

London Borough of Hackney
Scrutiny Chairs Group
Municipal Year 2015/16
Date of Meeting Wednesday, 4th March, 2015

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

Chair	Councillor Ann Munn
Councillors in Attendance	Cllr Margaret Gordon, Cllr Ben Hayhurst, Cllr Clayeon McKenzie, Cllr Tom Rahilly, Cllr Louisa Thomson and Cllr Carole Williams
Apologies:	Cllr Rick Muir and Cllr Sharon Patrick
Co-optees	
Officers In Attendance	Joanna Sumner (Assistant Chief Executive)
Other People in Attendance	Mayor Jules Pipe (Mayor of Hackney)
Members of the Public	
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Councillor Ann Munn in the Chair

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence from Councillor Sharon Patrick and Councillor Rick Muir.
- 1.2 Apologies for lateness from Cllr Thomson.
- 1.3 Officer apologies for absence from Tim Shields, Chief Executive London Borough of Hackney.

2 Urgent Item / Order of Business

- 2.1 None.

3 Declarations of Interest

3.1 None.

4 Cabinet Question Time – The Mayor of Hackney

4.1 The Chair welcomed the Mayor of Hackney, Jules Pipe and Assistant Chief Executive Programmes and Projects, Joanna Sumner to Cabinet Question Time with the Scrutiny Chairs Group (SCG).

4.2 Members submitted questions in advance to Mayor Pipe enquiring about the development of devolution plans for London and his view on the impact this would have on Hackney. Members also enquired about the Council's performance monitoring framework.

4.3 Mayor Pipe updated the SCG about the discussions being held at a pan London level in relation to devolution powers for London. In response to the update Members made the enquires outlined below.

4.3.1 Members enquired if the pan London devolution discussions had resulted in detailed proposals for discussion with Central Government. Member were informed there are two forms of devolution being discussed Fiscal and Public Service Reform. The London boroughs were discussing devolution powers related to public service reform. The public service reform devolution would be beneficial for local government because it would enable them to decide how services should be provided locally. However pan London discussions to date have not resulted in specific proposals or clarification on how it would work in practice.

The 5 areas devolution would be most effective are Skills, Employment, Housing, Health and Social Care and Crime, Community Safety and Justice. It was highlighted devolution of powers for these areas would require regional and local government to make hard choices about services for example local NHS reforms.

4.3.2 Members referred to the Mayor of London's comments in relation to devolution powers and enquired if they aligned with the London boroughs. It was explained, the Mayor of London's comments in respect of devolution powers related to fiscal devolution e.g. property taxation (stamp duty). This was different to the public service reform discussions.

4.3.3 Members enquired if Greater Manchester received the devolution powers claimed in the media. Mayor Pipe acknowledged the headlines indicated Greater Manchester had received full devolution powers. He advised the details of the devolution agreement would become clearer after the General Election in May 2015.

4.3.4 Members pointed out the provision of devolved powers was being presented as a win/win situation for all. Members queried if all local areas would have the capacity to be self-sufficient and have access to affluent areas to pool resources from. It was acknowledged that some Counties were less enthusiastic about the prospect of devolution, however a model could be applied to ensure that fiscal devolution was proportionate.

Mayor Pipe explained his view of devolution for public services and what this would mean. He did not envisage additional funding, but rather, that the locality would be given the freedom to decide how the money is spent on services. This would allow local authorities to have greater flexibility for joint working and to address complex issues; achieving better value on spending. It was explained that currently the Government outlines to localities what the process, programme indicators and outcomes should be for their area – this was usually the same for all localities. Whereas devolution would enable the locality to decide the process, programme indicators and outcomes to be achieved for their area based on their needs.

It was highlighted this type of devolution would enable the Government to focus on setting national outcomes and holding local authorities to account if they failed to achieve the outcomes they stated for their locality.

