
**London Borough of Hackney
Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission
Municipal Year 2014/15
Date of Meeting Monday, 9th February, 2015**

Minutes of the proceedings of
the Governance & Resources
Scrutiny Commission held at
Hackney Town Hall, Mare
Street, London E8 1EA

Chair	Councillor Rick Muir
Councillors in Attendance	Cllr Will Brett, Cllr Laura Bunt, Cllr Rebecca Rennison and Cllr Nick Sharman
Apologies:	Cllr Deniz Oguzkanli
Co-optees	
Officers In Attendance	Mark Griffin (Head of Environment and Waste Strategy), Michael Honeysett (Assistant Director Financial Management), Tom McCourt (Assistant Director - Public Realm) and Ian Williams (Corporate Director of Finance and Resources)
Other People in Attendance	Councillor Feryal Demirci (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods), Councillor Geoff Taylor (Cabinet Member for Finance) and David Beadle (Managing Director)
Members of the Public	1 member of the public
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Councillor Rick Muir in the Chair

1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies for absence from Cllr Deniz Oguzkhanli.

2 Urgent Items / Order of Business

2.1 None.

3 Declarations of Interest

3.1 None.

4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 4.1 Minutes were agreed subject to the amendments below in point 4.4.
- 4.2 Cllr Sharman commented the minutes did not reflect as an outcome from the discussion, the willingness to think about joint commissioning by service providers and commissioners.
- 4.3 The Chair and Cllr Sharman referred to the discussion item on Executive Response to the ICT Review. They wanted it noted that technology and the Council's ICT strategy would be critical for the future of the organisation and key in the next phase of development for services to reconfigure successfully.
- 4.4 The Chair requested for an amendment to point 7.1.2 bullet point 3 on page 10 for accuracy in relation to the difference between all political parties and their plan to tackle the UK's deficit. The statement should read 'Although the main parties have different fiscal positions overall, whatever the outcome of the election the settlement for local government is likely to be poor'.

RESOLVED	Minutes were approved subject to the amendment in point 4.4.
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5 North London Waste Authority Update

- 5.1 The Chair welcomed to the meeting Councillor Feryal Demirci, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods London Borough of Hackney (LBH), David Beadle, Managing Director from North London Waste Authority and Tom McCourt, Assistant Director Public Realm from LBH. Also in attendance was Mark Griffin, Head of Waste Services from LBH.
- 5.1.1 The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods opened the discussion by explaining the decision was taken to end the major joint procurement process being led by NLWA on behalf of the 7 Boroughs. The NLWA Officer, Cabinet Member and Officers from LBH provided an update on the future plans, costs and the reasons why the decision was taken to end the procurement process for waste services.
- 5.1.2 Members thanked the Cabinet Member and Officers for the paper provided in advance of the meeting. Members asked for clarity on the following:
- Reasons for strategy change?
 - How the partnership can be successful?
 - Rationale for menu pricing and its impact on the Council's budget?
 - NLWA's work to change residents' behaviour?
 - Evidence that supports this approach to show it will be successful?

5.1.3 The Managing Director from NLWA referred to the paper in the agenda on pages 17 – 22 and highlighted the key points below:

- The procurement process started in 2007. The service contracts needed to be replaced by 2014. NLWA started the PFI procurement process with publication of an OJEU notice for tender of two contracts for waste services.
- The requirements to contract out waste disposal functions was repealed by Section 47 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.
- In 2009 the NLWA acquired ownership of the Edmonton waste incinerator at the Edmonton site.
- Previously, proposals to extract energy from waste was not viewed as favourable and the NLWA could not carry out waste conversion on the Edmonton site, so they started the process of looking for a new site. Since the start of the procurement process the likelihood of obtaining planning consent for the NLWA's proposals to extract energy from waste has become a strong possibility.
- In addition 2 major planning policy documents were published that supported the NLWA waste service proposals.
- The NLWA has been informed the current Edmonton site will be available until 2025 (with an appropriate maintenance plan). This has enabled the NLWA to continue using the Edmonton site until new facilities can be found.
- The conversion of waste to energy on site would be the most efficient process.
- The PFI procurement process was a long process and as this progressed the situation regarding planning consent started to change in favour of the NLWA proposals and plans.
- During the tender process the bidders reduced to one bidder for each contract.
- Following the planning authority changes and the reduction in the competition in the procurement process. The NLWA reviewed the procurement to decide if it was in their best interest to proceed to the final stages - in light of the reduced competition and lack of competitive tender – and potentially award 2 long term contracts. The review found in the short to medium term if they proceeded with the NLWA plans they could save £900 million. After this review the decision was taken to end the procurement process in favour of the NLWA plans.
- NLWA has completed the first round of consultations about the proposals and demonstrated how they will feed heat into Lea Valley. The GLA has responded to their consultation and expressed support for the plans.
- The second round of consultations will be completed in the summer of 2015. The comments from this consultation will inform the refresh of the North London Joint Waste Strategy (NLJWS).
- In the short term the NLWA will continue to use the Edmonton site.
- The NLWA only manages the waste for the 7 London boroughs and has no external contracts.
- NLWA plan to have no waste going to landfill sites from 2025 but this could be as early as 2018/19.

