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London Borough of Hackney  
Scrutiny Panel  
Municipal Year 2017/18  
Date of Meeting Wednesday, 7th February, 2018

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

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<b>Chair</b>	<b>Councillor Ben Hayhurst</b>
<b>Councillors in Attendance</b>	<b>Cllr Margaret Gordon, Cllr Ann Munn, Cllr Sharon Patrick and Cllr James Peters</b>
<b>Apologies:</b>	<b>Cllr Mete Coban, Cllr Christopher Kennedy and Cllr Anna-Joy Rickard</b>
<b>Co-optees</b>	
<b>Officers In Attendance</b>	<b>David Padfield (Interim Director of Housing Services), Steve Platt (Interim Head of Property and Asset Management), Tim Shields (Chief Executive), Ian Williams (Group Director of Finance and Resources), Kim Wright (Group Director Neighbourhoods and Housing), Rob Jack (Project Manager), Malcolm Peek (Delivery Manager), Dan Paul (Head of HR &amp; OD &amp; Elections) and Michael Sheffield (Head of Investigations)</b>
<b>Other People in Attendance</b>	<b>Councillor Clayeon McKenzie (Cabinet Member for Housing Services)</b>
<b>Members of the Public</b>	
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**Councillor Ben Hayhurst in the Chair**

**1 Apologies for Absence**

1.1 Apologies had been received from Cllrs Coban, Rickard and Kennedy.

**2 Urgent Items / Order of Business**

2.1 There were no new or urgent items of business and the agenda was as published.

### **3 Declaration of Interest**

3.1 None were declared.

### **4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

4.1 Members gave consideration to the minutes held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

4.2 Cllr Gordon, asked to make a correction to the minutes of the previous meeting:

- Paragraph 3.1 should read ‘...an employee of the Government Legal Department...’ rather than ‘...an employee of the Department of Work and Pensions...’.

4.3 The Chair briefly explained that the 4 actions from the last meeting were either going to be covered as a part of this meeting agenda or had been scheduled as agenda items going forward.

4.4 The minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2017 subject to the amendments were agreed as a correct record of the last meeting.

### **5 Council's Code of Governance**

5.1 Members were informed that the Council’s Code of Governance document had been reviewed by the Statutory Officer Group and Hackney Management Team. It had come to the Scrutiny Panel for Members’ consideration before being submitted to the Audit Committee for formal approval.

5.2 The Code of Governance sets out and describes ways in which the Council carries out its functions and the processes to ensure that resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and that decision making is sound and inclusive. Accountability is clear for the use of those resources in order to achieve desired outcomes for service users and communities.

5.3 The Chair welcomed Michael Sheffield, Head of Investigations, to the meeting. Before answering Members questions the Head of Investigations made the following substantive points:

- The revised document was being presented to the Scrutiny Panel for comments because it has implications for the work of the Panel.
- The revised Code of Governance was an update of the Council’s existing Code of Governance which is based on best practice. It was noted that the Council is not obliged to follow best practice but there is an expectation to do so unless it is justified not to do so.
- The current draft will go to the Audit Committee for approval with the caveat that it will be subject to further change and review. Changes will take place throughout the year to make it more ‘Hackney specific and in line with the Council’s policies and procedures.

- 5.4 The Members wanted to better understand how the Council will ensure that effective arrangements and principles in place to manage data are adhered to across the Council. In response the Head of Investigations stated that:
- Once the document was updated and agreed there will be a need to focus on publishing it more widely than previously, to ensure staff are aware of the document. This will form part of the comprehensive framework of principles around data collection and storage.
- 5.5 Members expressed the following points, they wanted the Code of Conduct document to be included in the training programme for Councillors alongside guidelines on how to better assess risks. In addition, Members highlighted the importance that data is not only accessible but also available in a usable format in order to improve interactions with and support to residents.
- 5.6 The Chair confirmed the Code of Governance did not need to be formally endorsed by the Scrutiny Panel.

