

Scrutiny Panel

All Members of the Scrutiny Panel are requested to attend the meeting of the group to be held as follows

Monday, 11th December, 2017

7.00 pm

Room 102, Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street, London E8 1EA

Contact:

Tracey Anderson

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Tim Shields

Chief Executive, London Borough of Hackney

Members: Cllr Ben Hayhurst (Chair), Cllr Mete Coban, Cllr Margaret Gordon, Cllr Christopher Kennedy, Cllr Ann Munn, Cllr Sharon Patrick, Cllr James Peters and Cllr Anna-Joy Rickard

Agenda

ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 Urgent Items / Order of Business**
- 3 Declaration of Interest**
- 4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (Pages 1 - 18)
- 5 Cabinet Question Time - Mayor Glanville** (Pages 19 - 20)
- 6 Quarterly Finance Update** (Pages 21 - 36)
- 7 Complaints and Enquiries Annual Report** (Pages 37 - 48)
- 8 Work Programme 2017/18** (Pages 49 - 54)
- 9 Any Other Business**

Access and Information

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<http://www.hackney.gov.uk/individual-scrutiny-commissions-health-in-hackney.htm>



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Providing oral commentary during a meeting is not permitted.

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Scrutiny Panel 11 th December 2017 Minutes of the previous meeting	Item No 4
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OUTLINE

Please find attached the draft minutes for the Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 23rd October 2017.

Matters arising

Action 1 - Group Director for Finance and Corporate Resources to circulate Audit Committee Data Dashboard to Scrutiny Panel Members.

Overview and Scrutiny Officer circulated to the Scrutiny Panel Members

ACTION

The Scrutiny Panel is requested to agree the minutes and not the matters arising.

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London Borough of Hackney
Scrutiny Panel
Municipal Year 2017/18
Date of Meeting Monday, 23rd October, 2017

Minutes of the proceedings of
the Scrutiny Panel held at
Hackney Town Hall, Mare
Street, London E8 1EA

Chair	Councillor Ben Hayhurst
Councillors in Attendance	Cllr Margaret Gordon, Cllr Christopher Kennedy, Cllr Ann Munn, Cllr Sharon Patrick and Cllr Anna-Joy Rickard
Apologies:	Cllr Mete Coban and Cllr James Peters
Officers In Attendance	Tim Shields (Chief Executive) and Ian Williams (Group Director of Finance and Resources)
Other People in Attendance	
Members of the Public	
Officer Contact:	Tracey Anderson ☎ 0208 3563312 ✉ tracey.anderson@hackney.gov.uk

Councillor Ben Hayhurst in the Chair

1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies had been received from Cllrs Coban and Peters.

2 Urgent Items / Order of Business

2.1 There were no urgent items.

2.2 The Chair noted that Members had asked that Item 6 – Chief Executive Question Time – be predominantly focused on the topic of ICT. He therefore suggested that this item be delivered at the same time as item 5 (ICT Update).

2.3 With Members agreeing to this, the recording of the discussions associated with both items 5 and 6 are recorded in the minutes under item 5.

3 Declaration of Interest

- 3.1 Cllr Gordon noted that in pre meeting discussions Members had requested for an update on Universal Credit as part of the Quarterly Finance Update (item 7 on the agenda).
- 3.2 She declared that she was an employee of the Department of Work and Pensions and that she would therefore excuse herself from the meeting for this part of that item.

4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the 17th July 2017 were agreed as an accurate record.
- 4.2 Two actions arising from the last meeting were due to receive responses in this one from Ian Williams, Group Director of Finance and Corporate Resources. The Chair suggested that these be received during the Quarterly Finance Update.
- 4.3 Cllr Nick Sharman, Chair of Audit Committee, fed in at this point. He brought Members' attention to the discussion in the last meeting recorded in section 5.24 of the minutes. Giving an update on the development of a suite of key performance indicators, he confirmed that a data dashboard had now been finalised following liaison between the committee and the Business Analysis and Complaints Service.
- 4.4 He said that this now included a 2 page summary detailing the key indicators for the Council. He wished to thank Bruce Devile, Head of Business Analysis and Complaints for driving this forward.
- 4.5 He said that the dashboard had highlighted some good areas of performance but also some issues; most notably within Housing Services.
- 4.6 He suggested that the dashboard should be used by both the Audit Committee and Scrutiny Panel to inform their work.
- 4.7 He also recalled the points made by the Mayor in the previous meeting around him being happy to attend Audit Committee or Scrutiny Panel to discuss the issues that the work that the Audit Committee brought to light. The Chair of Audit Committee suggested that there might be further discussion around the forums in which the Mayor might feed into regarding the data.
- 4.8 The Chair thanked the Chair of Audit. As a way forward he suggested that the Group Director for Finance and Corporate Resources might circulate the data dashboard to Scrutiny Panel Members. This would then help the panel reach a view on how they might incorporate considerations around it into its work programme.

ACTION 1 - Group Director for Finance and Corporate Resources
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To circulate Audit Committee Data Dashboard to Scrutiny Panel Members.
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5 ICT Update

- 5.1 Guests in attendance for this item were:
- Tim Shields, Chief Executive
 - Rob Miller, Director, ICT
- 5.2 The Chair welcomed the guests. He thanked the Director of ICT for having provided what he said was a concise and helpful report, which was available within the agenda packs.
- 5.3 The Director, ICT thanked the Chair. He said that he had joined the Council a little over a year ago, at what was a very exciting time. He had entered an organisation which had had strong ITC infrastructure and arrangements already in place. There had been a track record of investment and achievement, meaning that his focus had not needed to be on putting right issues. For example, on entering the role very few Council computers were run on the dated Windows XP system. The Council had been responsive in moving to Windows 10 at an early point.
- 5.4 A key element of this was the in-house model which had been in place since 2012. This had meant the Council had the strategic levers for change at its control. Moving forward, it could continue to respond to the rapidly developing changes in technology, without the risk of being constrained by any rigid external contracts.
- 5.5 A good set of information and assets were in place, including the Hackney One Account and Citizen Index.
- 5.6 Asked to explain the Citizen Index system the Director, ICT confirmed that this was a database of all of the Council's residents. Its links to other systems meant that changes to records on this would automatically update other databases used by Council services. It also meant that the Council could better understand and meet the needs of residents by having insight into their interactions with areas across the organisation.
- 5.7 The Director, ICT said that successful projects had brought significant savings and service improvements to the Council. A project led by Parking Services and supported by ICT had enabled much greater use of online permits. The strength of the Citizen Index system had also enabled the service to verify address details through this rather than paying significant amounts to private providers (for example Experian) to fulfil this function. Improving online services for customers had enabled channel shift by many of those previously accessing them via face-to-face contact.
- 5.8 His service was now working to build on these successes. Work in progress included a redesign of the Hackney Works service to allow more ease of access for residents with employment or work experience needs, and a service enabling Council residents to check their rent account balances and report and track repairs requests in real time online. He said that a key aim of his service was to work very closely with users to shape the solutions being created. For example, the launch of the 'check my rent' tool had involved usage by 650

- customer in the first week. This would act a pilot with which to create and drive further improvement.
- 5.9 This principle of working with people more closely was applicable to both residents, internal council services, and businesses also.
- 5.10 On businesses, the service was progressing a Business Index. In a similar vein to the Citizen Index, this tool would enable the Council to have a definitive register of businesses in the borough in order to be able to better support them.
- 5.11 Adding to this, and in response to a question from a Member, the Chief Executive confirmed that the Business Index would better enable businesses to be provided by a one stop shop service offer. This was part of a drive by the Council to make business start-ups easier, and to give support to aid their growth.
- 5.12 The Council was introducing both a Landing Pad which would enable businesses to quickly access services such as setting up a Business Rates account upon starting up in or moving to the borough, and a Launch Pad which would provide advice and support to help them grow.
- 5.13 In response to a Member question around whether there could be a resident Landing pad, the Director of ICT said this would fit with the life model approach that his service was aiming to take.
- 5.14 A Member noted the moves towards more effective partnership working with other organisations including the NHS and other London boroughs. She asked what steps the Council was taking to ensure that consent was given where appropriate and what communications were being made to residents around this. She felt that closer working could raise issues. For example, there might be a risk that in some cases residents would be less likely to access health services for them or their family if they were aware that this might automatically be shared with other agencies.
- 5.15 The Director, ICT said that this was a crucial consideration. The service had always worked to ensure its compliance with Data Protection legislation, and was awaiting the introduction of the new General Data Protection Regulation Act which was expected to come into force from May 2018. A picture was beginning to emerge on the contents of this and the implications for the Council and the service was working through these.
- 5.16 He felt that there should always be a full focus on compliance, but that this should also be coupled with working to ensure that this did not prevent progress. For example, he suggested that while one service might not need to share the full details of a verification check with another service, that it could be of benefit to the resident if the service was able to confirm that the verification had been passed successfully. This could mean that whilst a raft of information was not being shared, that residents or businesses would not need to submit a range of details again.
- 5.17 He fully agreed that the Council would need to be very careful, and also that some sharing arrangements would be more appropriate than others. The joint agreement which had been reached between the Council and the Homerton

which enabled social workers and health practitioners to share information in order for a more integrated service to be delivered had been successful. However, while there would be benefits of wider sharing – for example that which would enable housing providers to be aware when residents were in receipt of support from Adult Social Care – there would need to be great caution applied.

