

London Borough of Hackney
Scrutiny Panel
Municipal Year 2018/19
Date of Meeting Monday, 21st January, 2019

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 Sade Etti and Cllr Richard Lufkin
Apologies:	Cllr Yvonne Maxwell
In Attendance	Cllr Rennison Cllr Nick Sharman
Members of the Public	None.
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Councillor Margaret Gordon in the Chair

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Yvonne Maxwell and Tim Shields.
- 1.2 An apology for lateness was received from Cllr Coban.

2 Urgent Items / Order of Business

2.1 In the absence of Tim Shields, it was agreed that Chief Executive Question Time would be deferred to the following meeting in April 2019. The planned update on the Council's contingency planning for Brexit would still be provided however, though this would be presented by the Group Director for Finance and Resources.

2.2 Item 8 would be taken in two parts: (a) Update on the Introduction of Universal Credit and (b) Quarterly Finance Update. As an advisory lawyer to the DWP, the Chair noted that she had a conflict of interest in the Universal Credit item and would therefore leave the room. This item it would be overseen by the Vice Chair.

3 Declaration of Interest

- 3.1 The following declarations of interest were made:
- Cllr Gordon was an Advisory Lawyer for DWP.

4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

4.1 Members considered the draft minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2018.

4.2 The Chair reported back on a number of matters arising from the meeting of the 9th October.

- (At 5.5) The Panel requested that members were informed when a Member Enquiry would take longer than the standard process (10 days). In response, it was noted that a review of the Member Enquiry process was planned and that in the interim, officers had been briefed of the Panel's request;
- (At 6.9) It was reported that the Group Director for Finance and Resources had circulated the Council's response to the Department of Housing and Communities consultation on the borrowing cap;
- (At 6.7) It was confirmed that a paper was being prepared on recycling and the North London Waste Authority (NLWA) for submission to the relevant Budget Task and Finish Group (BTFG);
- (At 8.16) The Director of Communications was in attendance to update the Panel on the communication, consultation and engagement support offer to scrutiny bodies.

4.3 The Panel agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 9th October.

5 Communications and Consultation - Update on Scrutiny, Ward Forums and the Council's Community Engagement

5.1 The Chair welcomed Polly Cziok, Director of Communications, Culture and Engagement for this item, who would cover the following areas:

- Scrutiny and the Council's community engagement work;
- Ward Forums and the members community engagement work;
- How scrutiny and the consultation and engagement function work together;
- Raising the profile of scrutiny.

5.2 It was noted that there were a number of drivers that warranted an examination of the communication support for scrutiny commissions. Firstly the scope and ambition of the work of Scrutiny Commissions had increased and secondly, there was much more coverage of the work of Scrutiny Commissions work in the media as a result of the appointment of a Local Democracy Reporter at the Gazette. This has resulted in an increased public awareness and interest in the work of scrutiny which, given its public engagement function, was to be welcomed.

5.3 Although support from communications department had been provided to scrutiny on an ad hoc basis (e.g. Unregistered Schools Review by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission), it was felt that this support should be more formalised and structured. In this context, it had been agreed that a

communications officer would be assigned to each scrutiny commission who would attend all meetings of the Commission, work proactively with the press to explain items for discussion and actively publicise and promote scrutiny meetings and events. In particular, the assigned communication officer would meet with the relevant scrutiny Chair to identify those topics from the forward plan which might benefit from additional support from the communications department.

- 5.4 Panel members noted that additional communications support was needed to support high profile scrutiny meetings in which there was substantial public interest. The Chair of Living in Hackney Commission reported that, due to lack of defined budget, it had been difficult to obtain promotional leaflets to support the scrutiny of Thames Water following recent floods in the Lea Bridge area of the borough. Similar concerns were raised by the Chair of Working in Hackney Scrutiny Commission. Given the centrality of the public engagement and involvement function of scrutiny, Members of the Panel suggested that additional support would be needed to enable them to carry out this function effectively.
- 5.5 The Director of Communications informed the Panel that whilst there was no dedicated budget to support the consultation and engagement function of scrutiny at present, there would be no reason why a modest budget could not be found within existing resources to support the work of the scrutiny commissions. This budget could be used, for example, to support publicity for a specific item (such as a review of the Commission) or to provide leaflets to promote scrutiny meetings.
- Agreed:** That a budget would be set aside from existing resources to facilitate communication and public involvement function of scrutiny commissions.
- 5.6 The Commission indicated that it would welcome a broader discussion as to how the communication and engagement function interfaced with the both scrutiny function and Ward Forums. It was noted that there were a number of consultation and engagement issues in respect of the operation of Ward Forums. Of particular concern was that on occasion, meetings of local Ward Forums had been conflated with the general consultation processes of the council (e.g. traffic management changes). This issue aside however, it was clear that some Ward Forums were functioning better than others.
- 5.7 It was noted the view of members was critical to the future development of Ward Forums, and that the council was consulting with them on how they could be improved (on-line survey, focus group and reference group). There had not been a high level of response from members to the consultation, and it was suggested that a short paper should be submitted for discussion at the political group meetings, and further feedback from those discussions would inform any future proposals.
- 5.8 Whilst dedicated administrative support for Ward Forums ceased some time ago, minute-taking and other administrative functions was undertaken by officers on a voluntary basis. It was suggested that it might be helpful if additional guidance could be provided to new members to clarify existing administrative support arrangements and how actions from Ward Forums are taken forward.

