

London Borough of Hackney Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission Municipal Year 2016/17 Tuesday, 13th November, 2018 Minutes of the proceedings of the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission held at Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street, London E8 1EA

Chair: Councillor Sharon Patrick

Councillors in Attendance: Cllr Sade Etti (Vice-Chair), Cllr Ian Rathbone, Cllr Anthony McMahon and Cllr M Can Ozsen

Apologies: Cllr Michelle Gregory

Officers In Attendance: Karen Law (Partnership Strategic Analysis and

Performance Manager), Tim Shields (Chief Executive), Ajman Ali (Director of Housing Services), Jason Davis (Policy Advisor), Sonia Khan (Head of Policy and Partnerships), David Pitney-Hall (Contracts Manager, Housing Services), Cathal Ryan (Service Manager, Children and Families Service) and Aled Richards

(Director of Public Realm)

Other People in Attendance:

Councillor Caroline Selman (Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Policy and the Voluntary Sector), Oluwatosin Adegoke (Inspirational Leader, Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men Programme), Deji Adeoshun (Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS), Councillor Clayeon McKenzie (Cabinet Member for Housing Services), Oj Odebode (Inspirational Leader, Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men Programme), Avo Oguniimi

for Young Black Men Programme), Ayo Ogunjimi (Inspirational Leader, Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men Programme), Lamide Olusegun (Inspirational Leader, Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men Programme), Dina Sahmanovic (Senior Operations Manager Victim Support) and Zoe Williams (Senior Operations Manager for Children and Young People,

Victim Support)

Members of the Public:

Officer Contact: Tom Thorn

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1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies had been received from Cllr Gregory, who had another commitment related to her Councillor role.

2 Urgent Items / Order of Business

- 2.1 There were no urgent items and the order was as laid out.
- 3 Declarations of Interest
- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest.
- 4 Update from Housing Services progress on implementation of recommendations of Fire Risk Assessments PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION
- 4.1 The guests in attendance for this item were:
 - Cllr Clayeon McKenzie, Cabinet Member for Housing Services
 - Ajman Ali, Director of Housing Services
 - David Pitney-Hall, Contracts Manager, Housing Services
- 4.2 Introducing the paper available in the agenda packs, the Cabinet Member for Housing Services advised that this had been presented to the Council's Cabinet at the end of October. He made the following substantive points:
 - The paper laid out the substantive work carried out since March 2018, and that being currently delivered.
 - This included cladding removal to four blocks, installing sprinklers to 355 Queensbridge Road and the retro fitting of dry risers (63 completed, another 154 to follow).
 - The 1823 Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) carried out after the Grenfell Tower tragedy had led to more than 22,000 actions.
 - The Council had been the first and as far as he was aware the only local authority to have published its FRAs online.
 - Remaining recommendations outstanding were being worked through according to priority.
 - The Council had established a dedicated Fire Safety Team.
 - The replacement front door programme would take place shortly, scheduled on a risk based basis.
 - The report had made the recommendation to Cabinet (which was agreed) that the Council approved investment of an additional £5.9 million for the door replacement programme.

- This was in reflection of the Government not making dedicated funding available to local authorities to deliver fire safety work.
- That a programme of such scale was being delivered alongside business as usual activities was testament to the commitment and hard work of Officers, for which he was very grateful.
- 4.3 Ajman Ali, Director of Housing Services made the following substantive points:
 - With Cabinet having approved the £5.9 million additional investment mentioned, the Council would be investing a total of almost £15 million in fire safety improvements.
 - The work to deliver Sprinklers had gone very well; the process had been a smooth one and high quality standards had been achieved.
 - The report provided a breakdown of where the service was in terms of enacting the recommendations from the FRAs. This analysis showed that front entrance doors accounted for the large share of actions still to be carried out. This would be a long term programme. The initial focus would be on replacing just over 3,700 doors in higher blocks before moving onto others.
 - The service was currently in the specification and design stage of the door replacement programme. Following this, it would tender for the contract, in around January 2018. This would be done through a mini-tender process meaning a faster turnaround. It was expected that the delivery phase would begin early in the next financial year.
 - There had been a range of testing by Government of doors. Partly based on this, the Council was planning on delivering timber doors. Composite doors were currently not available, having been withdrawn from the market following testing.
 - However, newly designed composite doors were currently being tested. The service would keep abreast of this testing as composite doors – if found to be fully safe – were often preferred by residents and would also require less ongoing maintenance.
 - The paper set out the doors which Council leaseholders would be recharged for, and those for which the Council would cover the costs. In 80% of cases, leaseholders would not be required to pay.
 - The Council was going to be one of the first to ensure that gas safety testing of leaseholder properties took place. Currently the service was exploring any changes required to both lease and tenancy terms and conditions to enable this to take place. From April 2018, leaseholders would be required to provide gas safety certificates for their appliances on an annual basis. The service was writing to people currently. It would provide the option of leaseholders being able to buy into the Council service.
- 4.4 The Chair thanked the guests. She said it was positive that leaseholders would be required to provide gas-safe certificates. She asked what the cost would be

