
London Borough of Hackney
Scrutiny Panel
Municipal Year 2018/19
Date of Meeting Tuesday, 9th October, 2018

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

Chair	Councillor Margaret Gordon
Councillors in Attendance	Cllr Ben Hayhurst, Cllr Mete Coban, Cllr Sharon Patrick, Cllr Sophie Conway, Cllr Richard Lufkin and Cllr Yvonne Maxwell
Apologies:	Cllr Sade Etti
Co-optees	
Officers In Attendance	Bruce Devile (Head of Governance & Business Intelligence), Florence Obinna (Consultation Manager, Communications and Consultation), Tim Shields (Chief Executive), Ian Williams (Group Director of Finance and Resources) and Polly Cziok (Director Communications, Culture and Engagement)
Other People in Attendance	Mayor Philip Glanville (Mayor), Councillor Aron Klein, Councillor Rebecca Rennison (Cabinet Member for Finance and Housing Needs) and Councillor Nick Sharman
Members of the Public	
Officer Contact:	Tracey Anderson ☎ 0208 3563312 ✉ tracey.anderson@hackney.gov.uk

Councillor Margaret Gordon in the Chair

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 An apology for absence was received from Cllr Etti.
- 1.2 An apology for lateness was received from Polly Cziok.

2 Urgent Items / Order of Business

- 2.1 There were no urgent items and the order of business was as on the agenda.

3 Declaration of Interest

3.1 Cllr Patrick stated she was a contributor to the Hackney Marsh Partnership Club.

4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

4.1 Members gave consideration to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2018 and noted the matters arising.

RESOLVED:	(a) That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2018 be agreed as a correct record. (b) That the matters arising from the previous meeting be noted.
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5 Annual Report of Council's Complaint's and Members' Enquiries Service 2017/18

5.1 Members gave consideration to the Annual Report of the Council's Complaints and Members' Enquiries Service. It was noted that this item came to the Scrutiny Panel annually.

5.2 The Chair welcomed for this item:

Bruce Devile, Head of Governance and Business Intelligence (BD)
Cllr Rebecca Rennison, Cabinet Member for Finance and Housing Needs

5.3 Members asked for an explanation of the increase in the number of Ombudsmans' investigations which had been upheld and whether there were any underlying trends associated with them.

5.4 BD explained that the numbers here were small and the changes not significant. Often the Ombudsman will agree with the Council but still find fault so it is not always an accurate measure. Generally though they had not raised any issues and they had not felt the need to visit. The Council promptly supplied them with whatever they requested and so the relationship overall was a good one. On common issues, often this related to complicated cases where they would find fault with one small part of the process.

5.5 Members noted that the average response time for Members' Enquiries had jumped to 15.5 days and expressed a concern that a many might be significantly over this. One Member stated that on one case over one month a holding response had been sent to her but not to the complainant and this needed to be addressed. BD stated that the lag related to the more complicated cases relating to benefits and Housing Needs because these take much longer. Members also asked that they be kept informed when a case is

likely to take a longer time so that the complainants' expectations can be managed.

ACTION:	Head of Governance and Business Intelligence to ensure that the Members Enquiries process is amended so that the relevant Member is kept informed when a case of theirs is likely to take a longer period than usual.
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- 5.6 With ref to point 3.7 of the report (p.51) Members asked why the volume of complaints on Street scene and Housing Needs had increased so much. BD replied that this related to varying quality and performance of schemes. When an issue arises there is usually a flurry of complaints e.g. the cycle super highway or the 'no left turn' onto Richmond Rd. Cllr Rennison added that Members need to be aware that the Complaints Service is not responsible for the service complained about but rather the complaints process. Much work was ongoing with the Housing Team for example on the learning from complaints.
- 5.7 Members asked if there was guidance on the best way to present Members Enquiries. BD replied that they get c.2000 enquiries a year and very rarely do they need to refer back to the Member as the information provided is generally sufficient to properly investigate.
- 5.8 A Member stated that Cllrs were being used as a mailbox for complaints to MPs and suggested that Scrutiny Panel request the MPs to forward emails to the members enquiries email address and cc the relevant Cllrs. Cllr Rennison cautioned that MPs do this to make sure Cllrs are held accountable. BD added that the same complaint will be made to a range of people simultaneously and this was always a challenge to sort out.
- 5.9 Members asked about the volume of complaints on Housing Assessments and the Council being accused of not meeting its statutory requirements. BD replied that 50% of the complaints were on housing and 50% of these was on repairs and the balance on Housing Management and Asset Management. He stated that this was no higher than other similar councils and Hackney had 20,000 tenants. He added that the Service was looking at how it can better use the data available so services are made aware earlier about what might be going wrong.
- 5.10 A Member commented that in his view the service was excellent and with helpful briefings being provided they were able to offer better guidance to residents.
- 5.11 The Chair thanked BD for his report and for attendance.