- 5.9 The Commission reported that a Senior Officer Group had oversight of the items taken at Ward Forums and that prospective agendas were systematically reviewed. If it was assessed that an item required corporate support, this would be escalated with additional support provided by relevant council officers.
- 5.10 Members present indicated that Ward Forums provided an excellent opportunity to showcase positive and beneficial work undertaken in the community. It was noted however, that it was often problematic to publicise Ward Forums effectively as there was a lack of advice and guidance to support the development of an effective communication strategy, particularly for the use of social media (e.g. Facebook).
- 5.11 The Director of Communication reported that whilst the Council was looking to develop a digital support offer to members in respect of Ward Forums, there were a number of technical and privacy issues. For instance, due to privacy concerns, it was reported that members were reluctant to use their own social media profiles to promote Ward Forums. It was suggested that with additional guidance and support, such issues could be overcome and could help to improve the digital promotion of Ward Forums.
- 5.12 A number of members present indicated that as not everyone had access to the internet, other means of promoting and publicising Ward Forums should be undertaken alongside the use of social media. In particular, if printed promotional materials were available, this could be displayed on public notice boards within each ward (e.g. estates and community centres).

Agreed: A short paper on communication support arrangements for Ward Forums would be taken to both political groups in Hackney for consultation.

- 5.13 The Chair thanked the Director of Communication and Engagement for attending and responding to member questions.

6 ICT Update

- 6.1 The Chair welcomed Rob Miller, Director of ICT to the meeting. A presentation was provided to the Panel on the use of digital solutions to improve service delivery and innovation, and how such developments may impact on respective equality groups.

Presentation

- 6.2 The Panel noted that a key principle underpinning the digital switch in Hackney was that new digital services should be better than the existing service offer, to the extent that residents would prefer to use digital rather than other media platforms. In this context, IT services worked closely with council services and users of their services to develop systems which
- 6.3 It is recognised that significantly more people now engage with digital platforms through mobiles and other handheld devices than through laptops or desk top devices. As a result the Council has sought to prioritise and improve the experience of mobile users which has resulted in a significant improvement in uptake of digital services.

- 6.4 The ICT service has made a significant investment in user research to help understand local residents' needs and how these can be met through a new and improved digital offer. The Government's digital service division is now located in Whitechapel and the Council has taken advantage of these facilities to test out new local systems and how they may impact people with sight impairment or problems with dexterity. This has helped to improve the local digital offer to residents.
- 6.5 A number of examples of successful service digitisation were provided to the Panel.
- Hackney Works – the creation of a bespoke system to support local jobseekers had increased the reach of the service into the community and helped residents to find work;
 - Housing services – rent accounts had only previously been available in paper form on a quarterly basis, but were now available on resident's mobile phones. As residents now had access to live data, they were better able to monitor their account which had contributed to a significant drop in calls to the Contact Centre;
 - Community Housing - the introduction of hand held devices has enabled live data to be recorded and viewed by officers in the community which has enabled them to be more responsive and reduced the amount of time that needed to be spent in the office.
- 6.6 The Panel noted that ICT had sought to develop and maintain digital skills and experience in-house. This approach has reduced the need for costly outsourcing of ICT development, but more importantly this had helped ICT to develop relationships with local services and to better understand their ICT needs. To support this approach, ICT was committed to developing local skills and knowledge of the local community and was a big supporter of the Apprenticeships Programme. It was recorded that apprentices make up 21 posts (or 8%) within the IT establishment. ICT was also seeking to develop access to apprenticeships among 'non-traditional' groups and it was recorded that women now make up 20% of the ICT apprentice cohort.
- 6.7 The digitisation of the application form for the licensing of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) has helped to develop efficiency of this process. This new system has supported 1,731 new HMO license applications which had generated £1.25m in revenue. In addition, private sector housing enforcement officers would be issued with mobile devices from February 2019 which would support the local HMO inspection process.
- 6.8 The Panel understood that ICT was seeking to collaborate with the broader network of local services outside the council to extend the positive impact of digitisation in Hackney. The Council was an early signatory to the Local Digital Declaration which is a commitment to work collaboratively with other agencies to maximise benefits and reduce costs. In this context, the Panel noted that Hackney was a lead organisation in Pipeline, a collaboration platform to help councils identify other councils working on similar projects.