- if they bought into the Council service. She also asked what action would be taken in any case where a leaseholder did not provide a certificate.
- 4.5 The Director of Housing Services confirmed that the cost of gas safety checks would be £71 for leaseholders buying into the Council service.
- 4.6 In terms of non-compliance, the service would seek to work with residents, through communicating in advance of the process starting, and sending reminders. In the event of any leaseholder continuing not to engage despite reminders being given, the service would seek to liaise with them directly. As a last resort and as per the approach followed with Council tenants enforcement action would be taken in order to gain access to properties.
- 4.7 The Cabinet Member for Housing Services agreed with these points. The Council had taken the decision to require all residents of Council properties to provide proof of gas safety checks. It would support leaseholders in this process, including by providing the option of buying into a Council gas checking service and by clearly communicating with them. However, as a last resort the Council would take all necessary action to ensure that gas appliances in homes did not compromise the safety of residents either of these homes or others.
- 4.8 In preparation to implement the policy, the service was reviewing all lease agreements that were in place to identify any retrospective revisions which were required. Unfortunately, rather than one standardised lease agreement for each Council property, there were a variety of agreements in place with different terms and conditions. This was a historical issue. The service was identifying the range of changes required to different leases to ensure that each allowed for the Council to require proof of gas safety.
- 4.9 In response to questions, the Director of Housing Services confirmed that the Council was working closely with legal services around the changes required.
- 4.10 The Chair noted the point in the paper suggested that 257 high priority door replacements were close to having been fully completed. She asked how many more doors would be replaced during the current financial year.
- 4.11 The Director of Housing Services said that it was likely that no more doors in the programme would be replaced before April 2018. The months up to that point would see the procurement exercise completed which in turn would enable delivery from the new financial year. There would be an initial focus on blocks of 10 storeys and higher.
- 4.12 A Member noted the table in the report detailing the door types which would be chargeable to leaseholders and the types which would not. He asked what criteria these decisions had been based on, and what the cost would be to the leaseholders required to pay. He asked if leaseholders would be charged for replacement girder doors.
- 4.13 The Director of Housing Services said an approach was being taken where doors would be provided free of charge where leaseholders had paid for the installation of new doors in previous improvement programmes which at a later point had been found to not have the appropriate certification. This meant that if a girder door had been installed in a programme which had now been found to