- 5.18 The Chief Executive agreed with this point. The Council continued to be very cautious whilst also recognising the benefits that greater data sharing could have for residents.
- 5.19 In terms of technology generally, he noted that developments had significant potential to enable independence. Intelligent personal assistant devices (for example Amazon's Alexa) could better enable residents to call for help in their homes. Alerts of vulnerable person suffering a stroke or having very low blood sugar levels based on a device worn by them could be sent to healthcare providers or other contacts. The Council would seek to be at the forefront of development.
- 5.20 A Member asked what the Council was doing to ensure Cyber Security.
- 5.21 The Director of ICT confirmed that this Council and others were required to report back to the Cabinet Office on a set of indicators. Their responses were used to give assurance that their infrastructure was robust enough for their access to the Public Services Network. The Council had passed this.
- 5.22 In addition, the Council commissioned external providers to test the strength of their security and to identify vulnerabilities needing to be addressed. The count of vulnerabilities had been low; there would always be some that were identified from these exercises.
- 5.23 The Chief Executive said that advice to staff was a crucial part of the work to protect the Council. Regular updates were sent around emails and advice around not to open what appeared to be suspicious content. The infrastructure in place blocked many of these before they reached the user. The front door at the Council was strong but vigilance was needed.
- 5.24 The Director of ICT said that it was crucial to enable staff to work securely whilst doing their jobs. He referred to a case where a Council had been fined £150,000 for a breach in which a social worker emailed a document to her personal email address so that she could work on this on her personal computer. The Social Worker's computer on her accessing the file had then uploaded a range of the data to a website. Hackney was working to ensure that Council staff had access to reliable and secure systems (including the capacity to work on personal devices but within a secure system) to ensure that the above scenario would not play out here.
- 5.25 A Member noted the references in the paper to the development of analytics capabilities. She saw great potential in systems monitoring and mapping the extent and impacts of change. She asked whether a system could be envisaged which would consider and make available data around planning approvals, new licenses and revisions to licenses (including hour based licensing applications) and the impacts that these changes had. She suggested

- that noise and antisocial behaviour could be two indicators used to explore the impact, but said that this could be positive aspects also.
- 5.26 Looking specifically at noise, she said that as a Councillor she had found herself performing analysis herself on cases raised with her by a number of her constituents, regarding one source of noise. She said that this was cumbersome and also that the requirement for residents to fill in paper copies of diary forms made them easy to mislay and also – she felt - more difficult for the Council to identify trends and patters. She asked if the improved analytics could allow for online reporting, and a better depth of analysis regarding noise complaint cases. She said that an online reporting option would be valuable in her view; it was difficult for customers to make contact with the service at late times of the day and night when problem noise often occurred.
- 5.27 The Director of ICT thanked the Member for the suggestions which he felt were fully sound. He very much saw a future in which analytics and data was used to aid both services and Members in their decision-making and in their assessments of the impacts that these had had.
- 5.28 He confirmed that his service was working closely with the Enforcement Service. This was part of wider work within the fuller Public Realm Division led by Aled Richards. Early work had delivered improvements to the bulky waste collection function.
- 5.29 As per the points in his paper, the ICT Division was moving away from following a standalone strategy, towards working in partnership with services, and providing advice and support on the areas they themselves were prioritising. Future areas of focus in Public Realm – including on noise within the enforcement area – would be informed by the priorities for that area.
- 5.30 This said, the Director of ICT said that the sound data held around Planning – down to property reference number detail – would give a good foundation point for enabling the initiatives mentioned by the Member.
- 5.31 On noise specifically, the Chief Executive noted the Members concerns about the need to make reporting easier. He confirmed that it was possible to report issues online. However, he also noted that fuller investigation of noise issues required officer visits to ascertain noise levels compared to statutory nuisance thresholds. The diary systems complemented this and online diary submissions were possible. However, this would not remove residents' frustrations at needing to wait for investigative staff resources to be available.
- 5.32 In response to a question from the Chair of Audit around how the service currently monitored its performance the Director of ICT confirmed that there were a suite of performance indicators in place. However, the service recognised the need for these to be reviewed. They were currently focused on processes and not people.
- 5.33 Noting the points around the potential of analytics to provide a breadth of insight, including by area, the Chair of Audit Committee said that he would be supportive of this. He asked whether ICT saw a future model in which the impact of investment on results and outcomes could be better measured. He felt that the impacts of the significant regeneration which had been delivered in

the borough associated with the Olympics was not very quantifiable. This was in particular relation to jobs. He noted that the Council was unable to categorically state the number of jobs which had gone to local people as a result of the games.

- 5.34 The Chief Executive said that on jobs the Council had been careful to ensure that those being supported into employment related the Olympics had been long standing Hackney residents. Other boroughs had not always been as stringent on ensuring this within their programmes.
- 5.35 He acknowledged that full data on employment outcomes of the games was difficult to quantify. This was due to lack of information sharing from and between the Inland Revenue and the Department of Work and Pensions, and the Council not having the capacity to track people as they left the borough nor as they went in and out of employment.
- 5.36 However, he felt that the broader impacts of regeneration regarding the games was straighter forward. The new leisure centre, the ongoing improvement and development in Hackney Wick, a sustainable future having been achieved for Here East and the new housing stock which had been delivered were some of these.
- 5.37 A Member noted the successful moves by the Council to improve their online offers. He welcomed this and the savings that it brought. However, he asked for assurance around there being a continuing focus on meeting the needs of vulnerable residents.
- 5.38 The Director of ICT said that digital services for everyone was a key aim of the service. The ongoing work to embed digital service improvement into the strategies of services across the Council was being complemented by a range of activities to ensure that accessibility and digital inclusion considerations were designed into these.
- 5.34 He said that a crucial ingredient towards achieving this was gaining insight directly from users. To this end the service had worked with Hackney Healthwatch to deliver an interactive focus group in which partially sighted users fed back on their experiences of using current Council online services and on improvements which were needed.
- 5.35 The service was working to close the digital divide in other ways also. It was working with the Libraries Service to deliver training to residents on using digital technology.
- 5.36 It was working with residents living in hostel accommodation, piloting Wi-Fi provision. They were also engaging with residents in order to identify the barriers to digital inclusion for this group and whether these were restricted to the availability of Wi-Fi or if there were other factors which training and support might help address.
- 5.37 An example around this was that engagement exercises had shown that whilst some residents were confident with applications and websites which they were familiar with such as Whatsapp and Facebook, that they did not always find Council applications easy to use. They had found that the verification process

- on the Hackney one Account was inaccessible for some and the service was addressing this.
- 5.38 A Member noted that the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Commission had carried out a day of evidence gathering in a review relating to the support for Foster Carers. He asked if the digital services for current and potential Foster Carers was being improved.
- 5.39 The Director of ICT said that work had started with the Children and Young People's Service in recent weeks. This had a focus on aiming to improve the online offer to better ensure that potential new carers were not put off at the early stages. There had been very good engagement from the service on this, which was a crucial ingredient to reaching good outcomes.
- 5.40 He was pleased that ICT had had delivered early successes in their approach of working closely with other areas – in Housing Services in particular. He said that this was enabling learning with which to apply to other areas.
- 5.41 A Member asked about the potential of ICT to harness community resources over the next few years. She noted that ICT solutions often led to successes in this area in addition to those achieved through volunteer coordinator roles.
- 5.42 The Director of ICT said experience from his previous authority suggested that securing community engagement through ICT infrastructure was generally more successful when existing platforms (Facebook for example) were used rather than new channels. The service would work to support innovations in this area.
- 5.43 The Chief Executive said that the Council was exploring how it could broker the join up of community resources. He was aware of ward-based innovations in which people lent items or spaces to one another which had enabled the building of greater community cohesion. The Council would continue to consider ways that it could contribute to the further building of these initiatives.
- 5.44 This said, there needed to be caution. Residents were likely to interpret any endorsement of a community scheme by the Council to mean that it had been checked and validated. There was a need for the Council to explore how it could help community resources flourish whilst also helping to ensure that everyone was kept safe.
- 5.45 A Member asked what the mechanisms were for directorates to feedback and take a lead on ICT improvements.
- 5.46 The Chief Executive said that recent developments in ICT had been heavily informed by the findings of the ICT survey. A key message from the survey was a need for improvement in the availability of ICT support. He said that the response to this survey by the service had been excellent, which had included visits to Council services based outside of the Town Hall campus and pop up sessions being delivered.
- 5.47 The Director of ICT added that the most recent completed survey had drawn 702 responses. It was fair to say that the opinions had been negative, but that this had centred on interaction issues rather than systems ones. Since this

- point the service had worked hard on being interactive. This had included making one to one ICT support sessions available by appoint times to suit the user.
- 5.48 The Director of ICT said that responding positively to the survey would better enable the service to establish the relationships with service areas which could ensure that they were then involved with discussions on service development at an early point. In turn, this would enable ICT to be embedded within the strategies of all areas.
- 5.49 A Member said that she was interested in the impact that digital communications could and would have on local democracy. In particular – and given earlier discussions around the potential of analytics to map out the impacts and potential impacts of policy changes – she asked whether consultation processes could be adapted so that respondents could be grounded on both sides of the debate.
- 5.50 She gave any consultation on the topic of parking fees as an example. She suggested that within a new arrangement of making analysis easily available to consultees, these consultations might give modelled data on the air quality impacts (or any other benefits) each proposal within a consultation would have, compared to no changes being delivered.
- 5.51 The Chief Executive said that the Council had delivered some work relevant to this, within a budget planning consultation exercise. However, this had proven to be an overly time consuming process. He said he was keen that the Council did more, in a quicker way.
- 5.52 The Director of ICT agreed with this point. He also felt that the e-panel was a very strong resource for consultations of this type.
- 5.53 A Member said that she had ongoing concerns with the repairs service, and the issue of the repairs contact centre misdiagnosing repairs in some cases. She was aware that some service providers had moved to an online reporting tool which enabled those reporting repairs to identify the faults that they had from a set of pictures. She asked if this would help and if the service was pursuing it.
- 5.54 The Director of ICT said that he was aware of online reporting tools with pictures. However, he said that his experience had shown that there were challenges with these due to the diverse nature of appliances and apparatus within resident's homes. This had sometimes led to it being difficult for those reporting issues to link their faults with the range of possibilities listed and pictured.
- 5.55 This said, he was aware from his work with the Director of Housing Services that there was a strong focus on service improvement. He knew that the Director of Housing Services was aware of the issues regarding misdiagnoses and was seeking the address this through staff development to increase the call centre's capacity to accurately diagnose issues.
- 5.56 He said that ICT had supported improvements in other areas of Housing Services. On an overall level call centre performance had increased as particular system issues had been addressed. There was now also better

deployment of work with repairs staff being allocated jobs on a live basis according to need and urgency rather than on the basis of a paper list given at the start of the day. He felt that these examples showed how ICT was aiming to work hand in glove with services to deliver improvement.

6 Chief Executive Question Time

6.1 Item 6 was delivered jointly with item 5.

7 Quarterly Finance Update

7.1 The Chair welcomed Ian Williams, Group Director of Finance and Corporate Resources.

Special Educational needs Services

7.2 The Chair asked for the item to start with a response to the action below arising from the last meeting.

Action: To provide further details of the targeted and exceptional policy to the Panel and what this involves.

7.3 The Group Director, Finance and Resources confirmed that this new policy was part of the response to the issue of the Council having needed to use its reserve funds to significantly contribute to the funding of high needs pupils in Hackney.