RESOLVED:	That the report and the discussion be noted.
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6 Quarterly Finance Update

- 6.1 The Chair welcomed for this item:

Ian Williams, Group Director Finance and Resources (IW)
Tim Shields, Chief Executive (TS)
Cllr Rebecca Rennison, Cabinet Member for Finance and Housing Needs
Mayor Philip Glanville

And the Chair stated that the Panel received regular Financial Updates from the Group Director.

- 6.2 Members gave consideration to three reports:
- a) Overall Financial Position, Property Disposals and Acquisitions Report agreed by Cabinet in July
 - b) Capital Update report agreed by Cabinet in September
 - c) Presentation on 'Funding Cuts and Challenges', which was tabled
- 6.3 IW took Members through the reports and stated that on the revenue side the Council continued to experience significant financial challenges, however the overspend was just 5% of overall budget and the Council was in a very strong position vis-à-vis other local authorities in the country which were in crisis e.g. Northamptonshire, Surrey and Lancashire.
- 6.4 IW drew Members' attention to point 2.8 of OFP report regarding the plans for a North London Heat and Power Project by the North London Waste Authority. Hackney was one of the 7 councils involved. This would represent the largest investment by the Council for many years and so there would be regular updates to Members as well as updates in the regular OFP reports.
- 6.5 With reference to point 1.1 on p.62 of the OFP report and the £5.5m overspend, Members asked for clarification on how much the over spend would deplete reserves and how this would be handled and how for example expectations about potential lower council tax collection rates were factored in. IW replied that there would be no draw down of the Corporate Contingency and the Council wouldn't factor in an assumption about overspend. In the current situation it was too early to tell what the actual impact would be. He described how in the past £2.5m had been used to fund emergency works. Generally if council tax was raised 1% it would generate £800k but a 0.5% raise would just generate c£300k. Members asked further what the depletion of reserves was last year. IW replied that the Council was able to draw down agreed balances from the CCG which had meant that they did not need to dip into the reserves on that occasion.
- 6.6 Members asked about the financial challenges relating to Adult Social Care and CYP services. IW replied that the adult and children's social care came out of the general fund but SEND was funded from the Direct Schools Grant. They factored in growth pressures and the costs of Looked After Children and of placement costs in Adult Care. All things being equal they were confident that they would be able to manage the situation back to balance. He stated that in London overall there was a £100m deficit with SEND. As SEND was funded out of DSG the issue cannot be resolved through council tax.
- 6.7 With regard to the financial impact of the North London Heat and Power project Members asked how evolved the modelling was. Were there clear

specifications in place and was the £8-9m per annum estimation expected to rise to £14-15m? IW replied that Hackney will have to pay its share c. £600m for the whole project. Several growth pressures were being factored in and the Council would build up the levy. He also cautioned that issues such as moving to twice weekly collections won't materially impact on the bigger picture here. Officers would be bringing a paper on recycling and the NWLA to Members soon.

- 6.8 Members asked what the impact would be of the government's announcement that week regarding lifting the cap on councils' ability to borrow for building social housing. IW cautioned that while it was of course to be welcomed it represented an increase in borrowing rather than any new kind of grant funding. They would still have to build more private units to secure more social units. He stated that they had just met with MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) formerly DCLG, who were about to launch a period of statutory consultation on amending the prudential code for borrowing by local authorities. It not being a grant the same questions about viability remained. He added that the Council had made a submission on the borrowing cap to MHCLG in Nov 2017.
- 6.9 The Mayor described how the change would allow building plans to be scaled up and the financing mix between use of cross subsidy, borrowing and Right to Buy receipts. While it wouldn't be possible to increase the tenure mix, the new borrowing could fund 50% of the cost of the new units. He described a recent bid to Mayor of London where they planned to switch 100 units of shared ownership to social housing. He stated that other councils had S.106 war chests that they could access because of their approach. As the new Local Plan is rolled out in Hackney there may be able to be S106 contributions specifically for social housing he added. Overall the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap allows Hackney to expand and scale up its plans but not to change the existing tenure mix. 2000 homes could be possible by 2022 or 4000 by 2025 including 800 for private sale.