Questions from the Panel

- 6.9 The Panel noted that whilst considerable work had been undertaken to digitise services within the housing department, no work had yet been done with the

housing repairs team. It was felt however, that digitisation could help drive service improvement in this aspect of housing services. The Director of ICT reported that whilst customer facing service developments were still being trialled, back office digitisation had taken place within the repairs service which had helped to help improve the effectiveness and efficiency of this service:

- Improved on-line reporting process;
- Improved contact between Contact Centres and multiple repairs teams;
- More coordinated response to tenant's requests.

6.10 The Panel sought to understand how the proportion of female apprenticeships compared to the main ICT workforce, and to identify if any work had been undertaken to promote apprenticeships among BAME groups. The Director of ICT reported that women make up 20% of people on the Apprenticeship Programme which was comparable to the ICT workforce. Apprentices of white British ethnic origin were a minority in the entry cohort on to this programme which reflected the success in reaching BAME groups and corresponded to the local demographic. It was reported that over 5,000 applications were received for the ICT posts in the Apprenticeship Programme all of which were processed through the Hackney Works team.

6.11 The Panel noted that there was an ICT strand within Integrated Commissioning and sought to clarify what role the Director played in this work, and to outline what work was being done in primary and secondary care. The Panel was particularly interested in any ICT work to support primary care appointments systems given the impact private primary care providers into this field. In response it was noted that:

- ICT is working with colleagues in both social care, health and integrated commissioning to provide ICT support for service transformation;
- The Director of ICT attended the City & Hackney IT Enabler Board and East London Health & Care Partnership Informatics Steering Group.
- The entry of a private provider in primary care, essentially to provide the easiest parts of a complex package of care has proved challenging to the sector. The new Secretary of State had made a new digital commitment to ensure that people have the digital tools to enable them to access health services more effectively. In addition, a new NHS App was being developed which may respond to the challenge posed by new providers in primary care.

6.12 Members of the Panel wished to acknowledge the work of ICT to support the Fostering Service. Members of the panel noted that ICT had contributed to improved systems which had (i) enabled potential foster carers to assess if they are eligible to apply (ii) supported the development of an on-line application process. It was noted that this work had had a positive impact on the service.

6.13 ICT had sought to develop a strategic approach to prioritise those services which it worked with to develop new digital approach. The Panel learnt that as a result of the recent ICT restructure, the department had invested in developing links with services by increasing from 3 to 4 ICT Relationship Managers. These post-holders will work closely with Group Directors and Heads of Service to help assess their challenges and opportunities and to collaboratively identify priorities for ICT support

- 6.14 Given that the degree to which people may be able to access and utilise digital services will vary, how do you ensure that digital service offer and service design can appropriately respond to these inequalities? The Director ICT explained that user research is a key part of all projects that the ICT division supports. This ensures that user needs are fully understood and digital solutions are designed to meet those user needs. This includes taking account of accessibility and equality needs
- 6.15 The Chair thanked the Director of ICT for attending and responding to member questions.

7 Chief Executive Question Time

- 7.1 The Panel intended to question the Chief Executive on two main areas: the Council's corporate strategy in relation to bullying and harassment and the Council's preparations and contingency planning for Brexit. Given that the Chief Executive was unwell and unable to attend, the Group Director for Finance and Resources provided an update on contingency planning for Brexit whilst the remaining item was deferred to the next meeting.