## **6 Housing Repairs Service**

- 6.1 The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Member, Group Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing and the senior managers from housing repairs service to the meeting.
- 6.2 The Chair explained that housing repairs service would normally be scrutinised by the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission. However, at the last scrutiny panel meeting Members agreed to discuss this service area at the next meeting of the Scrutiny Panel. The Scrutiny Panel submitted the following request for information:
- The Council's action plan to improve the housing repairs service from the first point of call to the feedback request.
  - Highlight any best practice by other local authorities or Registered Social Landlords that Hackney could learn from to help advance the progress of improvement for the repairs service.
- 6.3 In response the Cabinet Member made the following substantive points:
- The report in the agenda provides a wealth of information about the scale of the work for the repairs and maintenance services and the steps being undertaken to make improvements. The report also include benchmarking information where relevant as part of the picture in relation to how Hackney compares to other similar authorities.
  - It was noted that the Council completes approximately 78,000 repairs a year. 87% are carried out by the in-house service (the DLO) and 94% are completed on the first visit; a 2% improvement from last year.
  - Overall, complaints about repairs are less than 1% of the repairs completed, and for the DLO it is 0.6% of the repairs completed.
  - The Council has increased spending on planned works such as fitting new kitchens and bathrooms, replacing roofs and windows and external decorations from £59.3m in 16/17 to a projected £98.9m for 17/18.

- Overall, the services are delivering an enormous number of repairs and improving the homes of thousands of residents. However, the services are not complacent about the need for service performance improvement and therefore welcome the Scrutiny Panel's input.
- 6.4 In addition, the Group Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing made the following substantive points:
- The top 2 priorities for the Housing Service are performance improvement and the fire safety work.
  - Despite improvement there are still concerns around response rates, inaccurate repairs and the implications of this, as well as issues around the benchmarking of the performance data. Improved performance is essential in order to ensure a better standard of living for those in Hackney Housing.

#### Questions and Answers

- 6.5 Members wanted to better understand what is currently in place to and what can be done to increase in-house capacity in relation to repairs. It was noted that currently the DLO perform far better than those contracted to carry out repairs.
- 6.6 Members also wanted to know more about the development programme in-house, recruitment process for apprentices and the number of apprenticeships.
- 6.7 In addition, they sought clarification around the framework of contracting in regards to how it benefits the local economy and in terms of wages and conditions.
- 6.8 In response to the questions above the Head of Building Maintenance and Estate Environment explained that:
- In general the DLO carry out smaller repair work while the contracted firms for example Purdy carry out more complex repair work that requires scaffolding. There are limits to the Council's ability to impact on how they carry out their work due to these being external companies. However, the intention and plan is to move more contracted work in-house.
  - In a competitive market the Council find it difficult to recruiting and retaining staff because people often opt to work for other companies rather than a local authority.
  - There are 20 new apprentices per year. All apprentices are hackney residents highlighting that the local community is benefitting from the scheme. In addition, there are plans to improve the current scheme to include the older cohort. The idea is that the scheme will offer opportunities to upskill those that missed out on doing an apprenticeship.
  - There is a strong history of apprenticeships in housing services. Offices pointed out several employees in senior management roles started out as an apprentice.
  - The Housing Service is reviewing the procurement process in such a way that it encourages small to medium contractors, who tend to be more local, to tender for contracts which are designed around recruiting local labour. However, the procurement framework needs to allow for larger contractors too in order to cover a range of skills. Unfortunately, it might still be the case that following the tender process a contractor does not use local talent and recruits workers from outside the borough.

- 6.9 The Group Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing added that as a part of the re-procurement of contracts in line with the Council's expectations there is a commitment to paying the London Living Wage.
- 6.10 The Members sought to understand why 1 in 5 repairs appointments are not kept (as indicated in the diagram on p5) and what has been done to improve this as well as what is being done to manage and monitor the work carried out by contractors. In response the Interim Director of Housing made the following substantive points:
- It was noted that the figure for repair appointments included compulsory gas safety checks. In regards to these it is not uncommon for residents to refuse to let officers in to do the necessary checks which counts as a 'repair appointment not kept'. However, in these cases the housing services will follow-up with a letter of appointment and where necessary they will force entry in order to ensure that they have completed all gas checks by the required deadline.
  - Residents call to book an appointment and non-urgent repairs appointment are made in agreement with the resident to ensure that they will be in. Residents also receive a phone call when the repairs team is on their way to the appointment.
  - In the near future the appointment booking system will be available online.
- 6.11 At this point the Delivery Manager added that a number of steps have been taken to improve performance:
- The KPIs have been reviewed to acquire residents' feedback before, during and after the repair works.
  - New contracts and partnerships are designed so that KPI are more easily obtained.
  - The Housing service has moved away from using some contractors, for example Mulalley. However, they might still be visible in the borough as they still need to complete their contracts.
  - Residents are encouraged to fill out an online survey form following their repairs appointment and the liaison officer will manage any complaints in regards to contractors.
- 6.12 The Members pointed out that in their experience there seems to be a lack of ownership, coordination and communications in regards to more complex repair cases particularly those involving a third party. Members sought to understand how issues around communication, coordination and ownership could be improved. This point was illustrated with an example where the DLO had removed a water tank in order to eliminate asbestos and the tenant was left with no water while waiting for the asset management team (and subsequently the contractor) to be contacted. In response the Head of Building Maintenance and Estate Environment and the Group Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing made the following substantive points:
- Following this particularly case lessons have been learnt and improvements made.
  - It was noted that the existing issues are known to the service and that some improvement had taken place. It is anticipated that the transformation programme - which in the Group Director's opinion has not been moving at a quick enough pace or consistent - will continue to focus on the culture of the organisation. The introduction of neighbourhoods structures is expected to improve the issues around ownership and accountability.

