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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 23.6.2022

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY, 23 JUNE 2022

COUNCILLORS

PRESENT (Chair) Margaret Greer, (Vice Chair) Bektas Ozer, Maria Alexandrou, Nawshad Ali, Mohammad Amirul Islam, James Hockney and Michael Rye OBE

ABSENT Elif Erbil

STATUTORY CO-OPTES: *1 vacancy (Church of England diocese representative), vacancy (other faiths/denominations representative), Mr Tony Murphy (Catholic diocese representative), Alicia Meniru & 1 vacancy (Parent Governor representative) - Italics Denotes absence*

OFFICERS: Marie Lowe (Secretary)

Also Attending: Councillor Nesil Caliskan (Leader of the Council)
Ian Davis (Chief Executive)

1 WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

The Chair explained that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would hear from the Leader, Councillor Nesil Caliskan and Ian Davis, Chief Executive, outlining the Council and priorities and areas of challenge for the upcoming municipal year. The Leader, and the Chief Executive Cabinet Officer would then be asked to leave the meeting, at which point the Committee members would discuss topics and agree a work programme for 2022/2023.

Apologies had been received from Councillor Elif Erbil.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2022.

4 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

NOTED, for information, the Terms of Reference for the for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in the Council's Constitution.

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CABINET PRIORITIES FOR 2022/23

The Chair invited the Leader of the Council, Cllr Nesil Caliskan to out-line the Council's Priorities for the coming year.

Cllr Caliskan reminded members that the administration's priorities were set out and detailed in the Council Plan.

The Chair noted that many areas raised by the Leader were in relation to the scrutiny panels in place and these will be picked up by the panels. It was confirmed that the minutes of this meeting will be circulated to all the panel chairs.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Nesil Caliskan presented the Council's local priorities for 2022/23.

Cost of Living Increases

Identify ways to provide as much support as possible across the Borough, particularly from the residents' perspective. Including benefits, homelessness, debt management and advice, debt welfare teams maintain council tax support scheme, protect the hardship fund.

More and Better Homes

Interventions into the housing market by the Council as soon as possible. Quality of homes and the impact of the changes to the private rented sector which has increased homelessness in the Borough.

The use of strategic industrial land, e.g. Meridian Water, in the provision of thousands of affordable homes already pledge and additional units. The renewal of the Council's estate. Recognition that the Council could not provide the homes needed alone and needed to work with the private sector to find resolutions. The Council's policy documents were pivotal to land designation.

Skills and Local Economy

The Council is to provide support around homes which are not connected to public transport links. Renewal and regeneration of the Borough's high streets and town centres. The use of strategic industrial land to provide two academies, one for construction and for the film industry to train over 1,000 each year.

Young People – Best Start

Continue to provide early intervention. Rollout additional school streets and encourage active travel. The introduction of free-swimming lessons, if possible. A review of the unsatisfactory leisure provision across the Borough.

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The creation of five new family hubs and children's centres to meet the particular needs of communities in which they are located and to work with Ward Councillors.

Healthier Enfield

To reduce inequalities. New health and wellbeing centres once sites have been identified. To review adult social care and the impact on the Council's budget.

Safer Enfield

Creation of a new Enfield Council Law Enforcement Team of 50 officers, working with but independent of the Police. There was much work to be completed to scope the roles and how these would support the role of the Police.

Parks and Open Spaces

Enhancement of parks and open spaces across the Borough, the facilities in the parks were an important part of the Council's work.

The Chief Executive, Ian Davis presented the regulatory changes and inspections affecting Local Government.

Adult Social Care

Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspections challenges were around having the right systems in place to meet the needs of adult social care required. Significant changes ahead including funding which are unclear at this stage. There is a budget gap, which will increase as interest rates increase.

Housing Regulator

Impact on the Council in terms of registered social landlords, social housing provision, age of stock and the number of high-rise residential buildings. Ensure that the regulations are fully understood.

Grenfell Inquiry

Impact on the Council of the Grenfell inquiry around structure and fire safety.

Budget

Energy costs for schools – knock on effect on the school structure and teaching budget, better insulation to reduce energy costs, additional Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision, the cost of transport to school and impact on the revenue budget. Increase of materials associated with housing construction, maintenance and repairs, both in the private sector and for the Council. The impact of the increase in the cost of materials and freeze on construction.

Local Government Pay

4% pay increase suggested and resulting budget pressures. The Council was looking for 2-2.25%.

Recruitment and Retention of staff, particularly in children's services and social workers but across the organisations.

Merger of five NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)

Continued and developing relationships with the NHS before during and after transition.

The Leader of the Council and Chief Executive provided the following responses to questions raised by Members of the Panel.

- The covid pandemic had a significant impact on the Borough and a flexi approach needs to be taken towards the recovery, focussing resources where they are needed most for example the increase in evictions now that the restrictions to prevent evictions had been lifted.
- Innovative ways to support residents and to provide a better Council presence across the Borough would be identified and implemented where practical such as touch points in libraries.
- The timelines for the Local Plan, Meridian Water and the Council's estate were crucial to drawing many areas of work together from across the Council such as the provision of better homes, the housing crisis and the private rented sector. There were a number of elements to this - grant funding, the Council's partnership working, using empty homes to help address homelessness and the number of people in temporary accommodation as well as how the housing gateway is addressing voids to make those properties available.
- There were additional pressures on the supply chain with many small businesses operating on very limited cash flow. The Council were supporting these businesses where possible.
- The merger of the five NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) provided a window of opportunity for the Council to work with the NHS to improve and secure the best provision of services for the residents of the Borough.
- The Leader and the Chief Executive were confident that the Council would deliver 3,500 additional affordable homes despite the current challenges and those following the two-year pandemic and significant increases in the development costs which will affect the level of affordable housing. The prices were unlikely to go down to the previously level due mainly to the increases in the interest rate.

(Actions: Leader to circulate the current draft Local Plan timetable. Chief Executive to circulate advice of the London Fire Brigade on fire safety in high rise buildings).

The Chair, on behalf of the Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, thanked the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive for attending the meeting and presenting a comprehensive set of Council priorities and answering questions in relation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for the forthcoming year.

At 8.40pm the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive, as asked by the Chair and endorsed by the Scrutiny Panel members, left the meeting.

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PLANNING THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2022/23

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, following the presentation from and question and answer session with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive a detailed discussion ensued, and it was **AGREED** that:

1. The presentations on the 2022/23 Local priorities received from the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive be welcomed and noted;
2. Two to three items be considered at each scheduled meeting be agreed;
3. Following the meeting, the draft 2022/23 work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as attached as Appendix A, be circulated to the Chair, of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration with all the draft work programmes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panels to ensure there is no overlap or duplication of topics; and
4. The draft 2022/23 work programmes for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Panels be referred to Cabinet on 14 September 2022 and Council on 21 September 2022 for ratification and approval, endorsement.

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DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Noted that:

The next Overview & Scrutiny Committee business meeting was scheduled to take place on Thursday 14 July 2022; and

The next provisional Call-in Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting was scheduled to take place Thursday 21 July 2022.

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