5.2 Discussion, Comments and Queries

Members made the following enquires:

- a) **Did NLWA plan to replace the Edmonton site or did they have the ability to stay and do something different?**
- b) **How the loss of the PFI would affect the waste authority's ability to raise finance and if this would mean higher interest rates?**
- c) **If the introduction of the land fill tax in 2013 started a panic which has resulted in the local authorities paying a heavy price for a long procurement process?**

The Managing Director from NLWA explained the Government decided to pass on the cost of waste applied by Europe, however the waste authority had a policy to reduce the volume of waste taken to the land fill to 35%. He also advised the NLWA converted a large proportion of the waste collected into energy, so they were unlikely to incur large costs.

If the NLWA had proceeded with the procurement and awarded the new contracts the long term costs would have been more significant.

In response to the question about finance NLWA confirmed all the boroughs would make the decision about how to procure a new site and consider the finance options. If the NLWA is given planning permission to proceed with their plans, it is anticipated a decision would need to be made in 2017; and it is at this stage that the boroughs would need to consider the advantages and disadvantages of each finance option.

The Assistant Director for Public Realm from LBH informed the make-up of the Borough is 42% street properties and 58% estate housing. He also updates the Commission about recycling participation rates on estates, in blocks and from street properties. It was also explained the type of housing tenure also provided some challenges and for this reason Public Realm were reviewing how they could drive up recycling for street properties and address the issue of low recycling rates in blocks.

Parallel to the street campaign the Council is working in partnership with Hackney Homes to drive up estate recycling. Through this work they are reviewing current recycling facilities to ensure they have the appropriate infrastructure to achieve resident buy-in and increase recycling. This work will help the Council to identify where to focus resources and drive up rates.

The Commission was informed that recycling rates in London have either remained stable or declined and in Hackney the rate has remained stable.

- d) **Members enquired if research or evidence was available that identified barriers to recycling for estates.**

The Head of Waste Services from LBH advised WRAP had published a report in December 2014 about the barriers, which has taken into consideration the work completed to encourage recycling from 2008. This reported has helped to highlight areas of improvement for LBH and identify that in some locations residents are going too far to access facilities. The report recommends the

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maximum distance should be 30 metres away and currently in Hackney facilities are approximately 60 metres.

The Assistant Director of Public Realm from LBH advised they are conducting pilots to kick start engagement and partnership working with TRAs to help the Council identify the barriers to recycling.

- e) Members enquired if lesson could be learned about partnership working for joint waste services from other local authorities. Members also asked for clarification about the method used to extract energy from waste and the pollution levels.**

The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods from LBH advised it is a statutory requirement for all boroughs to be part of a waste authority. The NLWA's strategy outlines how the 7 boroughs work together and all communications about waste services and recycling is carried out by NLWA to ensure a consistent message across all boroughs.

The Cabinet Member for Finance from LBH pointed out all boroughs are still learning how they can encourage local residents to recycle more.

The Head of Waste Services from LBH informed the strategy has been for all boroughs to achieve 50% recycling rate and other authorities have come to Hackney to review the Council's work to encourage recycling. He explained inner city boroughs were often compared to suburbs like Enfield but inner city boroughs like Hackney will not produce the same level of recycling waste like Enfield.