ACTION:	Group Director Finance and Resources to share with Scrutiny Panel Members the submission to MHCLG in Nov 2017 and the recent submission to the Mayor of London on lifting the cap.
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- 6.10 The Chair of Audit Committee (Cllr Sharman) commented that the national funding crisis on Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) was a very serious challenge as the Council could not control the demand and had no control over the level of funding for it which came from the Direct Schools Grant. He stated that Hackney Learning Trust and Finance officers had already made a presentation to Audit Committee on the issue and a report was expected in November on the medium term plan to address the issue locally and he would be happy to share this with Scrutiny Panel Members. The Chair added that she and Cllr Patrick were on the Co-Design Group in relation to this.
- 6.11 Members asked what the plans were for Hackney House. Polly Cziok replied that the most significant cost associated with it was the business rates which were increasing significantly. This had to be balanced against the fact that it was an excellent venue for hosting events and being located in Shoreditch was ideal for targeting specific stakeholders such as the tech industry. The landlord

of the venue currently had a good deal but there were many factors for the Council to consider and a decision on its future viability would have to be taken very soon.

6.12 The Chair took issue with the level of spend on the IT Enabler Group. IW replied that this was part of the Integrated Commissioning system and it would allow Section 256 money to be released and was not a top up. They did not anticipate further increases in spend on this. Monies were being held for this purpose and this referred just to the mechanism for releasing it.

6.13 The Chair thanked IW for his report and attendance.

RESOLVED:	That the updates and discussion be noted.
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7 Budget Scrutiny Task Groups

7.1 Members gave consideration to a report to establish 4 time limited Scrutiny Task Groups for the purposes of budget scrutiny introduced by the Corporate Director Finance and Resources.

7.2 As regards the Membership of the Groups, the Chair proposed that the following Members would serve on Fees and Charges Scrutiny Task Group: Cllr Gordon, Cllr Patrick, Cllr Lynch, Cllr Stops and Cllr Joseph.

7.3 It was further noted that the Fees and Charges Scrutiny Task Group would commence its work immediately and the membership of the other three Scrutiny Task Groups would be agreed at the next meeting of Scrutiny Panel in January as they would not commence their work until the new year.

7.4 Members' agreed the report.

RESOLVED:	<p>(a) That 4 x time limited Budget Scrutiny Task Groups be created, as outlined in the report, to carry out budget scrutiny in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Fees and Charges- Early Years' Service- North London Waste Authority (Recycling and Waste)- Integrated Commissioning (Children, Adults and Community Health) <p>(b) That the membership of the 'Fees and Charges Budget Scrutiny Task Group' be as follows:</p> <p>Cllr Gordon Cllr Patrick Cllr Lynch Cllr Stops Cllr Joseph</p>
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8 Council's Approach to Consultation

- 8.1 The Chair stated that she had invited the Chief Executive and the Director of Communications, Culture and Engagement to this meeting to discuss the Council's approach to consultation and Members gave consideration to the following documents:
- a) Report from the Consultation Team
 - b) Consultation Principles – Code of Good Practice published by Cabinet Office (April 2012)
 - c) LBH Consultation Guide
 - d) Analysis of survey of Members' views on the consultation service
- 8.2 The Chair welcomed to the meeting:
- Tim Shields, Chief Executive (TS)
Polly Cziok, Director of Communications, Culture and Engagement (PC)
Florence Obinna, Consultation and Engagement Manager (FO)
- 8.3 Members asked whether there was an appetite for a shift to more democratic or inclusive means of engaging with residents. PC replied that there was a shift to a more engagement led model but there was a dichotomy between consultation and engagement. The *Hackney A Place for Everyone* exercise was a game changer in that it had used many creative new approaches which led on to the current '*Dalston Conversation*' and the '*Young Futures Commission*'. There was a clear difference between the large number of statutory consultations which the Council had to carry out each year e.g. involving road closures or parking etc and the larger more strategic ones which were more deliberative. Most of the former were uncontroversial but a small number did create a lot of heat. The Group Director of Neighbourhoods was pushing for more pre-consultation engagements in order to forge solutions prior to going out to consultations on something specific. Members stated that often there were tensions because a consultation was done about one road and then the next, when there should be a more holistic approach. FO replied that the Place Based Approach to consultation which was now being tried should help remedy this by working with the technical officers and looking across service areas and aiming for a more coordinated approach.
- 8.4 Members asked whether more work could be done to link consultation activity with Ward Forums and make the latter a platform for some of these pre-consultation conversations. A Member stated that attendance at the Forums was generally not very representative unless there was a big contentious issue under debate.
- 8.5 FO replied that the London Fields Ward Forum had been an example of this when there had been major concerns about traffic changes in the area. When an issue was contentious and if there was an information vacuum on it, then residents would turn up to their Ward Forums seeking answers.
- 8.6 A Member expressed the concern that residents thought consultations were referendums and this idea needed to be challenged. PC stated that with CPZs