6.13 Members enquired about the Housing Service's view on tenants' engagement and the role of TRAs in proactively and preventatively working with the service to improve. Members wanted to know how they ensured council tenants are receiving a high standard service and made to feel like valued customers. In response the Head of Building Maintenance and Estate Environment and the Group Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing made the following substantive points:

- Resident participation and associations are key to discussions about repairs including communal repairs in the transformation programme.
- There are a number of initiatives being developed around improving engagement such as instant updates online, reviewing practices around Section 20 notices and the involvement of TRAs.
- A new structure is scheduled for implementation on the 1<sup>st</sup> April. This will include more streamlined roles, offering better liaison between the housing service and residents and a flatter structure to address communication and coordination issues.
- There are currently pockets of excellent work but this is not consistent across the service. Issues around the treatment of tenants is being addressed in the work to change cultural behaviour in the organisation. This work is being carried out through communication and engagement work focusing on raising standards. The message being communicated to staff is that 'the service provided should be good enough for you and your family'.
- It was noted that the resident feedback provides a rich data set which feeds into the service improvement work to ensure the processes in place are providing a good repairs service.

## **7 Quarterly Finance and Budget Update**

7.1 The Chair welcomed Ian Williams, Group Director of Finance and Resources, to the meeting. An updated version of the Power Point presentation in the agenda was circulated to Members prior to the meeting.

7.2 Before answering Members questions the Group Director of Finance and Resources made the following substantive points in regards to the Local Government Settlement:

- There is no additional central government funding.
- Core Spending Power will increase by 2.1% over SR period, with a 1.5% increase in Core Spending Power in 2018/19.
- Central government has based their assessment on local authorities increasing their council tax following the flexibility to do so.

7.3 The Members enquired if the Adult social care precept would result in a 6% increase for Council tax over the 3 years. In response the Group Director of Finance and Resources made the following substantive points:

- It is expected that the Adult social care precept would be raised by 6% over the three years and it is anticipated that the Council tax would either be raised by 3% in the first and second year with no increase in the third year or raised by 2% across the three years. The Council has raised it by 2% in the first year and is proposing to raise it with 2% this year and a further 2% in 2019/20.