- f) Members enquired if the NLWA had sufficient resources at the front end of the process and asked if they had undertaken major campaigns to change behaviour and improve estate recycling rates. Members also asked if consideration was given to implementing compulsory recycling.**

The Assistant Director of Public Realm from LBH confirmed the aim was to have all social housing blocks recycling on par with private housing blocks. Currently new build properties were achieving a higher rate approximately 20%. The challenge was with existing estates. To tackle this the Council was working with housing partners to help them recognise that improving waste recycling rates was a joint concern.

The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods from LBH added the Council has completed work to identify areas of improvement. A key challenge in this area was enforcement powers. She explained enforcement relies on the ability to identify the culprit; in communal areas this was difficult coupled with the fact that each estate was unique.

It was highlighted the Council had recently helped partners to understand the costs of recycling and waste to the Council. The Council was working with housing providers to persuade them to invest and put in place the appropriate infrastructure to improve recycling rates. After achieving this the Council would focus on improving communication to challenge a person's behaviour and take the necessary action.

g) Members enquired if the Council considered using peer pressure as a tool of persuasion to change behaviour.

The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods from LBH pointed out on estates it was unlikely that a person would see their neighbour recycling, so peer pressure was unlikely to be effective.

The Assistant Director of Public Realm from LBH informed they were working with Hackney Homes to review how they could change their waste management approach.

The Cabinet Member for Finance from LBH pointed out different communities resided in estates and this would have an impact too, therefore the Council also needed to understand these nuances.

h) Members expressed concern that not enough was being done collectively to really drive up recycling rates. Members believed more could be done collectively by the boroughs to drive up recycling across North London.

The Managing Director from the NLWA informed the Commission the waste authority's strands of work include: joint communication, behaviour change messages and research to identify how to influence change. NLWA also do waste prevention work and a strong element of this activity is to influence and change behaviour.

NLWA propose to use the latest technology to extract energy from waste. As the NLWA develop their plans they will consider the option of doing this on their own site or another site and incurring costs. Their proposals include new facilities and using the latest technology to reduce flu (Knox) gases in line with countries like Holland. To date NLWA flu gas levels are found to be acceptable.

The two options open to waste authorities is landfill or energy waste. It was noted the UK uses soft persuasion to encourage households to recycle. The Commission noted to enforce recycling stronger levers would need to be implemented to obtain better co-operation from the public. The Commission was informed an expert giving evidence from Milan to the GLA highlighted they had powers to enforce food waste on estates.

i) Members enquired if the NLWA had considered public health concerns and asked for clarification on the type of Knox emissions emitted from the site and if NLWA had measured the impact on local air quality.

The Managing Director from NLWA advised they had made improvements to the technology used and this had reduced their gas levels. A comparison of waste incinerator targets to the Edmonton site showed it was well below the target level.

In relation to public health concerns a new public health report was due to be published and this would show if there was a direct link between Knox emissions and public health.

j) Members referred to the uncertainty around planning consent and enquired if this presented a big risk to NLWA.

The Managing Director from NLWA explained the waste authority was implementing its plans slowly. The first phase was to stabilise costs and keep the cost of waste disposal as low as possible. NLWA can use the current site until 2025. This means they have until 2016 to obtain planning consent for a site. If planning permission is not granted the waste authority can still go to the open market to find service providers.

k) Members enquired about public opinion to NLWA's plans.

The Managing Director from NLWA advised they have completed an initial consultation which provided information about their plans and showed pictures of what the site would look like. The information was distributed to properties within a 1 ½ mile radius from the Edmonton site. The second consultation will seek views and this will commence in May 2015.

l) Members enquired about the menu pricing information and asked for the rationale behind changing to this pricing structure.

The Managing Director from NLWA advised historically the charges to each borough were based on an average of the waste costs. The concept behind the new pricing menu is for Boroughs to pay for the services they use. The menu pricing will incentive boroughs to think about their waste and move in line with the NLWA targets and waste disposal plans.

m) Members asked to see the Council's action plan to address the current gaps in performance to understand how they will move the borough's waste disposal in the right direction to achieve the desired target levels.

The Assistant Director of Public Realm from LBH informed the Council's strategy was approved by Cabinet. They are currently waiting for the outcome of the composition survey which will inform the targets. All waste action plans are based on the NLWA strategy. They have information on where to target and they will focus on streets because this is where they get the greatest return.

The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods from LBH advised they have outlined to Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission their work programmes which has multiple work strands.