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for example there was a need to legally consult and a process laid down in statute had to be followed. There was however also a need to supplement that with more meaningful engagement exercise and this was the reason behind initiatives such as the 'Dalston Conversation'. A Member stated that of 1500 residents being consulted on parking changes for example only 150 might reply, many felt it didn't apply to them.

- 8.7 PC replied that officers do ensure particularly with the large statutory consultations that the responses will be as representative as possible citing the example of a recent education consultation where they ran a series of intensive focus groups with social housing tenants because previous similar consultations had over 70% owner occupiers responding. FO added that when they are aware of the possible impact of a change on a particular group of residents they make a concerted effort to target the consultation exercise to them. The general problem though was that the public often don't take any notice until a change is being implemented.
- 8.8 PC added that some groups are simply much harder to reach than others. Generally they have found that women are far more likely than men to reply to consultations (apart from in parking and licensing). She added that the move of the former Hackney Homes Tenant and Leasehold Engagement Team to the corporate centre had been very positive one and allowed the team to build on the existing relationships which that group had with tenants groups and to develop better consultations.
- 8.9 A Member commended the Hackney Wick 'Through Young Eyes' engagement exercise which he felt was revelatory in that it asked the young people how they looked at life. The views of the young people hadn't been mediated or interpreted. He added that it was an approach which should be copied. PC replied that there wasn't a standard approach to engagement and they thought carefully about each one and whether new approaches might be tried. On the forthcoming Pembury exercise they will use Place Based Engagement. Different approaches are tried in different areas and with different groups for example, the work with Young Black Men and the work with the Charedi community. FO added that part of the approach was to go where the target groups were e.g. using the market stalls at the Hackney Carnival or the summer Street Parties. There was also a need to think about timings e.g. parents not being available in early evening to attend something like a Ward Forum because of parenting responsibilities.
- 8.10 A Member commented on the low initial response to the Future Shoreditch consultation and having discovered that many of the leaflets distributed via Hackney Today were not being delivered. PC asked Members to let her know about examples where Hackney Today was not getting through so this can be rectified by the distributors.
- 8.11 On the recent controversial Licensing consultation a Member commented that while she had only one objection by email, in her surgeries many were raising the issue of their lives being made a misery by the over saturation of night time venues. They were choosing to respond in person at the surgeries and not online she observed. PC commented that 75% of respondents on that were males aged 25-40 and so it was not representative of the different cohorts

being affected and this was one of the challenges with it. Members commented that it was important not to simply listen to the loudest voices.

- 8.12 Members asked if there was some way to have a system of rapid rebuttal when issues become heated and mistruths are flying about and was it possible to feed back to the consultation team half way through a consultation.
- 8.13 PC replied that one of the key priorities for the Consultation Team was to keep consultations Judicial Review proof. It would never be allowed to intervene half way through a consultation although Members have in the past asked if they could see how one was progressing. FO stated that the challenge now was with social media and making sure that those who are tweeting on an issue are linked back to the original information provided by the Council. Often these individuals won't do this because they have a specific counter agenda.
- 8.14 Mayor Glanville added here that this was a Public Affairs issue rather than one of rebuttal and it was about how you construct the argument in the first place. It was vital that consultations were operated totally professionally and so could withstand any potential Judicial Review. He added that on the SEND issue they had come late to it and did not establish clearly enough in the public's mind that there was a major funding gap. PC added that one of the challenges for the team was to keep across what the entire organisation was doing at any one time. TS added that if the Council can get in early with engagement e.g. Dalston Conversation or the Britannia consultation that it can capture other sets of voices who might be being overlooked. From this another narrative would emerge from another group of people. If this is done well the Council would then not be caught on the back foot on an emerging issue.
- 8.15 Cllr Coban stated that the Skills Employment and Growth Commission recently had very successful engagement with community leaders who facilitated conversations with local businesses. PC commended this. She also added that in the past there had perhaps been too much reliance on community leaders, who on closer examination were found to have been more self-appointed than representative. The Council will always be looking to people who are better connected to allow it to engage more deeply with certain groups but that generally the Council needed to be more confident about going and having direct conversations with residents. The Mayor added that it was also important that people are not paid to give views or provide access.
- 8.16 The Chair thanked officers for the short Members survey which the Panel would study. She asked whether there were ideas on developing more deliberative democracy in areas which are undergoing rapid change. She also asked about the role of Scrutiny in terms of communication and engagement work. Because of pressure of time the item had to conclude but PC replied that she would be happy to come back to the Commission on this issue at a future meeting.