- not meet regulations and the leaseholder had paid for this, there would not be a requirement for them to pay for its replacement.
- 4.14 In contrast, leaseholders would need to pay for replacement of doors which had been originally installed at the point of the block being built, and which the FRAs had found did not meet regulations.
- 4.15 The Member asked if door stoppers would be provided behind doors by the Council. In response the Director of Housing confirmed that all appropriate equipment would be installed within and around the door as required to ensure that it met the FR30 standard.
- 4.16 The Member asked why door stoppers had been installed on doors in some blocks some months ago if the door replacement programme would include these measures.
- 4.17 The Director of Housing Services advised that some of the risk assessments had highlighted some issues which could be rectified by door stoppers being installed. The cases referred to by the Member reflected these being acted upon.
- 4.18 In terms of costs of this, these would differ according to what was needed. However the average would be £1,500 per door (including surrounding equipment).
- 4.19 The Member asked if a breakdown would be made available on the cost of each door replacement. The Director of Housing confirmed that this would be available following the procurement exercise for the programme.
- 4.20 A Member noted that a testing programme was being carried out by Government, and that a limited range of doors had so far gone through the process. He asked if the Government had been helpful in its communication on latest steps in the testing process. He asked if further results which might give a wider range of procurement options would be likely to be available by the point of tendering.
- 4.21 The Director of Housing advised that his service was represented on the DCLG group looking at door replacements. However, information provided had been general rather than specific. The service had not been privy to information on the specific doors which had passed the process as this would risk giving some providers commercial advantage.
- 4.22 The Chair noted the appended communication plan. She asked when the Christmas awareness campaign would begin. She asked whether it would cover information on decorative lighting and the installation of smoke alarms.
- 4.23 The Cabinet Member for Housing Services confirmed that the campaign was being prepared, and that this would include the aspects mentioned.
- 4.24 Bringing the item to a close the Chair thanked guests. She was supportive of the action on fire safety taken by the Council. However, she saw it as a disgrace that the Government was not supporting local authorities with these

investment requirements. She noted that without this Government support there were risks that some other general improvements would be delayed.

- Scene setting for Review Council and Partnership work to tackle violent crime and high level findings of new Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION
- 5.1 The Chair welcomed the following guests for this item:
 - Tim Shields, Chief Executive
 - Cllr Caroline Selman, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Policy and the Voluntary Sector
 - Karen Law, Partnership Strategic Analysis & Performance Manager
 - Aled Richards, Director, Public Realm
 - Maurice Mason, Community Safety Manger
- 5.2 She advised the item was intended to give context to the Commission's review which would look at the response of the Council and partners to the escalation in violence which occurred in the borough in a period starting late last year.
- 5.3 She said that the Chief Executive who was joint chair of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) attendance at this meeting highlighted the commitment of the Council and the wider partnership to addressing the issue.
- 5.4 Asked to make any opening comments the Chief Executive made the following substantive points:
 - The paper enclosed in the agenda was informed by the Strategic Assessment which the Partnership Strategic Analysis and Performance Manager produced for the CSP. This enabled the partnership to have an understanding of what was happening in terms of crime and disorder in Hackney, which could then inform an appropriate joint response.
 - He had been Chair of the CSP for just over 11 years. In that time he had worked with 5 different borough commanders. While it might not always be clear that this was the case, the period had seen general falls in levels of violent crime.
 - This reduction had been in place since the early 2000s. This said, over this full period there had been spikes in particular crime types. For example, in the early 2000s there were high numbers of gun discharges but these had significantly reduced. In comparison, knife crime had increased in more recent years. There had also been recent spikes in acid attacks and moped enabled crime, but these had now fallen markedly. These dips and spikes were due to a wide range of very complex factors.
 - This year very unfortunately there had been a number of tragic events involving deaths in the borough. He felt hugely for those who had been affected; the victims themselves and their families and friends.

- A great strength of the borough was its resilience. People were coming together around this issue to contribute to the solutions, including the young people in attendance at this meeting. The strength of the CSP was reflective of the strength of the borough and the common commitment to addressing issues together.
- It was his job and that of the Borough Commander as co-chairs of the Hackney CSP to bring partners together to ensure that there was a common understanding of what was happening and that appropriate action was taken to keep residents, visitors, businesses safe. This included work involving the Council, the Police, Probation and the Voluntary Sector to tackle, reduce and prevent a wide range of crimes.
- Reflecting the diverse range of crime types and the different actions needed to address each, sub groups made up of appropriate partners were formed to deliver improvement. For example a Domestic Violence sub group did excellent work.
- 5.5 The Chief Executive handed over to the Partnership Strategic Analysis & Performance Manager to present on the key findings of the Strategic Assessment which were relevant to this review. The Partnership Strategic Analysis & Performance Manager made the following key points:
 - Duties of the CSP included the production of a Strategic Assessment. This aimed to provide a borough wide overview of crime, disorder and related community safety issues, recommendations on the priorities which should be adopted by the CSP, and the rationale for the recommendations.
 - There were a number of elements which needed to be contained within the Strategic Assessment. This included insight into the views of residents, and data on substance misuse. It drew on evidence from Young Hackney, Youth Justice, Business Groups and a range of other sources, in addition to police data.
 - The CSP used the assessment to produce a three year partnership plan, setting out the priority areas of focus for the reduction of crime and disorder in the area and an action plan of how these would be progressed. This allowed for resources to be directed in the most appropriate way.
 - Violence featured heavily in the assessment. This included the residents survey which showed concerns around gang related violence, youth violence, and knife crime.
 - In relation to violent crime the most recent data showed that there had been 30,000 crimes in the last two financial years in Hackney which had been reported to the Metropolitan Police. Violence (in terms of the violence against the person category) accounted for approximately 30% of these crimes.
 - The most serious forms of violence assault with injury, murder, grievous bodily harm and offensive weapon accounted for around 10% of all crime, although there had been a slight rise in 2017/18 (to 11%).