The Council is working to improve rates and will take decisions in relation to the NLWA plans in the not too distant future. At this point the Council will need to decide how much it will invest in the capital programme to implement the infrastructure.

n) The Chair requested to be kept updated on the NLWA 2020 plan.

This was agreed.

The Corporate Director Finance and Resources from LBH pointed out LBH Finance has worked closely with the NLWA throughout the whole process. He

commended the work of the Managing Director (David Beadle) from NLWA and thanked him for his work in providing information and evidence that enabled the Boroughs to confidently make the decision to stop the procurement process and pursue other plans.

6 Fees and Charges Update

- 6.1 The Chair welcomed to the meeting Councillor Geoff Taylor, Cabinet Member for Finance and Ian Williams Corporate Director of Finance and Resources from London Borough of Hackney. Also in attendance was Michael Honeysett, Assistant Director, Financial Management from London Borough of Hackney.
- 6.1.1 The Chair explained the 2015/16 budget report was still being finalised. In the absence of the budget report G&R was presented with the Medium Term Planning Forecast (MTPF) report (discussed at Cabinet) which sets out the 2015/16 budget proposals.
- 6.1.2 The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources highlighted the cover note summarised the approach taken to fees and charges and built on the work of G&R from their Fees and Charges Review.
- 6.1.3 The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources advised under the previous governance structure the budget report was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Board. This board was disbanded and the budget report has been moved to G&R. He explained the date of G&R meeting in February was too early in the process of the budget report production to enable it to be presented to the Commission. To avoid this in the future a request has been made to move the G&R meeting in February to a later date in the month to enable the budget report to be presented and discussed.
- 6.1.4 The MTPF report provides information on the 2015/16 budget. It was pointed out the Council proposes to continue with the existing policies and approach taken to achieving savings.
- 6.1.5 Since the publication of the agenda the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources advised the Council had received the following confirmation in relation to the budget:
- The finalised local government settlement
 - The Government has reduced the DHP in the Revenue Support Grant by £600,000
 - The Social Fund Scheme was reduced to £1.4 million.
- 6.2 **Discussion, Comments and Queries**
- a) **Members referred to page 53 and commented Council Tax income would become one of the largest proportions of the Council's income in the future. Members expressed concern as previously local authorities have not relied heavily on this as a source of income.**
 - b) **Members enquired about the next phase or approach to achieving savings once the current principles were exhausted?**
 - c) **Members asked to be involved earlier in the process for the production of the MTPF.**

- d) **Members wanted to know the Council's view on the type of organisation it will become in the future?**
- e) **Members queried if the report presented financial projections or provided solutions.**
- f) **Members commented the report did not give them a clear indication of what proportion each service area has contributed to the cuts.**
- g) **Members enquired about the strategy taken to form the projections and the Council's plan for the next five years?**

The Cabinet Member for Finance informed the Council has been successful in achieving year on year savings through technology, back office efficiencies and officer output increasing. The Council is working on proposals to achieve the savings required for 2016/17 budget. The Cabinet Member pointed out there was no sign of an end to the pressure of cuts on local authority budgets and the longer they continued the more affect it will have on the Council.

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources advised the report outlined the strategy taken to achieve the 2015/16 saving. The Council's forward planning has enabled the Council to provide projections for budget savings.

Following the Government's announcement on the financial settlement for 2015/16 it was noted the projections made by the Council and assumption on the amount of saving to be achieved has not been impacted and remained unchanged.

After the General Election in May 2015 the Council hopes to have the majority of information on the financial settlement to be in a position to make projections on its income up to 2018/19.

The approach taken to date has been aimed at driving out inefficiencies within the organisation and ensuring all options have been exhausted before considering reductions to services. This will ensure that, if in the future, the Council needs to take such decisions they are confident all avenues have been explored.

- h) **Members commented taking into consideration the reduction in funding they wanted to understand how hard decisions about services might be made.**

Members were informed the Council has an understanding of its spend; the next step now was to identify the costs associated with the different service provisions, to help make the decision about the form a service provision should take.

- i) **Members pointed out a 50% reduction in the income of an organisation will change its ability to deliver existing services. Members referred to the principles being applied to achieving the efficiencies and noted 2 of them impacted on staff. Members enquired at what point cuts to staff would no longer be achievable and asked how long this approach could continue to be applied without impacting on the health and wellbeing of staff?**

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources explained organisations developing and improving start acquiring and recruiting a higher quality of staff with higher performance levels.