7.4 This policy replaced the previous 'Resource Level' system. The Resource Level system allocated one of 5 funding levels to schools to fund pupils' needs as detailed within their Educational and Health Care Plan (EHCP). The targeted and exceptional policy created 5 'Targeted Funding' levels to replace the bottom 3 levels within the Resource Level system, and a further 2 funding levels within an 'Exceptional Funding' category to replace the top 2 levels within the Resource Level model.

7.5 This along with other measures would help to narrow the gap between High Needs government funding and levels of SEND spend. He was working with colleagues across the Hackney Learning Trust to identify whether there were different approaches which could help support children at earlier points to reduce their likelihood of significant support needs at later points. They were also exploring whether – in the context of the Hackney Learning Trust reserve now fully committed after meeting SEND cost pressures – it was actually legal for the Council to use portions of its General Funds for this purpose.

7.6 Alongside this work, the Council was actively lobbying government for change. With High Needs Funding having been effectively frozen since 2011 at the same time as an acceleration in the numbers of young people in need of and eligible for support (through both population growth and policy change by Government), both this Council and others were facing significant budget pressures. There was an estimated funding gap of £100 million in London.

7.7 The Chair thanked the Group Director of Finance and Corporate Resources. He noted that there was a working group in place which the Deputy Mayor and a number of other Councillors were part of. He suggested that the Group Director

of Finance and Corporate Resources might attend this group and provide a briefing paper along the lines of what he set out above.

- 7.8 Another Member felt this suggestion to be a very good one. He confirmed that dates for the group had been set for the next 4 months.
- 7.9 The Group Director of Finance thanked the Members. He said that he would be very happy to attend and be involved with the working group.

Waste costs

- 7.10 Moving onto another planned theme for the discussion, the Chair noted the related paper in the agenda packs. This regarded waste and recycling costs, and the implications for the Council of the delivery of a new waste processing plant by the North London Waste Authority (NLWA), of which Hackney was a member borough.
- 7.11 The Chair noted that this item and the same paper had been covered by the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission the previous week. He therefore suggested that this meeting did not discuss the item in detail, which Members agreed with.
- 7.12 The Group Director of Finance and Corporate Resources thanked Members. He said that the only point that he would wish to make was around the work to factor portions of the costs related to the development at the NLWA into the Council's plans. On this, he said that the Council would incorporate the costs, but that the focus would need to be on mitigating and minimising them.
- 7.13 Investment was needed; the current waste processing facility was ending its life, bringing an end also to relatively low waste costs to the Council due to its use of a facility paid for some years ago. The Council would now need to contain the costs as much as possible whilst accepting that investment was needed.

Impact of potential lifting of 1% pay cap

- 7.14 The Chair thanked the Group Director of Finance and Corporate Resources for the paper in the agenda packs exploring both the implications for the Council of any lifting of the 1% pay cap in local government, and also the latest developments regarding devolution in terms of a 100% Business Rates retention for London pilot.
- 7.15 The Group Director of Finance and Corporate Resources said that there was significant uncertainty around any move to remove the 1% cap. He noted that there had been little further coverage of this issue since the end of the political conference season. He said that exploring the details behind the above 1% increases which had been ascribed to some areas (prison staff and the police) showed the increases to be lower or have greater conditions attached to them than might have first been obvious.
- 7.16 This lack of certainty had led him to still base budgets on the assumption of 1% pay rises in 2018/19 and 2019/20, although he had now revised pay assumptions slightly up for the latter year.

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- 7.17 Perhaps the greater uncertainty for local government was around the commitment to meet the Government's target of a National Living Wage equal to 60% of median earnings. This could have implications for bottom ends of Council pay structures, and also those above this to ensure that there continued to be salary progression according to levels of responsibility.
- 7.18 Hackney was more protected from this risk than Councils which had not implemented the higher London Living Wage as a minimum pay level.

London 100% Business Rates Pilot Scheme

- 7.19 Moving onto the London 100% Business Rates Pilot Scheme section of the paper, the Group Director Finance and Corporate Resources confirmed that the London Leaders Committee had given broad support on making a submission to Government for a 100% business rates retention pilot for London, within a pooling arrangement involving all London boroughs. Full detail which this submission would contain needed to be worked through.
- 7.20 While if a scheme was introduced steps would be put in place to ensure that no single borough was worse off compared to what they would have received under the current system, there were still differences of opinion around the measures which would be used to inform the allocation of the pooled resources across the boroughs.
- 7.21 Inner London boroughs continued to need to correct a common misconception around these boroughs being much better funded than areas in outer London. This was reflected in the discussions.
- 7.22 In response to a question as to the incentive for boroughs following this model, the Group Director of Finance and Corporate Resources said that this would be the retention of all business rates raised in London compared to 67% as was the case currently.
- 7.23 This would bring an additional £250 million into London. However, there was likely to be calls from the treasury for this greater retention to be reflected in higher contributions from the boroughs for infrastructure works in the capital.
- 7.24 In response to a question from a Member on timescales, the Group Director Finance and Corporate Resources confirmed that the pilot could start in 2018/19 for a period of two years. This said, there was still much uncertainty; getting the go ahead from Government was reliant on all London boroughs being in agreement on a scheme and significant differences in views would need to be settled to achieve this.

Update on Universal Credit

- 7.25 Cllr Gordon left the room at this point.
- 7.26 Moving onto a set of slides which had been tabled in advance of the meeting the Group Director Finance and Corporate Resources gave an update to Members on the planned roll out of Universal Credit and the likely implications for Hackney.

- 7.27 The roll-out was a significant concern for the Council; it was likely to have an impact on significant numbers of vulnerable households, on children and on people receiving services from Adult Social Care.
- 7.28 Areas piloted had reported significant issues and in some cases had commissioned independent reviews due to the Government previously rejecting their analyses. Southwark which shared some characteristics to Hackney had seen their rent collection rates reduce from 92% to 51%. Other areas in which pilots had been delivered had also seen rising arrears which were largely due to housing benefit no longer going directly to landlords but being incorporated within single monthly payments to households.
- 7.29 Despite the issues that the system was causing in its current format, roll out was still set for June 2018. Work continued on lobbying Government to adapt some aspects. This included on a move to exclude some or all households placed in temporary accommodation.
- 7.30 A Member noted the downward impacts that direct payments to claimants had had on rent collection levels. She asked if this was due to the 6 week waiting time for the receipt of a payment.
- 7.31 The Group Director of Finance and Corporate Resources confirmed that the rent shortfalls were significantly due to often vulnerable households being expected to adapt to receiving one single monthly payment with which to pay their rent whilst meeting their other living costs. However, even the 6 week waiting times had made it more difficult for Councils to support households in receipt of benefit into the private rented sector in the borough as landlords were less willing to accept them.
- 7.32 The Chief Executive confirmed the major concerns of the Council. In response to a question about what was being done at a London level, he confirmed that there was significant lobbying of Government. This included this council and others calling for the Government to remove the housing benefit element from the Universal Credit award, and to retain the current facility of direct payments to landlords. This would promote financial self-management whilst also giving greater safeguards to vulnerable people against evictions and homelessness. A letter was being sent to Government by the Mayor laying out the likely implications of the scheme in its current form on Hackney residents.
- 7.33 The Group Director for Finance and Corporate Resources said that the Council would continue to lobby against the roll out of the scheme in its current form. However, there was also a need to ensure that the Council was doing all it could to help mitigate the harmful impacts that it would have. This included through encouraging residents in receipt of benefits to sign up to Direct Debit arrangements in which monthly rent payments would be deducted from accounts on the same date as the Universal Credit was paid.
- 7.35 The Universal Credit element of the discussion was brought to a close and Cllr Gordon returned to the room.
- 7.36 As a final point the Group Director, Finance and Corporate Resources updated panel Members on the action below:

Action: Group Director of Finance and Corporate Resources to set up a member workshop to support assessments of corporate risks associated with housing and regeneration developments.

- 7.37 He advised that he had waiting on scheduling this session due to a recent move by Government to review the Public Works Loans Board. This review was carried out in response to Government concerns that some Councils were borrowing sums from the Board for projects with the exclusive aim of generating yields with which to deliver services.
- 7.38 He said that he would share these concerns and was keen to ensure that the reasons for use were restricted to ensure the viability and sustainability of the Board moving forward.
- 7.39 He said that the emerging view was that the review would result in some changes to the criteria and tests which would be applied to applications for future loans. He was now incorporating this into the content of the Member workshop as appropriate.
- 7.40 He advised that the workshop had now been scheduled to be delivered to Members of the Audit Committee prior to the committee's next meeting of the 17th January 2018. He asked if Members of the Panel would be content in participating in this session jointly with Audit Committee Members.
- 7.41 The Chair thanked the Group Director Finance and Corporate Resources. He asked that details of the workshop be circulated to Scrutiny Panel Members. It could then be determined whether all Members with an interest in the item were able to attend this session, or whether a dedicated session for the Scrutiny Panel would need to be arranged.

8 Work Programme 2017/18

- 8.1 The Work Programme was noted.
- 8.2 Members agreed that the next Scrutiny Panel meeting of 11th December should have a focus on Housing Services. It was suggested that the Group Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing and the Cabinet Member for Housing Services be invited to this meeting in addition to the Mayor who was already due to attend for a Question Time item.
- 8.3 Members noted that the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission was keeping a watching brief on contract management and housing repairs, with items relevant to this due to be discussed in its November meeting. The Chair suggested that he have further discussions outside of the meeting to enable the Panel to have oversight whilst seeking to avoid duplication.
- 8.4 A Member noted that a key role of the Scrutiny Panel was to provide coordination and oversight of the work of the different commissions. She appreciated that the last meeting had heard about the planned work programmes for each. However, she felt that consideration needed to be given as to how it should perform this oversight function on an ongoing basis.