Contingency Planning for Brexit

- 7.2 It was noted that contingency planning for Brexit was difficult given the absence of a clear decision making process in Parliament. However, the Council was working with a number of stakeholders (residents of European origin, local businesses, council staff and the local community more generally) to raise awareness of the potential implications of Brexit and to mitigate any adverse impacts that could be anticipated.
- 7.3 Brexit had been discussed at Senior Management Team and with the Mayor and an extensive paper was prepared in December 2018 to outline some of anticipated outcomes and contingency planning in Hackney. A task and finish group (made up of a number of key officers and chaired by the Director for Finance and Resources) had been established to oversee this process. Some examples of the preparations included:
- Ensuring that contractors who provide key building services for the Council had access to adequate resources and finance to complete contracted works;
 - Working with local NHS partners to ensure that there was a collaborative response to any adverse conditions that may result from Brexit;
 - Making sure residents were aware of the potential impact of Brexit, particularly the 41,500 local residents who are European nationals;
 - Ensuring that local job seekers were adequately supported to respond to any opportunities that may result because of Brexit.
- 7.4 The Council was also keen to support the welfare of staff who may be affected by Brexit. The Council had made it clear that it will pay for the registration fee (£65) for staff who, as European citizens, must register to continue to work and live here. It was noted that this would be a key element for business continuity in key health and social care services.
- 7.5 The Council had developed and published a web page to support local residents and businesses. The page provided information to local residents

from the EU on how to achieve settled status. The page also provided a range of links to government websites so that local businesses were aware of the support available to them to help them prepare for Brexit. A partnership event was also held with the European Commission and the Hackney Business Network in Hackney House in October 2018.

Questions from the Panel

- 7.6 Given that the prospect of a no-deal Brexit remained, the panel sought to ascertain if any government departments had been in contact with the Council for any specific plans should such an eventuality occur? The Panel noted that the Council was preparing for a range of possible outcomes, including a no-deal exit scenario. The Group Director indicated that communication had been received through the London Resilience Forum notifying that regional representations were taking place to inform the Secretary of State of the Brexit preparedness of individual local authorities and to identify emerging issues in this process. It was likely that the Council (in partnership with other statutory bodies where necessary), would be required to complete a weekly status report on the borough's preparedness for Brexit as the date of departure approached.
- 7.7 Understanding that Brexit will not be a one-off event but a longer-term process it was likely that divisions within the community brought on by the referendum would persist for the longer term. In this context, the Panel sought to clarify what preparations the council was taking to support community cohesion. In response, the Panel noted that the task and finish group had assessed both the short-term response and longer term impact of Brexit on community cohesion, and the Council would respond accordingly once the detail of the 29th March departure had become clearer.
- 7.8 The Panel sought to assess the exposure of the council to any loss of EU funding post Brexit. The Group Director reported that the council assessed both structural and skills & service funding stream to the council via the EU immediately after the Referendum in 2016. It was noted that the council did not have the same financial exposure as regional governments to EU funding, particularly in terms of infrastructure projects. It was also reported that unlike some other London Councils, Hackney had not accessed funds via the European Investment Bank. It was noted however, that Brexit would mean that the Council would not be able to access EU funding for its skills and training agenda.
- 7.9 As other non-governmental organisations in the UK received EU funding, the Panel sought to clarify what support was being provided to such organisations to help reduce their dependency on this funding stream? It was noted that a forum was planned to provide support to local businesses post Brexit. It was expected that this forum would help to identify emerging issues businesses faced in response to Brexit and to help shape the Council's response. This would include lobbying central government on contingency plans for any withdrawal of EU funding to local businesses and other organisations. It was noted that the Cabinet Member Community Safety, Policy, and the Voluntary Sector was developing the Voluntary Sector Strategy which would encompass how the voluntary sector made need to respond post-Brexit.

8 Quarterly Finance UpdateCllr Hayhurst in the Chair

8a.1 Ian Williams, Group Director Finance and Resources, updated the Panel on the impact of Universal Credit (UC) in Hackney. The attached paper highlighted a number of issues with the roll-out of Universal Credit:

- Key risks and how council is responding;
- Opportunities;
- Headline data and how it's impacted on local residents.

8a.2 As the housing benefit element of UC would be paid direct to claimants alongside other welfare support, the accrual of rent arrears and personal financial hardship was a significant risk to the local claimants and to the Council. In response, the Council had made a number of provisions within the Housing Revenue Account to support the transition to UC.

8a.3 There were a number of risks for UC in respect of the support provided to vulnerable client. The UC application process required claimants to identify their vulnerability (e.g. substance misuse, gambling addiction, mental health) which if omitted, appropriate safeguards and support may not be put in place (e.g. Alternative Payment Arrangement). In addition the operation of a centralised application and assessment UC process presented a number of risks in providing effective support to vulnerable clients:

- The needs of claimants might not be effectively communicated from DWP to local services;
- The Council would not be able to effectively signpost claimants to local services.