ACTION:	Director of Communications, Culture and Engagement to bring a briefing to a future meeting on raising the profile of Scrutiny and on closer working between Scrutiny and the consultation and engagement function.
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RESOLVED:	That the reports and discussion be noted.
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9 Mayor's Question Time

- 9.1 The Chair welcomed Mayor Glanville to the meeting for the regular Mayor's Question Time Session. Also attending for this item were Tim Shields (Chief Executive) and Ian Williams (Group Director Finance and Resources).
- 9.2 The Chair stated that the Mayor had been asked to answer questions on:
- (a) Progress on implementation of the 2018 Manifesto commitments
 - (b) The financial resilience of Hackney Council
 - (c) The Impact of Brexit in Hackney
- 9.3 The Mayor described the progress being made in planning for implementing the 157 individual commitments in the manifesto. They had been narrowed down to 10 key areas of focus which would shortly receive Cabinet sign off. They would also be the key building block of the Corporate Plan, to be agreed in October. The intention was to make the documents as interactive as possible. They were also phasing the commitments and planning the engagement that must be done on them early on. Several could be described as 'business as usual' and many were of course cross-cutting. Some involved capital investments and new projects e.g. future plans for King's Hall. He was also pleased that a lot of the manifesto commitments could also be included in the next iteration of the Local Plan.
- 9.4 On the issue of financial resilience the Mayor stated that many of the issues had already been covered in item 6. The increasing challenge of supporting SEND and No Recourse to Public Funds cases would offset the savings that would have been provided. Also it was not year clear what the full impact of Universal Credit will be. There was no obvious end in sight to austerity for local government and instead for example the goal posts keep shifting on plans for retention of business rates, he added. The latter had not been built into base budgets because the government's position kept shifting. The current overspend of £5.5m was the first in a very long time and other London councils had deficits of c. £20m and many in west London were complaining that they didn't have any reserves to deploy.
- 9.5 On the issue of Brexit the Council would be lobbying hard and standing up for its values. It would impact on workforce development, on procurement to name just two areas. The Council would ensure that support was offered both to EU citizens who live in the borough and those who work for the Council. The Council would be holding event with the EU Commission at Hackney House at the end of the month.

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- 9.6 A Member asked about the redevelopment of King's Hall Leisure Centre. The Mayor replied that it was a manifesto commitment. He stated that much detailed work on the options appraisal would need to be done. Lessons could be learned from the consultations on London Fields and Britannia Leisure Centre. The options were broadly refurbishment or building a new facility and closing Kings Hall completely but then what would be done with a Grade II listed building, he added. His personal preference was for refurbishment of it but this would require closure for some time and there was an issue about provision of leisure facilities on the eastern corridor of the borough. One of the challenges with such historic buildings was that you never know what you will discover during refurbishment or what limitations might have to be placed by English Heritage. Generally there was a need to complete the Britannia project first and it was unlikely that it would be possible to embark on a major spend on Kings Hall during this administration.
- 9.7 The Chair of Audit Committee asked how the Council was responding to the funding crisis nationally for local government which had seen some councils such as Northamptonshire go under.
- 9.8 The Mayor replied that the crisis in Northamptonshire was neither sudden nor unexpected. The danger was that councils would panic and either reimagine their services by for example selling off assets and using lease back. Hackney decided in 2010 that it wouldn't change its approach and would not become merely a commissioner of services. There proved to be no need for knee jerk reactions and overall the council has very good commercial acumen, excellent financial management and it has also been adept at winning outside investment. Unfortunately there was no solution for local government finances that was not based on a national solution. The Council has got the right partnerships in place and is focusing more on integrated commissioning he added. The Council was also investing in people and focusing on retaining a high proportion of its workforce. Local government was at a breaking point but Hackney was not and it would not be driven for example to the extreme of funding Adult Social Care to the exclusion of all else, the position faced by councils in dire trouble. It was also becoming clear that the government would not be able to deliver Brexit without working with local authorities, he added.
- 9.9 TS added that nationally the situation was serious and many local authorities were walking towards the edge of a cliff. He reminded Members however that county councils have different problems than inner London boroughs e.g. lots of roads to look after, a larger ageing populations with rising social care needs etc. Hackney's strategy has been to try to keep ahead of the game, because if a council acts too late it can end up making bad decisions e.g. quickly cutting 500 staff to save money which then doesn't deliver savings. The general lesson was that difficult decisions must be faced up to early on. Changes to contracts with providers designed to save money will take time to play out and deliver savings for example. Overall there has to be a structural change in how local government is funded.
- 9.10 The Mayor added that if you allow council tax to take the strain of the cuts you'd have to increase it by 80% to make a difference. Business rates, as currently constituted, were destroying the high street and yet the government was trying to move to a position where they do not have to put money into services.