Monday, 23rd October, 2017

- 8.5 The Chair agreed with this point. While he felt that this might not be a standing item for each meeting, he suggested that this might be incorporated into the agendas of alternative meetings. He said that he would give consideration to this.
- 8.6 He also agreed that he would work with the Head of Scrutiny and Ward Forums in seeking to produce a plan of items being submitted to Council by Scrutiny.
- 8.7 A Member noted that a new scrutiny structure was in place for this municipal year. She suggested that the Panel might hold a discussion item to take stock,
- 8.8 Members agreed with this suggestion. It was agreed that this item would be held in the meeting of 7th February 2018.
- 8.9 As a final point the Chair recalled discussions around the non-take up of the Scrutiny Panel Vice Chair role by the main opposition. This had ended with an agreement that the Chair would explore any ways to secure involvement in the Scrutiny Panel of opposition parties.
- 8.10 Updating Members, the Chair confirmed that he had raised this issue with colleagues. Any constitutional changes which would be required to better enable opposition involvement would follow in fuller reviews of the constitution.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00 - 9.00 pm

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Scrutiny Panel 11 th December 2017 Cabinet Question Time - Mayor Glanville	Item No 5
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Outline

In the municipal year the Scrutiny Panel will hold 2 cabinet question time sessions with the Mayor to ask questions about performance and decision-making within the Council.

Invited guest

Mayor Phillip Glanville has lead responsibility for the overall corporate strategy, financial management, and delivery of services by the Council. He also takes the lead within Cabinet on strategic housing, housing regeneration, property services, ICT, communications, devolution and policy.

The questions below were submitted in advance.

1. One year on – achievements, priorities and learning
2. Hackney Council's communication – update, improvements and future plans
3. Housing and welfare reform – implications of the debt cap announcement by Government.

Action

The Commission to hold a Q&A session with Mayor Glanville about the decisions and performance of the Council.

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Scrutiny Panel 11 th December 2017 Quarterly Finance Update	Item No 6
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Outline

The finance report attached covers:

- The Autumn Budget
- Hackney Council Budget Risks
- National Non-Domestic Rate Collection
- Rent arrears collection, Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Universal Credit.

Invited guest

Ian Williams, Group Director - Finance & Corporate Resources

Action

The Commission is requested to note the report and ask questions.

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DRAFT SCRUTINY PAPER

1.0 AUTUMN BUDGET 22ND NOVEMBER

- 1.1 The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the Autumn Budget on 22nd November. As well as the usual updates on the deficit, performance of the economy and the state of the public finances, the Chancellor made a number of policy announcements relating to local government. However, no mention was made of: - Adult Social Care, Children's Services and High Needs Pupil funding; School Funding; and Welfare other than Universal Credit. Also, there was no commitment to fund the additional fire safety costs arising out of the Grenfell Tower fire, simply reiteration that councils should contact DCLG if they cannot afford to undertake essential work.
- 1.2 At this stage, it is too early to determine what the exact impact on LBH will be and more detail is likely to emerge over time. The key headlines for Local government are set out in Appendix 1.

2.0 BUDGET RISKS

- 2.1 Whilst we have closed the budget gap for 2018/19, we must be mindful of the fact that we have a considerable number of budget pressures. These are summarised below.
- 2.2 Special Educational Needs (SEN) cost pressure – £8.2m (met in part by early delivery of savings)

HLT are forecasting a significant overspend (between £4,000k and £5,000k), in 2017/18. Special educational needs activities are forecast to spend around £8,200k more than agreed budgets; within the HLT forecast some of the SEND over-spend is offset with savings made across other HLT departments. This is primarily driven by the number of SEN statements and Education and Healthcare Plans which have increased by over a third since 2011 with minimal increases to funding levels.

This cost pressure sits mainly with activity funded by the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) but also incorporates an overspend in relation to SEND transport where costs are met by the General Fund.

Costs associated with special educational needs have complex cost drivers and the HLT finance team continue to work closely with the relevant managers in implementing an action plan to reduce these pressures. Officers are also currently considering the funding of the deficit position at year end. Significant pressures will remain in 2018/19 as the High Needs Block of the DSG will remain insufficient to meet this pressure.

- 2.3 Looked after children (LAC)

Looked after children budgets remain under pressure because of the number of young people in high cost placements. In the current year the service is planning to draw down £2.5m against this cost pressure from the commissioning reserve which was set up by the Group Director of Finance and Corporate Resources in acknowledgement of the volatility in this area.

Young people in residential care have some of the most complex support and care needs and the average cost of such a placement stands at over £160k per year and as at the end of October 2017 there were 26 young people in a residential placement. The shortage of in-house foster carers and the subsequent reliance on independent agencies also remains a pressure. The cost of a child placed with an independent foster care is double that of a placement with one of our own foster carers. Despite extensive recruitment campaigns and some recent success this is unlikely to significantly impact on the forecast in the short term.

Children's Social Care are also seeing an increase in the number of referrals coming through as well as young people on child protection plans.

2.4 No recourse to public funds (NRPF)

We are currently supporting around 107 families who have no recourse to public funds, generating a cost pressure of over £1.1m which is currently met from reserves. These are often vulnerable families whose immigration status means they have no access to the benefit system in this country, and due to restrictions on their ability to work, require financial assistance to pay for accommodation and subsistence. This is a pressure we have in common with many of our London neighbours and which is exasperated by delays in the determinations made by the Home Office. Although the Home Office are now prioritising processing cases where local authority financial support is being provided as fast as cases are closed new cases are presenting.

2.5 Adult social care (ASC)

Adult Social Care have achieved £17m of the original £20m savings target since 2011/12. Progress on the remaining £3m has been monitored closely, but has progressed more slowly and has involved plans where savings are more challenging to achieve.

The pressure on the service has increased this year with the overspend forecast at £5m. This pattern of cost pressure is similar to other local authorities in London and is largely attributed to an increase in the complexity of need for service users in Learning Disability services. There are a number of actions in place to address some of this pressure and the impact is being monitored at Group Director level.

The other main cost pressure is from hospital discharge with greater number of older people requiring long term residential or nursing care packages. This has partly been addressed by the iBCF monies announced in Spring 2017. However, iBCF is a one-off funding source and it is unclear if or what additional monies will be available post 2019/20.

Under the new integrated commissioning arrangements, we have pooled or aligned (depending on the service) Adult Social Care (£67m) and Public Health (£35m) budgets with CCG monies (£377m) through a Section 75 agreement. Health and social care partners across Hackney share an ambition to improve health outcomes for local people by commissioning and delivering services across organisations in a more joined up/integrated way that makes the most of our shared investment at a time when public sector funding has experienced significant reductions and increasing budgetary pressures. Under the governance structures set out in the integrated commissioning arrangements the aim is to make real improvements for local people with a Hackney-based model responsive to Hackney needs delivered in a more efficient and effective way.

2.6 Schools funding

As previously reported Hackney is expected to be one of the councils worst affected by the national funding formula proposals. However, announcements in the summer confirmed that per pupil funding will not reduce by 3% over two years as previously expected. This is now expected to increase by 0.5%. However, although welcome news, when considered alongside recent increases such as those in National Insurance and teacher pension contributions there is still considerable financial pressure on our schools.

In addition, the position of schools that are still not funded at the new national per-pupil rate by 2020-21 is a concern in terms of the scale of any potential reductions at that stage, i.e. all Hackney schools. Many schools plan on a 3-year rolling budget and so this remains a risk, potentially significant, that needs to be accounted for in forward planning now.

2.7 Concessionary Fares

Concessionary Fares has stabilised in 2017/18 compared to 2016/17 but there is potential for increases in future. For 2017/18, the cost is £12.2m whereas this was just £5.3m in 2007/08

2.8 Temporary Accommodation

By the end of 2018/19, £6m will have been injected into the budget for temporary accommodation via growth allocations. However, there is still likely to be a need for further on-going support, particularly in light of the Homelessness Reduction Bill. With private rents continuing to increase in Hackney, more families are finding themselves unable to afford their rent and presenting themselves to the Council as homeless. With the Council having a statutory duty to house these families, the rent increase is also making it impossible to find affordable accommodation in the borough to discharge our duty. For most families, the only housing that is affordable is outside the borough and increasingly outside of London.

2.9 Pay Award and Pay Spine Review

A 1% pay award has been assumed in both 2018/19 and 2019/20. This is clearly a significant area of uncertainty given the pressure to remove the 1% cap and the Unions 5% pay demand. Additionally, the 2016-18 pay deal included a commitment for the NJC to review the 'Green Book' pay spine, in order to meet the challenge of achieving the Government's target of a National Living Wage (NLW) equal to 60% of median earnings (forecast to be around £8.75 per hour in 2020). As a result of this, a technical working group was formed consisting of LGA officers and unions to devise a potential new national pay spine that:

- is legally compliant with the National Living Wage;
- has equal incremental increases between each spinal column pay point;
- does not cause equal pay problems for employers;
- requires minimum effort to implement and assimilate staff onto a new spine;
- can be the basis for an agreement with the Trade Unions.

The technical review group subsequently carried out a modelling exercise which looked at the financial impact of devising a new pay scale under various options. The exercise estimated this could cost on average, an Inner London borough somewhere between 2.4% and 4.76% of its pay bill over the two years depending on the option. In our pay award modelling, we assume an annual pay bill of £160m and so we could be looking at a cumulative cost over the two years, of between £3.9m and £7.6m if a new pay scale is devised and implemented.

- 2.10 There are also risks regarding external resources as our budget build is based on funding estimates included in the 2017/18 Settlement, but the actual values will be known before the 2018/19 budget is set. Additionally, there is the on-going risk from business rates appeals which has increased in light of the revaluation

3.0 **NNDR COLLECTION**

- 3.1 In June 2017, NNDR collection % was below target reflecting Ratepayers waiting for the national Budget changes to be implemented and the significant increase in the net collectible debit (NCD) from £101m to £122m, primarily as a result of the revaluation. However, we are back on target and in fact are outperforming last year, i.e.: -

October 2017 Performance

QRC collection:	64.6% compared to 62.8%
Cash collected:	£79.8m compared to £63.8m
NCD:	£123.5m compared to £101.6m

4.0 RENT ARREARS

- 4.1 The current position on rent arrears is shown below. The row labelled PI is the internal collection performance indicator. Whilst there was a dip in August and September, we are moving back towards the target (99.8%) in October and the difference between the October % and target is relatively small.