8a.4 It was important to note that as more claimants move to UC, the Housing Benefit caseload held by the Council would fall, and as a result, the caseload funding received by the Council from central government would reduce commensurately. Further still, the Panel noted that no additional funding would be made available for the Council to support UC related initiatives.

8a.5 It was noted that the roll-out of UC offered might offer benefit to some claimants in that this benefit offered greater flexibility existing benefits. It was noted that the level of entitlement under UC was responsive to the level of employment and income. Whether claimants would be better-off under UC was however a more complex assessment.

8a.6 As of December 2018, there were 1,490 UC claims made at Hackney Job Centre Plus (JCP), with additional claims made at other sites (Hoxton City) which is shared with Tower Hamlets. It was reiterated that this figure only represented single claimants who were the first cohort to be migrated across to UC since October 2018. Within this data it was noted that:

- 87-88% of claims were processed on time;
- 600 Hackney tenants were now in receipt of UC;
- Higher arrears were noted among UC claimants than Housing Benefit claimants.

8a.7 The DWP has made a number of changes to UC in five areas:

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- Whilst child limit (of 2 children) remains in place, this would not be applied retrospectively (i.e. children born before April 2017);
- In response to concerns around Domestic Violence, UC benefit will be paid to the main caregiver within the family unit;
- Only 5% of UC claimants in the private rented sector have their rent paid direct to their landlord, though new arrangements will make this easier;
- There will be an option of more frequent payments to vulnerable claimants as opposed to standard monthly payment;
- Childcare payments are more generous under UC (85%) and this will now be available up front where this is conditional to a job offer.

Cllr Gordon in the Chair

8.b Quarterly Finance Update

8b.1 A range of financial papers had been submitted to the Panel for review which included:

- 2019/20 Budget update
- 2019/20 financial settlement - consultation response
- Overall financial position of the Council (October 2018)
- Capital Update report

8b.2 In relation to the 2019/20 budget, the Panel noted that the Group Director for Finance was working closely with colleagues across the Council where there were identified overspends (0.5%) and to put in place actions to mitigate these. The Council had made a formal response to the local government financial settlement for 2019/20 consultation. The final settlement would be announced before 31st January 2019 to enable local authorities to confirm their respective budgets for the year ahead. Consultation on new Fairer Funding proposals was proceeding and the Council had continued dialogue with DCLG officials to highlight how these proposals would adversely impact on Hackney (and other London and urban areas).

8b.3 Submitted papers also included budget proposals for 2019/20. The Panel understood that it was likely that, if approved by Council, Council Tax would rise by the maximum permitted level of 4.99% in 2019/20. This would encompass the 2% increase allowed for social care and the 2.99% threshold above which a local referendum would be triggered.

8b.4 Given the ongoing budget pressures, the Council was assessing ways in which to reduce future spend in the next Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21-2022-23. These included:

- Introduction of a voluntary redundancy scheme;
- Reduction in spend on agency staff;
- Renegotiation of high spend contracts;
- Development of a strategy for better use of Council assets.

8b.5 The Panel noted that the Housing Revenue Account debt cap had been removed. Whilst this would not allow unconditional borrowing, it would provide greater flexibility to the Council in the delivery of its housing and regeneration programme.

Questions from the Panel

8b.6 The Panel sought to understand what impact that a future voluntary redundancy programme would have on services, particularly those with customer facing roles (e.g. child and adult social care)? It was noted that when voluntary

redundancy programmes are devised, special consideration was given to how this may impact on front line services and adjusted accordingly.

8b.7 The Panel understood that the formula for Fairer Funding was complex which incorporated both local needs and the ability of the authority to raise its own revenue (e.g. parking and fees and charges). There were however, other factors which were not fully recognised within the funding formula which possibly had a greater financial impact on the borough, this included a failure to recognise the cost of 'doing business' in the capital which was significantly higher than elsewhere.

Questions from the Panel

8.b.8 The Panel noted that some of the projected overspends across the council were being offset by underspends in staff recruitment, and sought to understand if this was a deliberate policy and if this was impacting on service provision. The Group Director responded that there would always be a lag within the recruitment process between the time when a person leaves a post and when that post is successfully recruited to. The Commission noted that this was also not an explicit policy through which services could respond to overspends.