- This indication of a slight rise is serious violence was triangulated by other sources. These included London Ambulance data evidencing greater assault related attendances in the borough in 2017/18 compared to previous years, and admission data at the Homerton Emergency Department.
- In short, violence accounted for around a third of all crime in Hackney. In terms of the most serious violence, murder accounted for 0.02% and GBH for 3% of all crime.
- The paper in the agenda packs provided summaries on gangs, knife crime, and analysis around Drug Markets and the extent (if any) of its links with violence.
- It was important to note that high shares of violence were not related to these issues. For example, significant shares of violence occurred in times and areas suggesting close association with the borough's Night Time Economy. 46% of serious violence occurred 7pm and 3.59 in the morning. This implied that much violence was not necessarily linked with gangs and youth violence.
- There had been a recent emergence of a new type of gang with different characteristics to those which had previously been typical. These gangs had fewer territorial links (traditionally gangs had often been connected to postcodes) and appeared to have been formed through school networks and social media. They had been linked some serious conflicts in the borough. They lacked the influence of gang 'elders' which could bring the risk of them being more volatile.
- On gang-flagged crime, GBH was the most prevalent, accounting for 40% of incidents. This was a much higher share than GBH accounted for in total crime in the borough, suggesting that the criminal behaviour exhibited by gangs was of a more violent nature than crime carried out generally.
- There had been 2 gang flagged murders and 9 attempted murders up to the end of March 2018, and 4 murders which had taken place outside of the borough but which had involved gang-affiliated Hackney residents.
- There was a higher concentration of knife crime within gang crime; 43% of gang crime involved a knife (not counting possession detections through stop and search) and within this almost half of these involved an injury. This when compared to knife crime data generally suggested that it was more likely that a knife crime would involve injury when it was associated with gang activity, than when a knife crime was not gang flagged.
- Gang-flagged crimes were concentrated in areas where it was known there were gang conflicts.
- Almost a quarter of them involved gun crime in the form of shots being fired, and there was again linkages between these crimes and conflicts between gangs.

- Victims of gang flagged crime were mostly males aged between 13 and 30 but there was a particular concentration in the age range 16 to 20. The 16 to 20 male age group emerged as the key group of both victims and suspects of crime linked to gangs throughout the analysis. There was an over representation of people from black ethnic backgrounds among both victims and suspects. 45% of gang crime victims had gang affiliations.
- The use of noxious substances in gang flagged crime appeared to have subsided, without a reported incident for more than a year. This had followed a small number of cases in evidence between 2015 and 2017.
- The distribution of gang crime was not concentrated on any particular day of the week, but in terms of time of day there was a peak between 3pm and the early hours of the morning. Within this, there was a particular peak between 3pm and 6pm (encompassing the after school period).
- In terms of general knife crime analysis had found that the share which had involved injury (in particular serious injury) were low. 80% of knife crime offences had not involved injury. 16% had involved minor injury, with 4.5% resulting in moderate or severe injury. This data was based on the 1700 knife crimes recorded in Hackney in the three years to 2017/18.
- Robbery was the most commonly recorded knife crime. The vast majority of these offences did not result in injury.
- Victims of knife flagged offences tended to be male and aged between 20 and 31. Suspects were much younger; predominantly aged between 15 and 20. People of black ethnic backgrounds were more likely to be both victims and suspects, and two thirds of victims were either unemployed or in full time education.
- There were a number of geographic hotspots with higher numbers of knife crimes. Each had their different characteristics, and not all of these were linked with youth crime or gang related crime.
- She had collated data published by the Metropolitan Police and merged this
 with information shared by the London Ambulance Service and Homerton
 Hospital. This combined evidence suggested that trends in knife crime resulting
 in injury had actually been quite stable over the last three years, with some
 peaks at different points throughout.
- Amalgamating the data had also appeared to confirm a particular concentration of injuries among those aged under 25. A detailed analysis on this aspect would follow.
- Moving onto Drugs Markets, a number of workshops had been delivered.
 These had found a general consensus that suppliers were not being put off
 selling activities by CCTV and that drugs could be purchased with ease at
 many locations. There was a perception that there was little consequence of
 drug dealing, and that the activity was increasingly being seen as highly