It was pointed out the Council has a high staff satisfaction rate and staff sickness levels are in line with other boroughs. It was highlighted one aspect the Council did need to give consideration too was that it had an aging workforce.

j) Members enquired about the Council's HR strategy in relation to the saving principles applied.

Members were informed the Council has a workforce strategy underpinned by a range of action documents to support implementation.

The Cabinet Member for Finance explained to Members changes in income outlined in the reports related to external funding and this did not include the income generation plans of the Council. He pointed out the Council is a provider of statutory and non-statutory services and the Council may get to a point when it needs to decide on the form these statutory services will take.

k) Members requested for an update on the results of the staff survey and wished to monitor this to observe staff morale as the organisation changed.

l) Members expressed concern about the sustainability of the cuts made and how long the strategy and principles could continue. Members enquired if the cuts were long term changes or just solutions to get through a financial crisis?

Members were told the strategy and principles applied have been in operation since 2011/12 and the changes sustainable. A report is provided each month to Cabinet outlining the Council's budget position and the Council was on track for the 13th consecutive year to deliver a balanced budget.

It was pointed out that in tough times often an organisation cuts areas like training for staff and maintenance costs, but these cuts can have long term implications for an organisation e.g. staff may not have the skill sets required in the future.

The Members were informed the Council has been operating a voluntary redundancy scheme across the organisation. The process has been managed to ensure they do not lose key staff that would result in an impact to service provision.

It was noted the Council is beginning to see some pressure points in the system but this is a reflection of the pressures London as a whole is facing.

The Cabinet Member for Finance highlighted the cost of housing in the borough was another key challenge. The impact of which was that local government pay could not keep pace with the cost of local housing and people were beginning to relocate.

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The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources agreed with the Cabinet Member that the diversity of the workforce may become a key issue. Highlighting the Council may in the future find it hard to recruit to key front of house roles if issues like rising housing costs are not addressed.

- m) Members enquired about the Better Care Fund and asked if this funding covered existing and new activity.**
- n) Members referred to the point about education funding on page 73 and enquired if resource constraints on service provisions like Early Years and SEN was as a result of schools being able to sit on healthy reserves because their budgets were protected.**

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources confirmed this issue was being discussed at a national level in education forums. He explained the national formula applied constrained local authorities, with all funding being delegated to schools. It was reported that the amount held in reserves by academies (4,400) was larger than the amount held collectively by the 18,700 maintained schools.

It was noted that a school's governing body had the power to decide if the school became an academy. Therefore this area is not an easy place to drive out efficiencies.

In Hackney the maintained school balances are £20.451 million and this is monitored. Some schools may hold a high level of reserves and in some instances this was to fund capital investment programmes. The Council is engaged with schools to monitor this and will make efforts to redistribute some of the funding if high reserves are identified.

In relation to the Better Care Fund it was noted Hackney's spending power has reduced by 6%. This takes into consideration the £18 million paid to CCGs as opposed to local authorities under the Better Care Funding. It was highlighted this included funding that was previously paid into the Social Care Grant, that was now redirected to the Better Care Fund.

In response the Chair suggested the Commission has a session to understand the local context in relation to the Better Care Fund and its impact on the Council's budget.

- o) Members commented the MTPF report did not present a clear picture of what the Council may look like in the future or outline possible costs and options for 2018/19 budgets.**
- p) Members queried if the Council was giving consideration as to how it would meet the needs of local residents and provide services as the local population was increasing and the Council's income was decreasing.**
- q) Members enquired about the strategies used in the past and the proposals to move forward.**
- r) Members wanted to understand if the Council was in a position to anticipate which services could continue to provide in its current form and what services would need to change.**

- s) **Members challenged officers about how long the Council could continue to operate the same efficiency strategy and asked how technology would feature in service provision to help reduce costs.**

The Corporate Director Finance and Resources explained the budget report going to full Council in February provided more detail about the budget and strategy.

- t) **Members enquired if the strategy and role of the MTPF document had changed over time or been refreshed?**

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resource advised the document had evolved overtime as the landscape has changed.

The Cabinet Member for Finance pointed out there was a difference between having a strategy and a plan. In the current climate the Council could not put a plan in place because of the frequent changes and their priority at the moment was to have a strategy.