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- 9.10 A Member asked about how much coordination there was with other boroughs on lobbying on Brexit issues. He stated the Skills Employment and Growth Scrutiny Commission would be shortly meeting with Amazon, now headquartered in the borough, to discuss employment and regeneration issues. One issue being explored was how Brexit might even present an opportunity to young people seeking employment locally because some of the larger local employers might end up short of employees post Brexit.
- 9.11 The Mayor replied that much work was being done at a London Councils level to make the case nationally for London. Nationally there were debates pitting the need for HS3 vs Crossrail 2 and a group of councils were arguing for the need to rebalance the economy without London unduly taking a hit. The LGAs Regeneration Committee now had a London leader who was making the case for London. He commended the work Cllr Williams was doing on Investing in People which was not only about apprenticeships and having local schools work with Amazon but also having TRAs working with Here East. He warned that there was also the possibility that the Hackney economy gets seriously damaged by Brexit and we'd be trying to upskill people for jobs that would no longer exist. It was of great concern that nationally that Further Education Colleges were on their knees, he added. Having further education cut to the bone would not make up for the benefits of the devolution of the Skills agenda to London. London was still performing very poorly on both apprenticeships and on skills.
- 9.12 Cllr Klein asked the Mayor why the Council was using bailiffs against poor people on benefits.
- 9.13 The Mayor replied that the welfare cuts which were producing this hardship were a direct consequence of government policy and this should not be forgotten. He stated that use of bailiffs was decreasing and they were ensuring that they were only used as a last resort and the aim was to have an independent organisation in between the council and the bailiffs. On the other hand if a Council doesn't have an effective mechanism in place to collect its debts the financial system that underpins support to residents will fail. IW stated that there was already in place a whole raft of support measures for residents in financial difficulties and he referred Members to the details on p.35-39. This detailed work with the Money Advice Trust on enhancing the support to residents. He added that a lot of the persistent non payers paid up in the end with some paying £10k for example so it was not correct to characterise them all as people of no means. He referred to the work with the previous Governance and Resources Commission on revising the whole approach to debt collection and the work of Cllr Rennison on leading a One Council approach to debt collection. The use of bailiffs was constantly reviewed, it was a last resort but the Council needed that final sanction if it was to recover what it was owed.
- 9.14 Members asked about how there might be an ongoing conversation with the public on the difficult decisions.
- 9.15 The Mayor replied that on the budget it was very difficult to get the public engaged with the concepts such as the financial envelope etc. When budget consultation events were held in the past they tended to attract the same limited number of residents/stakeholders and this process was very resource

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heavy. Budgeting was a 4 year discussion he added. A lot of work needed to be done on co-production. On 'early years' for example there was a need to present as much of the offer as early as possible and have a 2 year public discussion not just a yes/no consultation. You need to do this early enough for it to be genuine but then you won't have all the potential answers worked up. Overall though this is worth the risk involved. The overall local government financial situation needed to be explained and how councils have ended up where they are.

- 9.16 The Chair concurred stating that there is a need for a more deliberative process. She thanked the Mayor, the Chief Executive and the Group Director of Finance and Resources and the Cabinet Member for their attendance.

RESOLVED:	That the discussion be noted.
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10 Work Programme 2018/19

- 10.1 Members gave consideration to the latest update on the work programme for the Panel for the year.

ACTION:	That the item on 'Sustainable Procurement Policy' be confirmed for the January meeting and that there also be an item on policy development with regard to 'in-sourcing' of services.
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RESOLVED:	That the updated work programme be noted.
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11 Any Other Business (21.10)

Duration of the meeting: 7.00 - 9.10 pm