lucrative and low risk. There were reports of some young children being coerced into drug related activity.

- No obvious link had been found between the increase in violence and drug markets, except for some violence stemming from disagreements over money or drug deals. There did not appear to be high levels of conflict between different groups selling drugs in the borough. One possible explanation of this was that with markets being so apparently lucrative that there was little tension between the different parties selling them. There was potential for this situation to change as the Community Safety Partnership worked to clamp down in this area, and this would need to be kept under review. The new Community Safety Plan would highlight the tackling of drug markets as priority area.
- 5.6 The Chair thanked guests. She noted that there had been recently commentary including by the Metropolitan Police Commissioner around the linkages between drugs markets and the spike in violence. She said it was interesting that drugs did not appear to be the driver of an increase in serious violence in Hackney. She noted that from the presentation that there appeared to be linkages between the night time economy and violent crime. She said this contrasted with some of the accounts given by those supporting the night time economy that there were no negative issues associated with it.
- 5.7 The Chair noted that the Drugs Market Assessment for Hackney had been produced on the basis of workshops. She asked who had been involved in these workshops.
- 5.8 The Partnership Strategic Analysis & Performance Manager advised that a range of guests had fed into the workshops including Youth Services, the Anti-Social Behaviour Team, Outreach Workers, Housing Officers and Licensees.
- 5.9 A wanted to pay tribute to Hackney's Integrated Gangs Unit. From attending a recent Knife Crime awareness event hosted by the unit, she had gained an insight into the external recognition which it was afforded. This event had seen numerous officers and the relevant Cabinet Member from the London Borough of Enfield attend as they wanted to hear and learn from the Hackney's approach. It was clear that the unit was strong in Hackney.
- 5.10 She noted the headline findings of the Drug Market Assessment in terms of there being no obvious link between drugs markets and an increase in violence. This said, in a number of events she had attended she had regularly heard parents talk about their concerns around what they saw as open and explicit drug related activity in some areas of the borough, and which in their view was leading to this behaviour being normalised. She asked whether the Strategic Assessment had explored the issue of open drug selling.
- 5.11 The Community Safety Manager responded to this point. He confirmed that neither the Strategic Assessment nor the Community Safety Partnership were stating that there were not issues around drug selling in some neighbourhoods, or that there were not linkages between drugs and gangs. The assessment acknowledged that there were issues, and this was reflected in one of the