- 4.3.5 Members enquired if there was an example of another Country or State that had moved from the UK's current democratic model to the devolution models being discussed. Mayor Pipe advised states in other countries ordinarily have control over a larger proportion of the income raised in their state. Whereas London only has control over 7% of the income raised from Londoners.
- 4.4 Members enquired about the Council's performance monitoring framework and requested information on the roles and responsibilities of Members and Officers in relation to monitoring the performance of services in the Council.
- 4.4.1 The Assistant Chief Executive, Programmes and Projects explained the requirement on the Council to report against a national set of performance indicators in 2002 was removed. In 2010 LBH set local performance objectives. It was highlighted the Performance Analysis team no longer produce the quarterly performance reports. Instead they take reoccurring issues and look into why the problem is occurring and work with the service are to consider how they can resolve the issue and improve the customers' experience and satisfaction.
- 4.4.2 In addition to these changes there was a review of the Council's governance structure and the role of Scrutiny. It was recommended the Council stop reporting the quarterly performance data to Overview and Scrutiny Board and move towards using real time performance information (e.g. complaints) to support service improvement and development. Scrutiny reviews access performance information when conducting a service review. The Assistant Chief Executive, Programmes and Projects cited examples of scrutiny reviews that demonstrated scrutiny's work in performance monitoring. Highlighting these scrutiny reviews of service performance had contributed to service improvements.
- 4.4.3 Members pointed out at the 6 month or 12 month review stage of scrutiny recommendations; some recommendations may not be fully implemented. Members enquired if the Council ensured the recommendations were fully implemented following agreement by the relevant Cabinet Member. The Assistant Chief Executive, Programmes and Projects pointed out Scrutiny Members could use the cabinet question time sessions to follow up on the progress of review recommendations and ask questions about a service area's performance. The performance data and indicators for each service area in the

Cabinet Member's portfolio is available for review by Councillors on Covalent. The officer informed Members access to Covalent would soon be available via a Tablet or Smart phone.

Mayor Pipe informed the SCG all service areas are measured. Explaining their methodology was changing to review why the percentage not achieved was not meeting the customer's needs. Focusing on improving the customer experience and satisfaction.

- 4.4.4 Members commented they wanted support to understand what information was available and what they should be reviewing. Members asked for information from Corporate Directors that outlined their priorities over the long, medium and short term. Members advised they were finding out about service area issues through casework. In their view to be effective in their scrutineer role they should have access to information that would enable them to identify areas of concern early and not at crisis point like the Hackney Homes repair system.
- 4.4.5 In the discussion Members expressed their desire was to have a performance data system that was easily accessible and to have access to information from each Director about their focus and priorities for their service area. The Assistant Chief Executive, Programmes and Projects informed Members the Council's refreshed Corporate Plan outlines the Council's direction of travel correlating to the Mayor's manifesto commitments. In addition to support Members with access to the right information the officer asked Members to consider what information they wanted that would enable them to monitor their area(s) of interest.
- 4.4.6 The Chair of Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission (LIH) advised in his view it was important to monitor previous scrutiny review recommendations. As such he had made a commitment to monitor previous review recommendations to ensure they were being fully implemented. The Chair of LIH suggested each scrutiny commission should make the same commitment and factor this into their work programme.
- The Chair of SCG reminded Members they could also follow up on scrutiny review recommendations through their cabinet question time sessions.
- 4.4.7 Members raised concern about obtaining questioning advice in relation to performance information from the officers in the service areas. Members requested impartial advice that would enable them to ask the right questions about performance data. The Assistant Chief Executive, Programmes and Projects agreed to review the training provision for Members.
- 4.4.8 The Chair pointed out for Members to access the Covalent system they needed to log into the system and access the intranet. The Chair advised many Councillors did not log onto the Hackney system; therefore it was unlikely they would access the performance monitoring data. One Member reported trying to access covalent but experienced trouble accessing the information. Members commented on having support to access the system and being informed on how to the data effectively.
- 4.4.9 Members discussed their ICT system and enquired if the changes to Members ICT would be radical and enable them to access the system and information

more easily. Mayor Pipe explained the challenges the Council was facing with upgrading the ICT operating system stemmed from the variety of system packages being used by the Council. He explained several of the packages used were designed for maintenance by Microsoft thus requiring a Microsoft operating platform.