Income Services Performance Measures 2017/18		May-17 Wk 9	Jun-17 Wk 13	Jul-17 Wk 18	Aug-17 Wk 22	Sep-17 Wk 26	Oct-17 Wk 31
Current Arrears							
PI	Total collection as % of rent debit	99.49%	99.01%	99.45%	99.25%	99.23%	99.51%

5.0 RENT ARREARS, CHANGES TO CTRS AND UNIVERSAL CREDIT

- 5.1 Changes to the CTRS system and the proposed increase in the minimum contribution will have a limited impact on rent arrears given the relative small size of these changes. Universal Credit (UC) will have a far bigger impact.
- 5.2 Universal Credit will be implemented in Hackney from October 2018 (deferred from June 2018) and those authorities that have piloted the scheme have seen a significant increase in rent arrears. Universal Credit moves from direct payment of Housing Benefit to collection from all tenants and pilots have shown an adverse impact on collection rates and bad debt that need to be factored in to the budgets.
- 5.3 The rollout of UC will impact on levels of arrears as UC is paid 4 weekly and therefore arrears will increase before being cleared by UC payment. The initial 5 weeks delay in payment is partially mitigated by the 2 weeks transition payment for people transferring from HB, but will potentially increase arrears by £4.2m. Evidence and experience from other boroughs has shown that tenants may not clear these arrears and therefore arrears can extend to 8 weeks before the Council can switch them back to direct payment. This could (worst case scenario) increase arrears by £11.4m until it is reduced overtime from direct payments.
- 5.4 Because the roll out of UC is over 3-4 years the full impact will not be immediate and so it will be modelled, monitored and reported to ensure arrears levels do not increase beyond the expected levels and actions can be taken to mitigate the write off of arrears. With a change in the payment profile, it is accepted the arrears will increase, but the 'real' cost is if arrears are not paid and are written off. Additional provision has been made in HRA budgets for the introduction on UC but will be closely monitored to minimise the impact on budgets and the delivery of services

- 5.5 The Council has been active both directly and with local government partners on lobbying for changes to UC and delays to its roll out. As part of this lobbying the Mayor wrote to Secretary of State for Work and Pensions outlining the Council's concerns. The Budget announcements on 22nd November show that the Government has listened to some of the concerns that have been raised and has made some changes to UC namely:
- Stays in Temporary Accommodation will be paid through Housing Benefit
 - The seven waiting days will be abolished
 - A transition to Universal Credit housing payment of two weeks for anyone transferring across from Housing Benefit.
 - Extending the period of repayment for new advances from 6 months to 12 months.
- 5.6 These changes are welcomed but we will continue to lobby for adequate funding for councils to provide a comprehensive advice and support service so that we can fulfil our role in supporting residents to adjust to this significant change in the way they manage their personal finances.
- 5.7 In the light of this changes to UC the Government have written to all councils advising that they plan to delay the roll out of UC for 3 months in order for the necessary system changes to be made to accommodate the changes. Hackney's roll out is scheduled for October 2018.
- 5.8 Whilst the roll out in Hackney has been deferred, as noted above, there is the potential for increased arrears and writing off debt due to the implementation of UC and this is not sustainable for housing services. Therefore, it is the operational and procedural changes that minimise the build-up of arrears that need to be considered in the development of the new housing system and on-line rent accounts. Alongside the service developments, close monitoring of rent accounts and communication with other income services of the Council.
- 5.9 We have been planning for the implementation of UC for a number of years and I set out what we are doing to respond to this change and support our residents.

What we have in place now

- A strong income collection service that supports early intervention and identification of support needs.
- Exceptional collection rate compared to our peers – over 96%.
- Online rents portal, empowering customers and providing an effective communication channel.
- Investment in in-house customer support services
 - Resident Sustainment team
 - Financial Inclusion team
- Flexible external commissioned support services.

Work currently underway

- A council-wide welfare reform group drawing together services already supporting affected residents
- A review of all of our externally funded support services
- Collation of voluntary sector financial inclusion and debt work provision in the borough
- Working closely with the local DWP delivery partner
- Strong voice on the DWP local authority welfare steering group
- Successful ongoing lobbying

Strategy Going Forward

There are Five key areas:

- Monitoring, influencing and understanding governmental policy changes
- Managing and monitoring the impact
- Improving our income collection services to ensure continued efficiency and effectiveness
- Informing and empowering customers
- Building strong and effective relationships with internal and external agencies and partners

We will continually review and refine our strategy to respond to changes in the run up to the roll out of UC.

6.0 Debt Collection, CTRS and Council Tax

- 6.1 In recognition that Universal Credit is now set to go live October 2018 rather than June 2018, and to support vulnerable households paying Council Tax, the Revenues Service continues to review its approach to debt collection. Like many other councils we are considering how households can be prevented from falling deeper into debt, and lessen the requirement to incur additional court costs that lead to eviction/homelessness, but still maintain collection.
- 6.2 In terms of the 15% minimum CTRS payment which has applied since 2013/14, this has not had an impact on overall council tax arrears. At the end of 2012/13, the last year before CTRS was introduced, the in-year gross arrears total was £5.4m. At the end of 2016/17, the in-year arrears total was only marginally higher at £5.6m.
- 6.3 It is worth noting that since 2012/13 our tax base has increased significantly by £19m (25%) and our tax rate increased by 2% in 2016/17. These two factors have increased the amount of council tax collectible considerably from 2012/13 to 2016/17, which has put pressure on collection. The net collectible debit has in fact increased from £74.7m in 2012/13 to £92.3m 2016/17. Further, since the introduction of the minimum CTRS payment our council collection rate has not fallen. In fact, since 2012/13, it has increased. On a QRC basis (QRC is an official government NNDR and Council Tax return), our collection rate has increased from 93.5% in 2012/13 to 94.5% in 2016/17.
- 6.4 We are also able to note that collection of Council Tax broken down by working age and non- working age is showing a percentage decrease in the number of cases that are being issued with a final notice or summons as the Service encourages households to get in touch and make arrangements. Moreover, collection from working age taxpayers compares well against overall collection of Council Tax.

	16/17 Final	17/18 Final	16/17	17/18
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	Notice	Notice	Summons	Summons
Working age	26%	25%	18%	16%
Non -working age	5%	1%	1%	1%

Overall Collection comparison @ 1 Nov 17	Working Age	Overall C/Tax collection
17/18	56.9%	58.0%
16/17	56.1%	58.2%

Annual Collection	Working Age	All CT Payers
16/17	86.6%	94.5%
15/16	84.3%	94.1%

- 6.5 When considering the proposed changes to the CTRS scheme, the additional support we are introducing throughout the recovery process should see that overall collection maintained albeit at a slower rate as more arrangements over a longer period are made.
- 6.6 Understanding that households in debt are known to ignore letters, the Revenues Service continue to review its approach to recovery action, seeks to provide alternate opportunities for households to access debt advice and support before court action is activated. Some of the changes are;
- a. The introduction of exemptions within the Council's discretionary scheme for care leavers up to the age of 25 and domestic violence victims who are liable for two homes effective from October 17.
 - b. Leaflets promoting payment by direct debit are sent with all reminder and final notices.
- 6.7 Our council tax letters have been reviewed by the Money Advice Service with the aim of making them more legible. Officers are updating the changes.
- 6.8 The Revenues Service also reviews cases prior to referring to Enforcement Agents so that, where possible, cases that would be best suited to being collected by an attachment to benefits or earnings are moved to this alternative collection method.
- 6.9 The Enforcement Agents have specialised Welfare Teams who will handle vulnerable cases, including those on benefits. In some cases, vulnerability may be temporary, and it is appropriate for them to continue to handle the case with sensitivity. Other Vulnerable cases will be returned to the Council and no fees will be chargeable to the customer.
- 6.10 Council Tax have been trialling the use of texts and emails prior to reminders, finals and summonses. Before the notice letters are actually sent out the taxpayer list is created. A text is sent to those accounts where we have the details reminding them that a payment is due. From this nudge action we have seen an average 30% reduction of reminders and 25% reduction of finals being issued against the letters initially created.

- 6.11 The team also issued reminder emails and recorded that 21% of those who received the emails then chose to set up a direct debit. Of the 14,000 notifications issued prior to the summons the team have seen income increase by £278k which they have partly attributed to this form of contact without the need to take individuals to court. Subsequently the team have also seen cases going to the summonses stage falling to 12,902 by Sept 17 from 14,422 as at the same time last year. Customers have largely found these changes to be positive rather than the council using punitive measures and harassing them. This is something we will continue to monitor closely.
- 6.12 Our Academy system has the facility to allow customers who have had a final notice and who therefore are due to pay the full outstanding sum remaining for the year to not progress past this stage as long as they continue to pay what would have been their instalment amount. This facility was activated earlier this month.
- 6.13 We are also developing a corporate debt approach for agreement with Members that is intended to operate prior to court action being instigated, will not overturn statutory guidelines and will be embedded in debt recovery across the council. In developing this collaborative way of working we are seeking to test each stage firstly in Revenues to shape and formalise our recommendations. Some of the measures being tested are;
- a. The introduction of an online standard financial statement produced by the Money Advice Service. It is to be used by advice organisations across Hackney. The customer's income and expenditure are measured against a common set of criteria, in order to agree an individual arrangement.
 - b. The advice service, Payplan or other alternative debt advice agency can offer a service whereby customers who acknowledge that they would benefit from independent debt advice can be referred.
- 6.14 In addition we are looking at how referrals can be prevented in the first instance and so are looking at testing a solution known as "Stop the knock" administered by Agilysis. As well as analysing payment history that indicate any potential changes in circumstances, they will concentrate on customers who have broken their previous payment arrangements, have children residing in the property and recovery is at the final notice stage and refer them for independent debt advice where required and agree affordable and sustainable arrangements.
- 6.15 We are also looking at contacting customers by telephone during the day and out of hours, again offering Payplan either as a part of a 'warm' handover whilst the customer is on the phone or as part of an agreed referral if the customer is not willing to be transferred at that time. Payplan can complete a Standard Financial Statement. Both the above solutions encourage customers to contact other agencies if they would prefer not to speak to the Council at that point. We are talking to Housing and Central Finance to discuss starting trials in the new year.
- 6.16 We have been able to examine debt outstanding across council tax, business rates, housing benefit overpayments, sundry debts and housing rent to identify customers that are in arrears. We are piloting the option for a small number of customers to opt to make one arrangement to cover multiple debts. This is in its very early stages with further updates to follow.

- 6.17 The above pilot uses different mediums to contact customers this is contrary to the approach used in Lambeth, for example, which in summary is:
- Text message sent
 - Paper reminder sent
 - Intervention letter (non-statutory letter)
 - 2nd reminder / Final
 - 2nd intervention letter
 - Send summons – no further interventions after this
- 6.18 Officers recently visited Lambeth to discuss their reasons for following this approach and the impact on collection. Whilst they had previously ceased from using Enforcement Agents(EA) and are utilising this approach instead, the impact on council tax collection has been a 5% decrease in 3 years which has led to them reversing the decision.
- 6.19 The discretionary Council Tax Reduction scheme has been running since 2013 with limited take up. Details are published on the annual council tax bills as a starting point but officers plan to improve promotion of the scheme during the next financial year. In the first instance officers are moving to actively encourage applications from those who apply for the discretionary housing payment scheme.
- 6.20 The impact of all these changes are to be monitored over the next 12 months to review the impact on non-payment, as well as the take up of support.