8b.9 The Council continued to face a very challenging financial position in relation to providing services for its most vulnerable residents such as children (SEND) and adult social care. Will ongoing budget pressures force these services become increasingly reactive and minimise the scope for preventative measures? The Group Director reported that it was unlikely that there would be any fundamental change in the financial outlook before 2024/2025, so it is likely that the pressures on local services would remain. It was suggested that local government should instead focus on improving productivity, to ensure that the most benefit is obtained out of allocated resources. Local authorities were required to provide some services statutorily however, and that these would generally need to be resourced over and above preventative services. It was hoped that the introduction of Integrated Commissioning however, would help find the necessary efficiencies to maintain a broad range of service provision.

8b.10 The Panel noted that a significant amount of the budgets of local authorities were spent on a relatively few number of vulnerable residents with exceptionally high needs. To assist members in making future funding decisions, it was suggested that it would be helpful if the council could provide a more developed narrative around such high need spends to members along with case examples of how this money is spent. The Group Director noted that approximately 80% of the budget of the council is spent on 15-20% of residents, most of which have some vulnerability.

8b.11 The Chair thanked the Group Director for Finance and Resources for attending and responding to questions from the Panel.

9 Budget Scrutiny Task Groups

9.1 At the last meeting in October, the Panel agreed the Terms of Reference for the Budget Task and Finish Groups (BTFG) on Integrated Commissioning, Early Years Children Centres, North London Waste Authority and Fees and Charges. In addition the membership of the Fees and Charges BTFG was confirmed. The Panel had now been notified of the membership for the remaining BTFGs via the Whips and these were confirmed.

Agreed: The membership of the BTFGs for Integrated Commissioning, Early Years Children Centres, North London Waste Authority were confirmed as per attached report.

9.2 The Chair of the BTFG on Fees and Charges reported back on its work to date. The BTFG had two meetings between November and January. The group has covered a wide range issues including the financial context for the decision required around fees and charges. A wide range of services were covered within the fees and charges budget scrutiny process, including childcare fees, parking, skip-license and pest control. It was noted however, that there was there was more discretion to vary fees for some services than others.

9.3 The group has considered proposals from Officers and offered challenge by ensuring that these reflected the corporate priorities and key pledges within the Manifesto. The group had also sought to assess some of the risks and benefits of proposals put forward by Officers. The group had made a number of recommendations for action which would be submitted to Labour Group for consideration before ratification by Cabinet.

9.4 The Chair of the BTFG acknowledged that the work had been challenging, particularly as there were a number of new members within the group. In this context, the BTFG Chair was grateful of the support provided by the Chair of Scrutiny panel, the Head of Overview & Scrutiny and other members of the BTFG.

9.5 Members present noted that there would be just three meetings for the BTFG which would require that the planned work to be clearly focused. The Chair of the fees and charges BTFG reported that initial consultation with the Cabinet Member and the Group Director for Finance and Resources had proved very effective in guiding its work, and where it would be most helpful for additional scrutiny input.

9.6 The Chair of the Panel acknowledged that as there are no explicit protocols for Budget Scrutiny, BTFGs would need to adapt and respond to issues as they emerged. As there were just three meetings, BTFGs would also need to be practical about what can be achieved in those sessions, and focus on those areas where scrutiny can have most benefit.

9.7 The Chair thanked Cllr Lynch and Cllr Woodley for attending to talk about the work of their respective BTFG groups.

10 Work Programme 2018/19

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

10.2 The main item for the next and final meeting of the Panel was Sustainable Procurement. Given the level of public interest in this issue, the Chair hoped that evidence would be received from a range of stakeholders and that members of the public would attend and participate. The meeting would also take the Chief Executive Question time which was deferred from today's agenda.

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- 10.3 Cllr Sharman noted that a deep-dive study on the SEND budget was being undertaken by the Audit Committee. This Committee also intended to assess in-sourcing and out-sourcing which would overlap with the sustainable procurement item planned for Scrutiny Panel in April. It was hoped that respective bodies to could collaborate in assessing these respective items and that the Audit Committee would contribute to the April meeting. It was noted that training was being provided on 28th January to consider value for money and risk and would be open to all members.+
- 10.4 It was noted that a training session on questioning skills for scrutiny councillors would also be held on 13th February 2019 at 18.30-20.30.
- 10.5 The next meeting of Scrutiny Panel would be on the 29th April 2019.

11 Any Other Business

There was none.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00 - 9.15 pm

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