Mayor Pipe pointed out the problems being experienced by customers related to their ICT demonstrated the importance of capturing the correct performance information. Service areas need performance data that also informs them about their customers experience and the quality of the service provided. The Council's aim is to ensure the performance data being captured can inform the service area about the customer's experience and the quality of the service provided.

4.4.10 Members discussed the role of Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission (G&R) in performance monitoring and how the SCG would co-ordinate with their work. The Assistant Chief Executive, Programmes and Projects informed G&R conducted a review on performance management and looked at the framework and system. This municipal year G&R was looking at public services spend in Hackney; the aim being to develop a set of principles for whole place, whole system change.

4.4.11 The Chair summarised the following actions:

- Members want better access to the performance monitoring information and support with accessing the information available.
- Members requested training for scrutiny Members that would give them the ability to provide challenge and pick up on areas of concern early.
- Members requested performance information for Cabinet Question Time to enable them to review each directorate's service areas.

ACTION:	Members requested for 1) Access to the performance monitoring information and support with accessing the information available. 2) Training for scrutiny Members that would give them the ability to provide challenge and pick up on areas of concern early. 3) Performance information for Cabinet Question Time to enable them to review each directorate's
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5 Scrutiny and Performance Monitoring

- 5.1 Following the presentation and discussion about the Council’s Performance Monitoring Framework, Members had a short discussion about scrutiny’s role in performance monitoring.
- 5.2 Members commented although performance monitoring information is available on the intranet via Covalent, in their view it was not easy to find. Members requested for the performance management information to be more accessible e.g. from the internet and easy to locate on the system.
- 5.3 Members referred to the culture of the organisation and discussed the possibility of the Corporate Directors being more open and sharing information about their service area including areas of concern.
- 5.4 Members agreed they did not wish to create extra work for officers or duplication of process in relation to providing access to the performance monitoring information. Members wish identify areas of concern early and requested for the Assistant Chief Executive Programmes and Projects and Head of Overview and Scrutiny to review how performance monitoring information could be made more accessible for Members to enable them to review the service areas in their scrutiny commission remit.

ACTION:	Members requested for an update at the next SCG on the progress to make the performance information more accessible for Members and the provision of training.
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6 Scrutiny Work Programme and Reports To Full Council

- 6.1 Members discussed the scrutiny review reports produced by each scrutiny commission.
- 6.2 Members agreed the following reports would proceed to Full Council for debate in the next municipal year:
- Children and Young People – Female Genital Mutilation Report
 - Health In Hackney – Depression and Anxiety report
 - Living In Hackney – New Residential Development and Affordable Housing Gain Report.

- 6.3 The Chair of CSSI advised she would confirm at a later date if the Commission would like their scrutiny review report to proceed to Full Council for debate.

7 Scrutiny Stakeholder Engagement Event

- 7.1 Members discussed conducting a scrutiny engagement event to consult stakeholders and partners for their view on possible areas for scrutiny reviews and one off discussion items. Members discussed the option of going out to the community to capture stakeholder views instead of asking them to come to the Council.
- 7.2 Members discussed the possibility of doing more events like the CSSI inequalities debate to discuss issues local residents are concerned about.
- 7.3 Members discussed the possibility of making a short video and using social media to get the public's views for scrutiny reviews.
- 7.4 Members decided they needed more time to consider the following:
- The type of stakeholder event they would like to hold
 - The best point in the scrutiny commission's work programme cycle to conduct this type of event
 - How they wish to use the information captured
 - How to use this type of event to raise the profile of scrutiny.
- 7.5 Members requested that the scrutiny communications lead officer use social media to distribute the public invitation, inviting public suggestions for scrutiny reviews.

8 Any Other Business

- 8.1 None.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00 - 8.45 pm