AUTUMN BUDGET 2017

- 1.0 The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the Autumn Budget on 22nd November. As well as the usual updates on the deficit, performance of the economy and the state of the public finances, the Chancellor made a number of policy announcements relating to local government. However, no mention was made of: - Adult Social Care, Children's Services and High Needs Pupil funding; School Funding; and Welfare other than Universal Credit. Also, there was no commitment to fund the additional fire safety costs arising out of the Grenfell Tower fire, simply reiteration that councils should contact DCLG if they cannot afford to undertake essential work.

At this stage, it is too early to determine what the exact impact on LBH will be and more detail is likely to emerge over time. The key headlines for Local government are summarised below.

London business rates retention pilot – the government has agreed a pilot of 100% business rates retention in London in 2018-19.

Efficiency Review – In the 2016 March Budget, the Chancellor announced a public-sector efficiency review which would impose further cuts to those set out in the 2015 Spending Review. In the Budget, the government stated that it has decided not to proceed with the remaining £1.1 billion reduction in spending in that had been planned for 2019-20. This is welcome news.

Business Rates – A number of measures were announced, i.e.

- (a) Indexation – The planned switch from RPI to CPI inflation will be brought forward to April 2018 (2 years earlier than planned). This will cost £2.3bn over 5 years nationally (£770 million in the first 2 years). Local government will be “fully compensated” for the loss of income. It is assumed that this will be funded by section 31 grant, but this is yet to be confirmed.
- (b) Reliefs – The £1000 business rates discount for public houses will be extended by one year to March 2019 – again this will be fully funded.
- (c) Revaluations – The frequency of revaluations will move to three years following the next revaluation, currently due in 2022. A consultation on implementation is due in the spring.

Council tax - Local authorities will be able to increase the council tax premium from 50% to 100% in respect of empty properties.

Universal Credit – from January 2018 eligible claimants will be able to access up to a month's worth of Universal Credit within five days as an advance. The period of recovery will extend from six to twelve months. From February 2018 the government will remove the seven-day waiting period, and from April 2018 claimants on Housing Benefit will continue to receive this for the first two weeks of their Universal Credit claim. Roll out will be more gradual, with all jobcentres implementing Universal Credit by December 2018. £8 million will be allocated to trialling approaches to increase earnings of individuals on Universal Credit.

Housing – An additional £15.3 billion of new financial support will be made available creating a total of at least £44 billion of capital funding over the next five years (including grant, loans and guarantees) to support the target of 300,000 net additional homes per year by mid-2020s. Initiatives include:

(a) Local authorities in areas of high demand - details to be confirmed - will be invited to bid for increases in their HRA borrowing caps from 2019-20, up to a total of £1 billion by the end of 2021-22.

(b) The Budget confirms the extra £2 billion promised by the Prime Minister in October for the Affordable Homes Programme.

(c) An additional £1.5 billion will be put forward for the Home Building Fund to support SME builders.

(d) £630 million small sites fund to unlock 40,000 homes through investment in infrastructure and remediation.

(e) £2.7 billion to more than double the Housing Infrastructure Fund.

(f) The HCA will expand to become Homes England – bringing together money, expertise and planning and CPO powers to facilitate the delivery of new homes where they are needed

Planning – The Government will consult on policies to increase density in urban areas, including: minimum densities for housing development in city centres and around transport hubs; greater support for the use of compulsory purchase powers for site assembly; and a permitted development right to allow commercial buildings to be demolished and replaced with homes. Also, Oliver Letwin MP will chair a review of unbuilt planning permissions and if there is evidence of land banking then government will intervene through CPO and direct intervention.

Health & Social Care. On NHS Funding, the government will provide £2.8 billion of additional funding in England to 2020. £335 million of this will be provided over the coming winter, £1.6 billion in 2018-19, and £900 million in 2019-20. £2.6 billion of the £3.5 billion of new capital funding for the NHS in England will be for local groups of NHS organisations to deliver transformation schemes that improve their ability to meet demand for local services. Also, the government will provide an additional £42 million for the Disabled Facilities Grant in 2017-18, bringing the total budget for this year to £473 million.

Crossrail 2 – The government will continue to work with Transport for London on developing fair and affordable plans for Crossrail 2, including through an independent review of funding and financing.

Schools - Additional support will be provided to support maths teaching, including £18 million to support specialist maths schools and £27 million to expand the Teaching for Mastery maths program. Schools will also receive an additional £600 for every pupil that takes Mathematics or Further Mathematics A-level. Also, £84 million will be provided to upskill 8,000 computer science teachers and £20 million will be provided to support the introduction of T-levels.

Public Sector Pay – the relevant Secretaries of State will be writing to the various Pay Review Bodies to initiate the 2018-19 pay round, call for evidence on each profession, and await the PRB recommendations in the spring.

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Scrutiny Panel 11 th December 2017 Complaints and Enquiries Annual Report	Item No 7
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Outline

This report provides an overview of the headline data related to complaints and enquiries for the Council during 2016/17, the Complaints and Enquiries process and a focus on volume received and the performance in managing and learning from them. Further to the detail on volumes of complaints and enquiries received in 2016/17 the report also considers the way they are managed and the intelligence they provide.

Invited guest

Bruce Deville, Head of Business Intelligence & Member Services

Action

The Commission is asked to review the report and ask questions.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report provides headline data related to complaints and enquiries to the Council during 2016/17.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 The Scrutiny Panel is recommended to: -

1. note the trends and related commentary with regards to complaints and enquiries managed during 2016/17

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 This report is in accordance with the Scrutiny Panel's remit in monitoring the Complaints and Enquiries process.

4. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES

4.1 There are no additional financial implications arising from this report. The cost of staff dealing with complaints across the Council is met from within the relevant revenue budgets, as are any compensation payments made. The cost of complaints monitoring is met within the approved revenue budget of the Business Analysis and Complaints Team (BACT).

4.2 Such costs, however, can be minimised by ensuring that complaints are dealt with successfully at the first stage, thus reducing the numbers that proceed to later stages.

5. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL SERVICES

5.1 This report informs Members of progress with the complaints process. Whilst there are no direct legal implications, some significant and unresolved complaints could result in legal action. An example is disrepair if a tenant complains of failure to carry out landlord's obligations to do essential repairs.

5.2 The report also refers to the role of the Ombudsman in managing complaints. By law if the Ombudsman intervenes and produces a formal report setting out significant failings by the Council, this would need to be reported to Full Council and the Ombudsman's report made available to the public. The Council and the complainant also have recourse to judicial review proceedings if they disagree with the Ombudsman's findings.

5.3 The report has not identified any issues of major concern to the Council with a risk of legal intervention.

APPENDICES

1 – Complaints and Enquiries Annual Report 2016/17

BACKGROUND PAPERS

In accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act, 1972 - Access to Information a list of Background Papers used in the preparation of reports is required.

Description of document	Location	Date

Report Author	Simon Gray Tel: 020 8356 8218 Email: Simon.Gray@hackney.gov.uk
Comments of the Group Director of Finance and Corporate Resources	Michael Honeysett, Tel: 020 8356 3332 Email: Michael.Honeysett@hackney.gov.uk
Comments of the Director of Legal Services	Stephen Rix Tel: 020 8356 6122 Email: Stephen.Rix@hackney.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Complaints and Enquiries Annual Report 2016-17

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the Complaints & Enquiries process and a focus on volume received and performance in managing and learning from them.

2. Volumes and Performance

- 2.1 Further detail on volumes of complaints and enquiries received in 2016/17, the way they are managed and the intelligence they provide are set out in this report. In summary, 2016/17 saw a 13% increase (3,005 up from 2,649 in 2015/16) in the number of complaints made compared to the previous year.
- 2.2 The 13% rise in the volume of resolution stage (first stage) complaints in 2016/17 takes numbers to a four year high. Paras 3.1 to 3.4 below sets out which services the increase is coming from and some of the contributing factors and themes. The volume of Reviews (second stage) remains at a comparatively low rate, bringing the escalation rate down and may reflect improvements in resolving complainant's issues at the first stage. In addition there is a more effective outcome focussed triage process when Reviews are requested which has helped reduce volumes and enabled greater focus on the cases where our help is most needed. The number of Members Enquiries is slightly up on 2015/16 levels. Volumes of complaints have also risen across Adult Social Care (32%) and Children's Act (32%). There has been a 10% increase in Mayor's Office Enquiries.
- 2.3 Escalation rates, an indicator of successful resolution at the earliest opportunity, continue to fall. Escalation rates from the Resolution stage to Review have dropped again to just 3.9% (down from 4.9% in 2015/16). The number of Reviews escalating to become formal investigations by both the Local Government Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman, at 45, is slightly higher than the 40 in the previous year and equates to around 35% of cases exhausting the Council's complaints process.
- 2.4 Of the 45 formal Ombudsman investigations, 26 (58%) were upheld, up from 42% last year. It should also be noted that upheld can (and often does) also mean 100% agreement with what was determined by the Council at Review stage and does not necessarily mean finding new or different fault.

3. Complaints and Enquiries Data Analysis (2016/2017)

- 3.1 The number of complaints received by the Council showed a marked (13%) increase compared to the previous year. The number of Members Enquiries were broadly the same and Mayor's Enquiries volumes rose by 10%.
- 3.2 Whilst any complaint received means the Council have, in the opinion of our residents, failed to provide an acceptable service, the numbers of complaints and those which are escalated should be viewed in the context of the size of the borough, the number of transactions and the complexity of those transactions. Hackney has a population in excess of 273,000 living in 112,569 households. Relevant to the areas with the highest volume of complaints we are the landlord for 21,700 homes and have an additional 9,300 leaseholders, have more than 41,000 residents claiming in excess of £300m of benefits, with 200,000 changes in circumstances assessed per annum and more than 139,000 visitors to the Hackney Service Centre asking for assistance on a wide range of services.