7 Whole Place Review: Long Term Unemployment and Mental Health

- 7.1 The Chair referred to the draft Service User Research Specification for the qualitative research on pages 93 – 98. He explained this document outlined the proposed methodology and criteria for participant selection.
- 7.2 The Chair informed the Commission he would be meeting with officers from the research company on 13th February 2015 and welcomed any comments from Members to feed into this discussion.
- 7.3 Members of the Commission provided the following comments:
- Asked for the research criteria to include geographical spread across the borough.
 - Asked for consideration to be given to using other workshop models if applicable.
 - Asked for the research information to highlight any areas of overlap identified from the participant's story.
 - Asked for the criteria to include people on and off benefits. Members pointed out some people have come off the ESA / IB benefit or may not be receiving any benefit.
 - Asked for clarification on the method of analysis that will be used.
 - Avoid using the word 'service user'.
 - Record if a participant has comorbidity and note the types of disability a person may have.
 - On page 97 amend EAS to ESA.
 - Change point E to be 2 years on.
- 7.4 Members of the Commission who did not attend the site visit referred to the information circulated from the site visit (to London Borough of Lewisham) and asked for the attendee's views on the service provision visited.
- 7.5 Members in attendance at the site advised the pilot service was an additional step in the DWP process for Universal Credit.

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- The different service areas were working well and supporting people through fragmented services.
 - The numbers going through the new service were small in comparison to the numbers at the front end of the process.
 - Having a key worker to help the person navigate their way through the different services was key to the service provision.
 - The pilot was using a multi-borough approach to access jobs in the growth areas. Cllr Sharman added from his discussions this approach may not be required for Hackney because it is thought the local economy is providing local jobs.
- 7.6 The second document was the Draft TOR on pages 99-108. The Chair explained the information in the formal scrutiny document was not new and drawn from the draft TOR documents discussed and agreed at previous G&R meetings.
- 7.7 The Cabinet Member for Finance from LBH requested for point 1.1 in the TOR to be expanded to explain the review would help to identify the barriers to whole place thinking in general and look at how to overcome these barriers.
- 7.8 The Cabinet Member asked for the point to reflect that this piece of work by G&R would feed into a wider cross cutting review programme that aimed to improve the quality of life for local residents and would help the Council to identify where to focus resources to be most effective.
- 7.9 Members agreed the TOR subject to the amendment in point 1.1

ACTION	Overview and Scrutiny Officer with the Chair to update point 1.1 of TOR document with comments from point 7.7 and 7.8.
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8 Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission - 2014/15 Work Programme

- 8.1 The Chair referred to the work programme on pages 109 - 116 of the agenda.
- 8.2 Members suggested the March meeting should have a wider discussion on whole place thinking. Members agreed to invite policy experts and academics to explore whole place thinking in relation to system change, joining up services and look at the capabilities and skills required in a workforce to provide the new services.
- 8.3 After a discussion Members suggested inviting:
- The project leads from the 21st Century Public Service Workforce review by Birmingham University
 - LankellyChase Foundation.
- 8.4 In addition Members agreed to explore preventative services to get a sense of how much should be invested up front to make savings and reduce expenditure

in the long term on expensive service provision. Members agreed to invite the Early Intervention Foundation.

- 8.5 Members requested for an additional discussion item to be added to the work programme. Members asked for information on the interdependency of the different housing benefit changes and the cumulative impact of these on residents.

Members referred to information they have received about changes to:

- Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and the cap on size for LHA properties
- Increase to age 35 for room only entitlement
- The benefit cap
- Spare room subsidy
- Cuts to Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP).

Members pointed out whilst they have received reports on the numbers affected by each policy change for each benefit; they wish to explore the cumulative impact of these changes and if they have affected the options available to residents when finding a property. For example are there:

- a) People affected by the benefit cap or LHA that have become reliant on DHP so their children can finish key exams?
- b) Couples affected by the spare room subsidy who are unable to find a new property because the relatively low levels of LHA mean they can't find a property.

ACTION	<p>1. Overview and Scrutiny Officer to invite the organisations stated in point 8.3 and 8.4 to the next G&R meeting on 16th March 2015.</p> <p>2. Members agreed to request the information. Corporate Director Finance and Resources to provide update for housing benefit information requested.</p>
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9 Any Other Business

- 9.1 None.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00 - 9.40 pm