- It was pointed out the Secretary of State has based the Core Spending Power around the assumed growth in council tax and the Adult social care precept.
  - It was noted that an increase of 2% in council tax for adult social care and the referendum limit of 1.59% means that the Council can increase the Council tax by 2.99% and by a maximum 4.9%. This has resulted in some local authorities increasing their Council tax by 5.9%.
- 7.4 The Chair suggested Members would benefit from receiving brief guidance notes around 'what you can do and cannot do' in terms of increasing Council tax and Council Tax Bands.
- 7.5 The Group Director of Finance and Resources explained that 60-65% of households in Hackney fall within Council tax band A and B. In the last 12 hours the government had announced an additional £150 million in funding would be made available for adult social care. Despite this additional funding there was still concern about how to tackle the £7.1 billion funding gap.
- 7.6 The Group Director of Finance and Resources made the following points in regards to the overall financial position for the current financial year:
- The reported overspend was £5.563million. This is mainly Adult social care, Children social care and the continuing pressures of Temporary Accommodation.
  - Council tax collection has continued to increase. This year £79.7million was collected compared to £74.9million last year. A further 20,000 residents are now paying Council tax via Direct Debit. This is close to approaching 54,000 households paying Council tax via Direct Debit.
  - The Business Rates devolution, has resulted in an increase to £107.8 million compared to £91.4 million last year.
  - The collection of Housing Benefit overpayments has increased. This was noted to be due to improvements in regards to collection processes.
  - There is no drawdown on Corporate Contingency which has stood a £2 million for a number of years. Instead the Council will continue to deliver departmental efficiency programmes to minimise the use of the reserve. It was noted that there is a general reserve fund and earmarked reserve for a range of costs and services where the Council has experienced high cost pressures such as Children services. The reserve is used to tackle in year cost pressures and to ensure that services are stabilised. The earmarked reserve take into account upgrading the Council fleet as well as any Capital programmes. The reasons for holding the earmarked reserves are explained in the Council's accounts.
- 7.7 The Members sought reassurance in regards to the increasing Business Rates and wanted to know how the increase in Business Rates was being managed to avoid businesses experiencing a significant increase in costs. In response the Group Director of Finance and Resources made the following points:
- Following their campaigns in regards to the proposed Business Rates the Council was granted £4 million in business rates relief over four years. However, this will be tapered down significantly year on year.
  - In addition, the Council has successfully implemented 2 schemes to minimise the impact on Public houses and licensed premises and small businesses as well as having a local scheme.

- It was noted that not all businesses have taken up the Council's offer. The Council is investigating whether the funding can be carried over to the next financial year. Work is also underway to increase the uptake to ensure that businesses are accessing their entitlement.

7.8 The Members wanted to better understand what action is being taken to address the pressures around SEND. In response the Group Director of Finance and Resources made the following points:

- A budget monitoring board has been established to work closely with the relevant managers in implementing an action plan to reduce these pressures and to ensure the forecast is as accurate as possible.
- In addition the Council is working with colleagues across London to address this national issue. The Group Director advised he has met with officers at the Department for Education (DfE) to discuss the significant increase of SEN statements and Education and Health Care Plans against the backdrop of minimal increases in funding. It was noted that this issue is of the same level of concern as the national funding formula for schools. Unfortunately, central government remains reluctant to release additional funding unless the Treasury gets a business case that shows return of investment. Consequently, it remains unclear how the Council, within the resources available, will continue to meet the increasing costs. Plans are being developed for implementation in the budget year 2019/20 and beyond. In the short term the Council will need to decide if it will continue to fund these services through the general reserve fund for the next 18 months to 2 years.

7.9 Members highlighted their concerns about the consultation process for the SEND proposals as well as the need for these challenges around overspend to be highlighted at an earlier point in the process.

**ACTION:** Overall Financial Position (OFP) and the Capital Programme reports to be included in all the Scrutiny Panel agendas.

**ACTION:** The Group Director of Finance and Resources to provide statistics on:

- a) The number of times the Council has instructed bailiffs since the housing benefits and welfare reform were introduced.
- b) Information on the strategies developed for the collection of Council tax and rents e.g. aligning pay dates to help residents budget their expenditure better and any noticeable trends.

7.10 The Members asked for the Group Director of Finance and Resources to comment on Northamptonshire County Council being issued with a section 114 notice. Putting a ban on new expenditure. The Group Director of Finance and Resources explained there was a range of issues that led to the ban of expenditure. Northamptonshire County Council has over a number of years made decisions around the outsourcing of services and commissioning, leaving most of their services having a relatively low-funded per capita and experiencing issues around efficiency due to organisational structures.



## 8 Chief Executive Question Time

- 8.1 The Chair welcomed Tim Shields, Chief Executive and Dan Paul Head of HR, OD and Elections to the meeting. The Chair further explained that the Chief Executive had been asked to provide an update on the integration of Hackney Housing with the Council (partly covered under Item 6 of the agenda).
- 8.2 In addition, the Head of HR, OD and Elections had been asked to provide an update on the planning and provision for the operation of the local elections in May 2018. The Members wanted to know what measures have been put in place to ensure that postal votes arrived in good time. In response the Head of HR, OD and Elections made the following substantive points:

### Local Elections:

- The procedure for postal votes is prescribed and therefore the Council has very little flexibility around the processes.
  - All postal votes are personalised and labelled with their individual Ballot number. This makes it a time consuming process.
  - The Council will do 4 print runs for postal votes for the local election in May:
    - The first run will contain all of the people that have an active postal vote as of the 5<sup>th</sup> March. This should cover the bulk of postal votes, approximately 31,000 electors.
    - The complexity for this particular election is that the Council needs to ensure the postal vote electors also receive the mayoral candidate booklet before they receive their postal vote leaflet.
    - The mayoral candidate booklet was expected to be ready for distribution on or around the 13<sup>th</sup> April. Shortly after this date the first round of postal votes will be distributed. These are sent by first class post and the expectation is approximately 93% of the postal votes in the first round will arrive the next working day.
    - The second distribution will follow a week later and include those whose postal vote application has been successfully processed (between the 5<sup>th</sup> March and early April). This is expected to be a smaller number of postal votes and faster turnaround time.
    - The third distribution contains those who applied from early April to the deadline date of 18<sup>th</sup> April at 5pm.
    - The final round contains those who applied to vote by post by the deadline but the application was still pending due to additional information requirements from the elector before processing their postal vote.
    - It was noted that all the dates will be published on the Council's website.
- 8.3 It was noted that because the Council has to go through the same processes, in a highly regulated system, such as checking names, verifying documents etc. for each application for a postal vote, the later the elector registers to vote the later their postal vote will arrive. The high volume of 'last minute' registrations was highlighted to be the cause of delays to postal votes in the last election.
- 8.4 Members referred to disabled electors highlighting this cohort mainly applies for postal votes. Member enquired if their postal votes could be collected. The Head of HR, OD and Elections explained postal votes could not be collected, the voter would need to appoint a proxy voter, who could either vote on their behalf at the polling station or by post. The same deadline applies to all voters. When applying

for a proxy vote, the elector will receive an information pack outlining all the options available.

- 8.5 In addition, the Members were informed that there will be a campaign across the borough encouraging residents to register to vote. The Elections team has also continue to work closely with other departments to ensure residents are reminded to register to vote. They automatically send out voter registration forms when distributing any new Council tax letters. It was noted that as a result of the large volume of elections recently registrations have continued to increase. In their view the register was fairly accurate.

#### Integration of Hackney Housing

- 8.6 The Chief Executive made the following substantive points:
- In 2006, the Council decided to create an ALMO (Arm's-length management organisations), in order to secure a grant of £2.5million to carry out housing repairs.
  - Prior to 2016 the Council consulted with residents, tenants and leaseholders about continuing with the ALMO or bringing the housing service back under Council management.
  - A ballot was carried out with an 18% turnout, and 56% wanted to bring housing services back under Council management.
  - On the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 housing services transitioned back into the Council. Prior to the services transition the council became aware of a number of challenges, the worst being the performance of the contact centre. Members were informed that in August 2015 waiting times were up to 23 minutes. Subsequently, a transformation team was established to address these challenges and put in place intervention processes. As a result the waiting times significantly improved and dropped from 23 minutes to 17 seconds.
  - A number of interventions were in place prior to the transition back into the Council in regards to contracts, repairs, processes and performance.
  - In addition to the improvement work around repairs, estate cleaning has been integrated with the street cleaning. Further changes have been made to block cleaning offering a 7 day week service to see a gradual improvement.
  - Work has begun on joining up estate grounds maintenance with parks and other open spaces with the expectation that there will be similar improvements to that of the estate cleaning.
  - New teams have been set up to manage properties that come out of the regeneration estates like the new tenancy team who address issues like snagging as well as make sure tenants move swiftly into the new properties.
  - The volume of disrepair cases was around 200 at the point of transition. Currently it stands at 109 including 52 cases involving legal cost.
  - It was noted that the Housing service is currently closing around 20 cases per month.
  - Members were informed that a Leaks Team was created and to date this team has resolved 195 complex cases.
  - A residents' engagement review and staff survey have been carried out. The big challenge remains around the culture of the organisation and this is taking a longer time to turn around. The Chief Executive continues to work closely with the Group Director Neighbourhoods and Housing to resolve the

housing services issues and the culture of the organisation including making improvements to the procurement and contracting processes.

- It was pointed out when the new telephony system was introduced there were a few 'hick-ups' which caused a few issues with the contact centre however these have been resolved and the new system is up and running.
- The Council is looking to improve the asset management strategy because at the point of transition it was not clear or strong enough.
- In summary, the Council transitioned 850 staff and huge service costs across to the Council which was seen as successful because there was minimal disruption despite a range of improvements being put in place including the contact centre. However, changing the staff culture within the organisation has continued to be more difficult despite continuous intervention from the management.