- priorities in the new Community Safety Plan including a focus on tackling both gang and drug related crime.
- 5.12 There would be a multi-agency response to the issue including action from Public Health, Enforcement and the Police.
- 5.13 This would build upon action already taken. 16 individuals had recently been arrested who were linked with gang-related drug crime. Significant amounts of drugs and money had been seized during these incidents.
- 5.14 The Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Policy and the Voluntary Sector agreed with this point. Noting the point of the Member around concerns of parents, she said that this had also been reflected in the feedback received via the survey carried out as part of the Strategic Assessment. The new Community Safety Plan had taken this and other evidence into account which was reflected in this being a priority area to address. She also clarified that while the assessment had not found a link between drugs markets and the increase in serious violence, this was not to say that drug markets did not contribute to overall levels.
- 5.15 A Member noted that the section on gangs in the paper referenced the existence of a new form of gang, of a younger age range and without links to territory. She noted that evidence showed the majority of young people who had been classed as being gang affiliated, were from black ethnic groups. She asked whether these new groups could legitimately defined as new gangs from the new generation, or whether they may be groups of friends.
- 5.16 The Partnership Strategic Analysis & Performance Manager advised that the section the Member referred to had been informed by analysis by Hackney's Integrated Gangs Unit. This had shown that two named groups comprised of people younger than that which was typical in terms of gang activity and which had not been formed within territories linked to post code areas had been involved in quite serious conflicts between each over during the last year. Whether this would be a longer term trend reflective of the use of social media, or whether they would prove to be isolated cases, was currently unknown.
- 5.17 Adding to this point the Community Safety Manager stated that it was very important to note that the number of young people in Hackney who were involved with gangs was minute compared to the numbers of young people who were aspirational and living very positive lives.
- 5.18 The Council and its partners worked very hard to identify at an early point where there was a risk of a young person being coerced or groomed into potentially criminal, gang-related activity. Having the Integrated Gangs Unit in which a range of relevant services worked in the same room better enabled this, as did effective partnership work in the Community Safety Partnership generally. There was a primary focus in these cases on prevention, diversion and safe guarding, and not criminalising young people. Alongside this and where this was needed robust enforcement action was taken to keep communities safe.

- 5.19 A Member noted the local Drug Market Assessment finding no clear link between drug markets and the increase in serious violence. He noted that the Commission's review was not currently seeking to explore drug markets in detail, which based on the assessment appeared to be a valid approach.
- 5.20 However, he noted the point in the assessment around the risk of increased drug related violence as a clamp down on drug selling led to greater competition in a more restricted market. He asked if the Council had a strategy to mitigate this risk.
- 5.21 The Community Safety Manager advised that the Strategic Assessment and additional work by the Partnership Strategic Analysis & Performance Manager would allow the CSP to be aware of the areas where there were concentrations of drug related activity and violence. Then within a 'strategy first structure second' approach relevant resources would be mobilised to address the issue. He himself was not convinced that bearing down more on drug related activity would lead to increased violence between market competitors. He felt that this action was more likely to reduce other associated activities, including violent crime.
- 5.22 A Member noted that a recent broadcast of a breakfast show had seen a discussion around there being an overly negative focus on young black men and this community group's apparent greater links with gang activity and violence. He shared the concerns raised in the programme around young black men being stigmatised.
- 5.23 The Community Safety Manager agreed with this. He felt that it would always be important to keep repeating the most important message; that it was only a very small number of people from any community group which was involved with gang activity and violence related to this.
- 5.24 Coming in at this point, the Chief Executive said he felt it crucial that balance continued to be given in the debate. Young people generally made excellent, positive and hugely valuable contributions to life in the borough. For example the Hackney Live event saw young musicians from the borough coming together to perform and be watched by people around the world.
- 5.25 The Council and its partners needed to continue to create more and more choice and opportunity for young residents including jobs and apprenticeships. It needed to continue to provide alternatives and to prevent and divert people away from negative life courses. Alongside this, there needed to be enforcement against the few, where this was required.
- 5.26 A Member agreed with these points, in particular around the hugely positive contribution made by the majority of young people in the borough. He said that he would challenge the local press to reflect on this, and to seek to communicate positive aspects such as the involvement of school children with the Hackney Youth Parliament at the same volume as it did tragic incidents of serious violence.

