmed that the emergency services agreed to unhindered routes, using cameras rather than planters, allowing clear passage in the area.
- xxii) It was noted that many schemes had been tried previously, to alleviate traffic congestion in the area. If pre-construction consultation had been possible, a lot of the issues raising concern now, would have been avoided.
- xxiii) It was commented that Phase 1 had been funded by Central Government to a total of £100,000, however, Phase 2 funding and timescales had yet to be confirmed, so there is now an opportunity to gain views of residents in advance.
- xxiv) In response to a question about consulting with Blue Badge holders and residents who are cared for or not able to access on-line consultation, it was confirmed that 1-1 consultations and local pop-up events are being considered.
- xxv) The scheme will be evaluated using a number of key metrics and data analysis.
- xxvi) A question was raised, relating to how the subject can be moved forward. The Monitoring Officer confirmed the options available to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; Note the petition, Take no action, Refer the decision back to the decision maker (An operational decision of the Director of Environment and Operational Services)
- xxvii) It was confirmed that consultation will take place with the petitioner, BHORA and all residents.
- xxviii) The Chair, Cllr Susan Erbil provided a summary of the discussion and the issues raised and out-lined the options available to OSC Members.
- xxix) Members of OSC had a discussion on the options available to them, with guidance provided by the Monitoring Officer. Cllr Smith put forward the initial proposal, seconded by Cllr David-Sanders, in relation to the as yet unfunded and unplanned Phase 2 scheme, involving Brownlow Road. Clarity was provided by the Monitoring Officer that this wasn't an option available to OSC.
- xxx) Cllr Georgiou proposed that this item be brought back to OSC for further scrutiny, following the 6 month consultation period.
- xxxi) Further discussion required Cllr Smith to clarify his original proposal and when this was not forthcoming, The Monitoring Officer advised

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The Chair to reject the original proposal and seek a further proposal. The Chair confirmed that the original proposal from Cllr Smith was rejected and asked for any further proposals.

- xxxii) An amended proposal was put forward by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr David-Sanders; - 'That the permanent traffic order is not brought into operation until there has been proper consultation completed.' The Monitoring Officer confirmed that this was an acceptable recommendation.
- xxxiii) A vote on the above recommendation was taken, with the result as follows; Cllrs Smith, David-Sanders and Georgiou voted in favour of the recommendation; Cllr Elif Erbil voted against the recommendation; Cllrs Yusuf, Demirel, Greer and Susan Erbil abstained.
- xxxiv) The Monitoring Officer confirmed that by a vote of 3-1 in favour, the following recommendation is agreed;-
The decision of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to request that Doug Wilkinson and Cllr Ian Barnes implement no permanent solution to the Bowes Low Traffic Neighbourhood until such time as a full and proper consultation exercise has been completed.

In concluding this item, The Chair thanked Cllr Barnes, Doug Wilkinson and Richard Eason for their attendance.

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ICT AND DIGITAL SERVICES - THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

The Chair welcomed Fay Hammond asked that the main areas of challenge were highlighted in the presentation. It was noted that Cllr Maguire, Cabinet Member for Finance had to leave the meeting before this item commenced.

- i) It was highlighted that accessibility will be at the forefront of the customer experience moving forward and there will be an improved offer for those residents identified as requiring early help.
- ii) We now offer face to face support at community hubs within Enfield Town and Edmonton Green Libraries where residents can gain appropriate help and early intervention as necessary.
- iii) The Council website is being redesigned and a range of groups will be consulted, for example the Over 50s forum and the Youth Parliament. The profile of the website will be raised to ensure residents and businesses find it useful.
- iv) As one of the future improvements, resident interviews will take place in relation to navigating the website.
- v) A new telephony system will be implemented which will provide a better experience for callers.
- vi) Over 130 Pay Points are now available across the borough in supermarkets and newsagents to pay Council Tax, business rates and housing rent. The availability to pay cash is still current.

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- vii) In response to a question it was confirmed that there are now 4 flagship libraries open, reviewed on a weekly basis.
- viii) A question was asked as to how increased demand has impacted on council employees and it was noted that improved IT for staff has alleviated stress levels considerably, with rates of absence reduced. Staff are encouraged to take down-time and annual leave.
- ix) The level of phone calls and webchat have increased during the covid-19 period. Our current, fragmented telephony system doesn't work well from a customer perspective., so a single telephony system is being implemented.
- x) We are currently reviewing the operation and number of community hubs available. The feedback from residents has been very positive.
- xi) The majority of contacts with the council are still via telephone but we are promoting self-help so there will be an increase in webchat and self-service via the website.
- xii) It was confirmed that 42% of calls are resolved at the first point of contact. The customer journey overall has been improved.
- xiii) The issue of outside contributors not being able to fully access Teams Live Events was raised and Fay Hammond agreed to take this back for further consideration with the Director of Digital, Data and Technology.
- xiv) Residents have informed councillors that navigation of the website has often proved difficult. It was confirmed that the new website would contain pictorial guidance and the search facility will be much improved. New tools and add-ons will be included to improve customer service.
- xv) The deaf community should be assisted as English isn't their first language.
- xvi) In response to a question, it was commented that feedback from customers during the pandemic has been very positive, especially when offering 1-1 assistance for vulnerable residents.
- xvii) During the initial stages of the pandemic, we had to adapt services quickly and reach-out to customers to ensure they were aware that services were still available.
- xviii) It was confirmed that there is a very diverse workforce in the Contact Centre.

The Chair summarised the comments received and thanked officers for their presentation.

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DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates of future meetings were noted.