8.7 The Chief Executive outlined the impact the Grenfell tragedy on Hackney:

- A large amount of resources were diverted to carry out fire safety assessments and the impact is expected to last for the next few years partly due to changes to building regulations around fire safety.
- A decision was made to remove and replace the cladding on three housing blocks even though they were assessed to be low risk as well as installing sprinklers in some of the taller blocks and scissor blocks. In regards to the latter installation is proving difficult.
- Going forward an officer will be appointed to deal specifically with the volume of queries from residents' about fire safety.

8.8 In addition, the Members were informed that following the Grenfell tragedy central government has not provided any additional funding for the Council to carry out the fire safety work. However, the Council had received approximately £30,000 from central government to report back on all private sector buildings in the borough that potentially have high risk cladding or that may have issues around fire safety.

8.9 The Members enquired about the timeframes around fire safety issues for categories 1 and 2. The Chief Executive advised the timescales are 4-6 weeks dependent on the issue however, urgent issues, such as a broken door, are expected to be dealt with within 48-72 hours. The Chief Executive highlighted in regards to fire safety the safety inspections is only guaranteed on the day of the check. It was explained the reason for this is because circumstances are continuously changing, i.e. furniture being put out on a landing obstructing the fire escapes, mopeds being parked in front of an entrance, fire exit signage being vandalised down, rubbish blocking door ways etc. Subsequently, tenants and leaseholders' behaviours need to be addressed and changed in order to protect themselves.

8.10 The Council continues to work closely with London Fire Brigade and with the independent fire safety advisor on these complex issues including getting access to flats and scissor blocks to install sprinklers.

**9 Review & Reflect and Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2017/18**

9.1 The Chair invited the Chief Executive and the Group Director of Finance and Resources to share their thoughts on the Scrutiny function. The Chief Executive and the Group Director of Finance and made the following points:

- It was noted that regrettably none of the suggestions, of where Scrutiny could add value, from the Chief Executive, over a number of years, have been taken forward. However, it was recognised that scrutiny can play a vital role in unlocking positions around difficult topics. To illustrate this point the Chief Executive gave the example of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission's investigation into unregistered educational settings in Hackney and further emphasised that it was helpful when Scrutiny taking the topic out into the community and talking with stakeholders, other local authorities and other partners to open up discussions in an objective way.
- Further, it was noted that the Governance and Resources Scrutiny Commission had provided financial challenge and acted as a welcome forum where officers could have discussions with Members around thorny issues.
- In light of the cost pressures going forward it was felt that partnership working between Members and officers will be increasingly important in order to communicate messages and explain to residents the difficult decisions for example SEND budget, debt collection etc.
- Scrutiny also has a role in cascading in-depth knowledge and expertise around difficult issues while it would be near impossible to immerse all the Members on such a level.

9.2 In the discussion the following comments and suggestions were made by Members:

- While a number of Members felt that there was a need for the Scrutiny Panel to expand on its overarching co-ordinating role in order to ensure that reviews are aligned and to ensure suggestions from officers are taken into account. Including more in-depth discussions looking at how and why we are reviewing certain issues as recommended by the Scrutiny review.
- It was noted that pitching and defending the work programmes as well as identifying good practice would improve standards and co-ordination.
- Others felt that this needed to be dealt with outside of the dedicated meetings and referred to holding an offline discussion about the work programmes.
- Further they raised concerns in regards less output and the best use of the resource. However, they agreed that there is a role for the Scrutiny Panel to provide non-confrontational peer support and to act like a critical friend.
- Further the following suggestions were made:
  - Look at the possibility of inviting members of the public to discuss policy issues as a way of allowing different communities to have a voice and get their messages across through scrutiny.
  - An additional meeting through the year in order to manage the vast remit of the commissions.
  - Cross-cutting reviews and picking up some off the work from the old Governance & Resources scrutiny commission.
  - Accessing the E-panel and other forms of consultations.

**Wednesday, 7th February, 2018**

**ACTION:** The Head of Scrutiny and Ward Forums to further develop the ideas above and to set-up a work programme meeting with scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs following their meetings with Group Directors and Cabinet Members.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00 - 9.30 pm