- 6 Evidence gathering for review Council response to spike in serious violence findings emerging from mapping exercise PRESENTATION
- 6.1 The Chair advised that guests in attendance for this item would be invited to introduce the paper which was in the agenda packs.
- 6.2 Following this, the meeting would receive introductions to the next two items (numbers 7 and 8). Then, under item 9 there would be a panel discussion covering the three items. This was felt to be most appropriate given the interrelated nature of the items.
- 6.3 Guests in attendance for the item were:
 - Cllr Caroline Selman, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Policy and the Voluntary Sector
 - Jason Davis, Policy Advisor
- 6.4 Introducing the paper, the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Policy and the Voluntary Sector advised that it set out the very wide range of relevant provision which was in place, and emerging areas for future focus. However, she would seek to highlight the areas which were of most relevant to the Commission's current review and or which fell within its remit. She made the following substantive points:
 - Earlier in the year following the spike in serious violence which occurred in Hackney as well as in London and the country generally – the Council had hosted an event which had been very well attended by internal and external services, and the community.
 - This event recognised the very wide range of excellent work which was happening across the piece. However, in reflection of the impact that the tragic incidents had had on the community there was also common agreement on the need to step back and identify what was already being done and what additional work might be needed.
 - This had led to an initial phase of 'mapping and gapping'. This work was carried out within a context where a range of activities were already underway which were relevant to the agenda. These included Contextual Safeguarding, the Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men Programme and also the refresh of the Council's Community and Voluntary Sector strategy.
 - The mapping and gapping work was based within 4 key themes. These included how young people were supported, how schools were engaged with, how parents and the wider community were supported and empowered, and the way that the partnership responded in the immediate aftermath of a serious violence incident in terms of community engagement and reassurance.
 - In terms of the work to support young people the findings set out a range of preventative and diversion work specifically directed at children and young people and their families. This insight was available in the paper. Many aspects of these were likely to fall into the remits of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Commission.

- There were also a number of preventative aspects of relevance to young adults, including those at risk of involvement in serious violence. Redthread in its work to divert young people (up to the age of 24) away from cycles of serious violence already worked in major trauma units where victims from Hackney with very serious injuries had in some cases been admitted. This was in order to work with and support victims at moments where they were most likely to engage.
- Redthread's presence had now been secured at the Accident and Emergency department at Homerton Hospital. This would help ensure that more young people could be engaged at crisis points, including those with less severe injuries than those seen at major trauma units. This was in line with the need to deliver diversion at early points.
- Outreach generally through detached outreach which sought to engage people outside of formal settings rather than waiting for them to approach – was already in place but the Council wanted to do more, a desire which had been echoed by the community at the event in April.
- The Integrated Gangs Units delivered targeted provision to those involved in gangs and gang-related serious violence. The unit worked with gang members, affiliates and the wider community to reduce violent criminal activity and to build community resilience. A dedicated Community Co-ordinator in the unit worked to build trust and relationships in the community and to increase awareness of the service. This included liaising with gang members, schools, families, local businesses and churches.
- The Council was enabling 'trusted voices' initiatives including mentoring of the community by the community.
- It was positive that the Central East Commander (overseeing local policing in Hackney and Tower Hamlets) had also committed to activities aimed at improving levels of trust and confidence. A task group had been established to help ensure a strategic approach.
- The work had sought to explore how the Council and its partners worked with 19 to 25 year olds. Within this, there was acknowledgement that while there was a wide range of provision appropriate for young people aged between 0 and 18, there was less provision specifically in place for young adults.
- The Integrated Gangs Unit supported young adults; the majority of the cohort they worked with were over 18. However, the client group was small and distinct.
- There had already been a response to this with some provision being extended to include this age group.
- The skills and opportunities agenda was also very relevant to this age group.
 The Council's established apprenticeship programme was being expanded to
 include a pre apprenticeship offer. There was close liaison with employers in
 the borough. There was a focus on enabling those with criminal records to
 move on.

- There was a range of work with and within schools aiming to help address and prevent youth violence, and also to address the fear which quite small numbers of incidents overall caused. This included workshops delivered by the Council.
- Evidence showed that fear could be a driver of unsafe behaviour. Consistent
 messaging was very important in terms of the true scale of the violence in
 evidence, the support which was available, and the positive opportunities which
 were open.
- The community event had also identified the important of community reassurance and engagement following incidents. Certain incidents would trigger Major Incident Procedures known as Gold. These procedures included consideration and delivery of appropriate community engagement and reassurance measures. Work was needed to develop a process for assurance when incidents were below the threshold of triggering Gold arrangements.
- 6.5 Asked if he had any comments, the Policy Advisor said that he had few additional points to add to those covered by the Cabinet Member. He felt that the findings of the mapping exercise had not been hugely surprising. It had identified the need for support and provision at points around transitions in education, around school exclusions, and others. This said, having a central source in place with this information was very positive as it would better enable a whole-partnership response.
- 6.6 The Chair thanked guests. Before moving onto the next presentation, she asked if the community assurance event which she as an attendee had found very positive would be repeated.
- 6.7 The Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Policy and the Voluntary Sector confirmed that the Council would continue to look for opportunities for engagement. This said, she felt that there was a balance to be achieved between engagement but also engaging at points where significant and tangible progress could be reported back. Plans were being informed by this approach.