	2012/13	2013/14*	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Stage One / Resolution	3,078	2,951	2,964	2,649	3,005
Stage Two	436	226	N/A	N/A	N/A
Review (formerly stage three)	151	202	196	132	130
Members Enquiries	1,460	1,828	1,993	1,632	1,676
Mayor's Office Enquiries	2,479	2,076	1,597	1,614	1,775

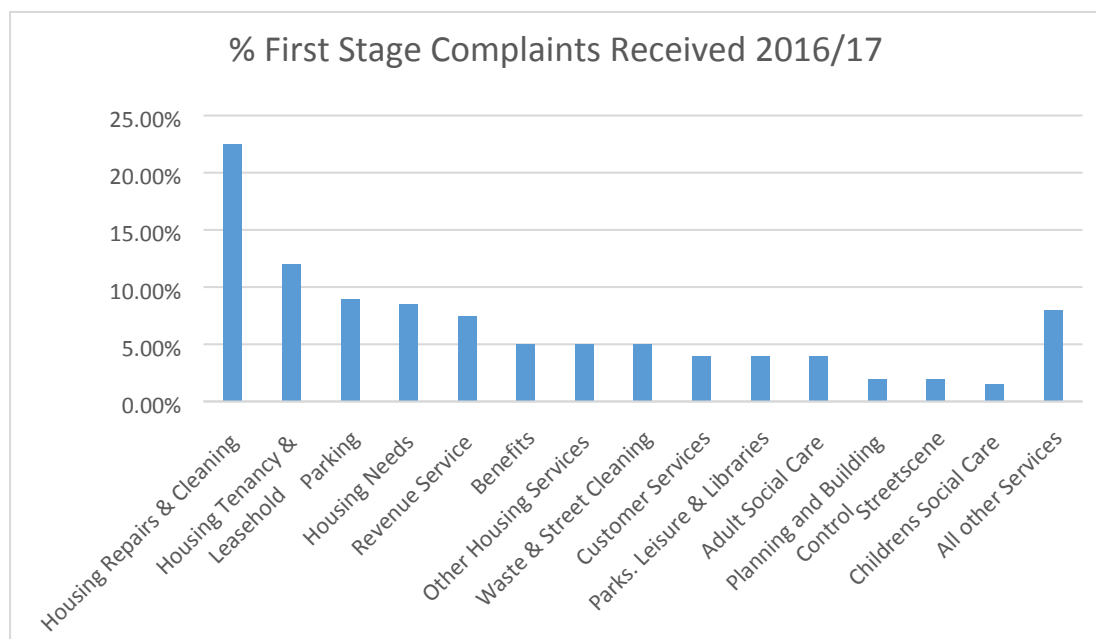
* change to process in October 2013 removed stage 2

Average Complaints Response Times	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Stage One/Resolution Complaints	14 working days	14.1 working days	20.3 working days	21.2 working days	20.6 working days
Stage Three/Review Complaints	18 working days	17.9 working days	19.2 working days	20 working days	19.5 working days

- 3.3 Whilst volumes of Resolution (stage 1) complaints increased by 13% in 2016/17 compared to the previous year, there was a slight decrease of 0.6 days in the average time taken to respond. We do not set a rigid response standard, but do aim to respond on average within 15 working days, recognising some cases are more complex and will take longer to resolve.
- 3.4 There were 130 Reviews in 2016/17, similar to the number in 2015/16 with the majority distributed across the following services – Benefits/Housing Needs 33 (25%), Housing Tenancy & Leasehold 30 (23%), Housing Building Maintenance 18 (14%) and Parking 13 (10%).

3.5 Types of Complaints

3.6 The chart below sets out the service areas in the Council that receive the highest volumes of first stage complaints. The chart is based on 3446 complaints.



3.7 There have been notable increases in the numbers of complaints received within the following services:

- Housing Needs up 74 (32%)
- Environmental Operations up 65 (65%)
- Housing Repairs/Cleansing up 62 (9%)
- Revenues up 50 (25%)
- Adult Social Care up 31 (32%)
- Customer & Corporate Services up 36 (35%)
- Benefits up 33 (23%)
- Parks & Leisure up 31 (63%)
- Streetscene up 26 (68%)
- Parking up 25 (9%)
- Libraries, Heritage & Culture up 23 (79%)
- Children's Social Care up 12 (32%)

3.8 Further analysis of the causes in these rises shows they are in the main driven either by i) demand for limited assistance, provision or resources ii) resistance against decisions taken by the Council or iii) perceived service failings.

3.9 Complaints driven by demand for limited assistance, provision or resources relate primarily to disagreements or dissatisfaction with decisions made in relation to housing need and access to the limited amount of assistance and provision available. Although some complaints do find fault against the services there is good evidence to suggest that the complaints process is being used by complainants to

register their disagreement with decisions that have been made in an attempt to have those decisions changed or undermined. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that peripheral complaints alleging staff misconduct or minor process issues are used to enable further engagement over a wider decision that may have been made for example on parking fines or unhappiness with decision around parking zones and traffic schemes.

3.10 A number of services deal with making payments to or retrieving monies from customers. These areas are seeing increases in the number of complaints due to legitimate decisions made and action taken but the result of which is understandably difficult for the customer to accept and who therefore attempt to resist against decisions. The collection of Council Tax and resulting action taken to secure payments are often complained about. Similarly retrieving payment for fines and other services where recovery action for example may be required lead to complaints aimed more at a reversal of that decision than issues on the periphery. In relation to the Benefits service, there are obviously lots of people in need but limitations to the assistance that is allowed which leads to complaints made with the intention of securing a review of decisions made even where a formal appeal process for example exists.

3.11 Complaints driven by service failure have also increased this year with issues in relation to housing repairs up 9% for example. What is of more interest is the rise in complaints against services that do normally generate high volumes. Public Realm services such as Environmental Operations, Parks, Libraries and Streetscene have seen comparatively significant increases in complaints with a noticeable split between operational delivery issues and staff behaviour or conduct issues. Whilst increases do appear high in percentage terms and relate to genuine issues raised by complainants they should be considered in context i.e. the number of household waste collections made or visitors to libraries and parks.

3.12 A breakdown of all Resolution stage complaints by 'complaint type', where identified, shows that people are complaining about service failure (38%), case management (6%), staff behaviour (6%), disagreement with policy/decision (11%) and delays/missed appointments (10%).

Ombudsman Complaints

3.13 Following conclusion of the Council's process a complainant can approach one of two Ombudsman to ask for their case to be reviewed, either the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LG&SCO) or the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS). In addition, those making a landlord related complaint can ask a Designated Person, Cllr McKenzie in our case, to decide whether he can help in reaching resolution of the issue without the need for the Housing Ombudsman to be involved.

3.14 The LG&SCO has published their Annual Report for 2016/17 and report that they undertook 28 formal investigations in Hackney last year of which 17 (61%) were upheld. This is an increase on the 23 cases in 2015/16 of which 52% were upheld. The 17 upheld cases were in Adult Care (5), Housing (4), Education & Children (3), Highways & Transport (2), Benefits & Tax (2) and Planning & Development (1).

3.15 In addition it should be noted that one 'Report' was issued against the Council by the LG&SCO in 2016/17 relating to an Adult Social Care case regarding our failure to undertake a client's review leading to provision being arranged by the family for which we were found financially liable. This follows one 'Report' regarding Planning Enforcement in 2015/16, which was the first the Council had received since 2007. 'Reports' are available from Business Analysis & Complaints Team.

3.16 There were 9 housing related cases where the complainant formally asked for Designated Person assistance in resolving matters following the conclusion of the Council's formal complaints process. This is a reduction on the 20 cases in 2015/16. The Designated Person passed 6 cases straight to the Housing Ombudsman as there was no more he could add to resolution already offered. He intervened in 2 cases resulting in increased compensation being offered. One complainant went on to the Housing Ombudsman before the Designated Person could make a decision.

3.17 The Housing Ombudsman do not publish an annual letter or report but records show that we had 17 formal investigations by them in 2016/17 which is the same as in 2015/16. 16 of the 17 cases investigated have been determined. Of the 16 complaints, 6 found maladministration, 3 found service failure and 7 found no maladministration. The 6 cases finding maladministration is an increase on the 2 cases in 2015/16. The 6 maladministration cases relate to repairs (4), ASB (1), rent arrears/eviction (1). As stated earlier, it should be noted that findings against the Council can (and often does) also mean 100% agreement with what was determined at earlier stages of the complaints process and does not necessarily mean finding new or different fault. Maladministration is not the same as a formal 'Report' and indicates for example a failure to comply with legislation, codes of practice or our own procedures or for unreasonable delay, behaving unfairly or treating the complainant inappropriately.

Members' Enquiries

3.18 Members' Enquiries consist of a mixture of complaints, requests for service for residents and requests for information.

3.19 Time taken to respond to Members Enquiries was 15.5 days in 2016/17.

3.20 A breakdown of Members Enquiries by type where identified shows that the majority are used to raise service requests (82%), information requests (14%) and complaints (4%).

Members Enquiries	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Members Enquiries Received	1,848	1,828	1,993	1,632	1,676
Average time taken to respond	8.5 working days	10 working days	13 working days	15 working days	15.5 working days

Mayor's and Cabinet Members Enquiries

3.21 Each Mayor's Enquiry represents a comprehensive, personal response sent from the Mayor or Cabinet member to what are often wide ranging and complex enquiries.

Mayor's & Cabinet Members Enquiries	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Enquiries received (inc referrals)	2,479	2,076	1,597	1,614	1,775
Average time taken to respond	9.7 working days	11.2 working days	18.6 working days	13.9 working days	19.9 working days

Note: Unlike the rest of the data in this report which is derived from the corporate complaints database, these figures are taken from a local source in the Mayor's Office as, due to multiple cases, separate records are kept.

3.22 Responses from the Mayor and Cabinet are subject to extensive quality assurance by the Mayor's Office and the Mayor or relevant Cabinet member before the response is sent, and drafts are returned to departments in cases where the resident's query has not been fully answered. Until a full response is obtained, the case will not be concluded, and therefore this process puts significant pressure on response times.

3.23 As shown in the table above, the volume of Mayor and Cabinet enquiries has increased by 10% in 2016/17 to 1,775 cases. The average response time has increased to 19.9 days.

3.24 There have been a number of changes in 2016/17 that have had an impact on the Mayor and Cabinet enquiry process and timelines, not least a change of Mayor and Cabinet in September 2016. This has led to an even greater focus on resolving issues before response and ensuring a comprehensive and personal reply, which has had some impact on response times. The response times across the year are in still line with resolution (stage 1) complaints, but with average response times increasing across the year this is an area for improvement in 2017/18.

Adult Social Care Statutory Complaints

3.25 The table below shows the figures related to complaints covered by the statutory Adult Social Care process.

Adult Social Care Local Resolution	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Numbers Received	139	93	118	96	127
Average time taken to respond	18 working days	17 working days	20 working days	33 working days	21 working days

3.26 There has been a 32% increase in the volume of ASC cases compared to 2015/16. Despite this increase in volume, the average time taken to respond has fallen considerably this year.

3.27 The majority of the 2016/17 complaints fell under the following categories: -

- Quality of care service provided - 31% (33% in 2015/16)
- Dissatisfaction with assessment & care provision/packages - 25% (21% in 2015/16)
- Charges and payments - 17% (9% in 2015/16)
- Blue Badge /Freedom Pass assessments including service users contesting results - 4% (10% in 2015/16)
- Customer care and advice - 6% (9% in 2015/16)
- Outcome of occupational therapy assessment, home adaptation, etc - 6% (6% in 2015/16)

3.28 All 127 cases were concluded at local Resolution and in the same period, 2016/17, 11 complaints went on to the LG&SCO.

Children's Social Care Complaints

3.29 Complaints related to Children's Social Care are handled separately under a statutory process. The number of Stage 1 Children's Social Care complaints has risen by 32% in 2016/17.

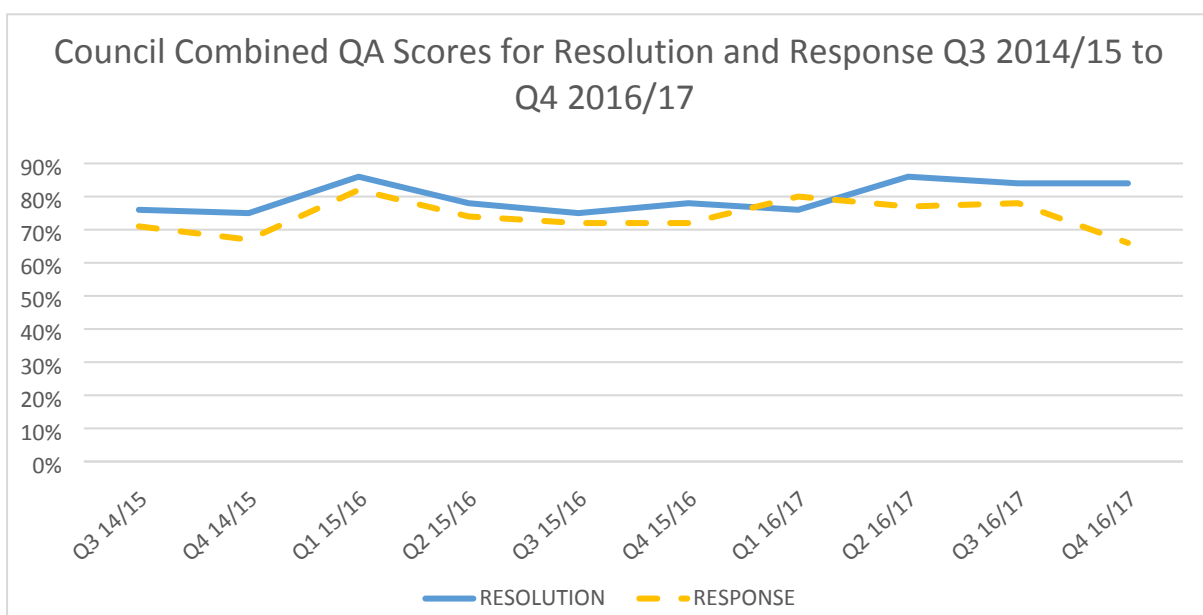
Children's Social Care Complaints	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Stage 1 – Local Resolution	50	43	41	37	49
Stage 2 – Investigation	7	7	5	8	9
Stage 3 – Review Panel	3	6	2	2	1

3.30 In relation to the nature of complaints, 61% relate to 'difficulties *with communication*' which remains the principal area of complaint, up from 46% in 2015/16. This is being addressed by the service through work to support practitioners in their use of language in assessments and reports, emphasising:

- Fact-checking, particularly information relating to families as presented in assessments
- Promoting proof reading of documents for grammar and spelling errors
- Developing guidance for service users and families on how information is shared between agencies and how it contributes to, and is used in, assessments. This will be undertaken through work on the CFS Information Sharing Protocol
- Clarity of the reasons for assessment being undertaken
- Clear recording of the views of children, young people and families within assessments

4. Improvement work and quality assessment

- 4.1 The focus on resolving complaints and improving the way they are dealt with is evidenced through quality assessment sampling of between 15-20% of Resolution stage investigations conducted by the higher complaint generating areas of Benefits & Housing Needs, Tenancy & Leasehold Services (Housing Services), Building Maintenance (Housing Services) and Parking. Results have shown an improving trend across all measures over the last three years however there has been some decline this year particularly in relation to the quality of written responses.
- 4.2 Quality assessments measure against set standards covering the five key components; record keeping, response, resolution, investigation and timeliness. The QA process is a tool used to drive improvement rather than an ultimate, refined and subjective measure. The outcome of the assessments are reported to the relevant Director or Head of Service setting out details of the cases assessed and findings. Findings over time are highlighted with performance compared against a range of historical, council average and trend data.
- 4.3 Reports are presented to relevant management teams setting out scope, findings, conclusions and most importantly suggested recommendations and service improvements. These quality assessments have in the round shown an upward trend in scores due to services taking better approaches i.e. more scrutiny of responses, better awareness of best practice, the provision of training in complaints handling and use of the complaints system and generally by senior officers taking more interest in complaints about their services.
- 4.4 The chart below shows combined results across all Council services assessed over the last ten quarters going back to Q3 2014/15 focusing on the percentage of standard met in 6/17. Results show the % of sampled cases meeting the desired quality standard in relation to response and resolution.





Scrutiny Panel 11 th December 2017 Scrutiny Panel Work Programme for 2017/18	Item No 8
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Outline

Attached is the work programme for the Scrutiny Panel for 2017/18. Please note this is a working document regularly revised and updated.

Each Chair to provide a verbal update on their Commission's work programme and current progress.

The Panel to consider if there is any co-ordination required and review reports to schedule for Full Council.

Action

The Panel is asked for any comments, amendments or suggestions for the work programme.

The Panel is asked to review all scrutiny commission's work and co-ordinate as necessary.

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Scrutiny Panel Scrutiny Commission

Rolling Work Programme June 2017 – April 2018

All meetings take place at 7.00 pm in Hackney Town Hall unless stated otherwise on the agenda. This rolling work programme report is updated and published on the agenda for each meeting of the Commission.

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and officer contact	Comment and Action
Mon 17th Jul 2017 Papers deadline: Wed 5 th July	Cabinet Question Time Mayor Glanville	Mayor's Office Ben Bradley / Tessa Mitchell	CQT session covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Company and future plans for this • Integrated Commissioning update - including but not limited to future plans to roll in youth commissioning • Civil resilience and planning • What is Hackney Council's view on the new administration (following the General Election) and the impact this may have on Hackney in terms of budget, policy and service provision.
	Quarterly Finance Update	Finance and Corporate Resources Ian Williams	Finance Update to cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Risk – review of the council's use of assets and capital programme. • Special Educational Needs – budget and overspend • Temporary Accommodation – budget and spend

Overview & Scrutiny

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and officer contact	Comment and Action
	Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Review	Overview and Scrutiny Team Tracey Anderson	Discussion and review of the Overview and Scrutiny function work programme for 2017/18. Update from each scrutiny commission Chair on their work programme for 2017/18.
	Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2017/18	Overview and Scrutiny Tracey Anderson	Discuss and agree the Scrutiny Panel work Programme for 2017/18
Mon 23 Oct 2017 Papers deadline: Wed 11 th Oct	Quarterly Finance Update	Finance and Corporate Resources Ian Williams	Finance Update to cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance and Resources spend to save solutions for ICT • The impact on the Council's budget of public sector pay cap being lifted • Waste costs - the financial implications and action being taken to mitigate increasing costs.
	Chief Executive Question Time	Chief Executive's Office Tim Shields / John Robinson	Chief Executive question time session covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms for directorates to feedback ICT solutions • The Council's use of technology and innovative solutions for policy development and accountability • Development of digital communications and the impact on the community and local democracy
	ICT	Finance and Corporate Resources Rob Miller	Update on ICT System and the strategic direction of ICT for the Council

Overview & Scrutiny

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and officer contact	Comment and Action
	Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2017/18	Overview and Scrutiny Tracey Anderson	Review of the Scrutiny Panel work Programme for 2017/18
Mon 11 Dec 2017 Papers deadline: Wed 29 th Nov	Quarterly Finance Update	Finance and Corporate Resources Ian Williams	Finance Update to cover: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Autumn Budget 2. Hackney Council Budget Risks 3. National Non-Domestic Rate Collection 4. Rent arrears collection, Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Universal Credit.
	Cabinet Question Time Mayor Glanville	Mayor's Office Ben Bradley / Tessa Mitchell	CQT session covering: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One year on – achievements, priorities and learning 2. Hackney Council's communication – update, improvements and future plans 3. Housing and welfare reform – implications of debt cap announcement by Central Government.
	Annual report on Complaints and Members Enquires	Chief Executive's Directorate Business Analysis and Complaints Team Bruce Devile	Annual report of the Council's Complaints and Members Enquires for 2016/17.
	Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2017/18	Overview and Scrutiny Tracey Anderson	Review of the Scrutiny Panel work Programme for 2017/18

Overview & Scrutiny

Dates	Proposed Item	Directorate and officer contact	Comment and Action
Mon 7 Feb 2018 Papers deadline: Fri 26 th Jan	Quarterly Finance Update	Finance and Corporate Resources Ian Williams	TBC
	Chief Executive Question Time	Chief Executive's Office Tim Shields / John Robinson	TBC
	Budget Scrutiny	Finance and Corporate Resources Ian Williams / Tracey Anderson	Review of the Budget Scrutiny requests and the format of this work.
	Performance Review	Overview and Scrutiny Tracey Anderson	Review of the approach taken by Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission to performance review of a service provision.
	Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2017/18	Overview and Scrutiny Tracey Anderson	Review of the Scrutiny Panel work Programme for 2017/18
April 2018		PURDAH NO MEETINGS	