7 Insight into Victim Support - PRESENTATION

- 7.1 Guests in attendance for the item were:
 - Dina Sahmanovic, Senior Operations Manager Victim Support
 - Zoe Williams, Senior Operations Manager for Children and Young People, Victim Support.
- 7.2 The Chair asked guests to make any opening comments. In terms of a discussion on the item, this would take place within the Panel Discussion under item 9.
- 7.3 Dina Sahmanovic, Senior Operations Manager Victim Support tabled and presented a paper. This contained a range of information on the work of Victim Support in Hackney. The paper is available on the online records of the meeting, and via the link below.

http://mginternet.hackney.gov.uk/documents/s63113/Insight%20into%20Victim%20Support%20Hackney%20November%2018.pdf

- 8 Evidence gathering for review update on Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men Programme Reducing Harm work strand PRESENTATION
- 8.1 Guests in attendance for the item were:
 - Sonia Khan, Head of Policy and Partnerships, and Programme Manager of Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men Programme
 - Cathal Ryan, Service Manager, Children and Families Service and Lead for Reducing Harm Working Group
- 8.2 The Chair asked guests to make any opening comments. In terms of a discussion on the item, this would take place within the Panel Discussion under item 9.
- 8.3 The Head of Policy and Partnerships made the following substantive points:
 - She would set out some of the context around the wider Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men Programme. She would then pass onto the Service Manager, Children and Families Service to present to the Commission on the Reducing Harm work strand of the programme.
 - The Council formed a partnership in 2015 to focus on improving outcomes for young black men.
 - This recognised the need for a joined up, comprehensive approach to tackling deep rooted inequalities which were disproportionately preventing some young black men from reaching their full potential. The previous individual piecemeal approaches by agencies and or by the community were not delivering the change needed. The programme identified that collective effort was needing involving the statutory and voluntary sectors and – crucially – young people themselves.
 - The programme was seeing a joint effort by multiple agencies and the community. The partnership was chaired by Deputy Mayor Bramble. It was focused both on the current cohort of young black men aged 18 - 25 and also embedding change which see greater life chances of future generations.
 Reflecting this, the work would address aspects relevant to early years and through to provision for 25 year olds. A multitude of partners were involved.
 - She noted the point made by a Member during an early item around the risk of stigmatising or problemising a community group. She said that that was something the partnership very much wrestled with.
 - However, they quickly flipped that, recognising that the programme would focus
 on the positive. The Commission would at a later point in the meeting hear from
 Inspirational Leaders; young black men who were trained in leadership,
 delivered peer work, and took leadership roles in the programme. These people
 were successful and had achieved many things, as the majority of young black
 boys and men in the borough had. They were raising the visibility of this fact.

- However, alongside this was recognition that there were complex systematic
 and structural reasons why there were inequalities in terms of the numbers of
 people in this community group who were in difficulty. The data and evidence
 showed that these inequalities were in place and glossing over them would not
 deliver the change which would help close them.
- The actions and plans emerging from the programme were informed by a wide range of data and statistics, insight into the views of young people and others within the community around the drivers of the inequalities, and those of providers and stakeholders.
- In the last two years the programme had been testing a number of initiatives.
 One example was the delivery of community-based mental health work.
 Another had seen a group of 12 Headteachers developing and driving a new approach in their schools which they were shortly due to present and share with other Headteachers.
- Each of the strands were interlinked. For example aspects for exploration –
 including by the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Commission included
 looking at the outcomes for students who were excluded. This had linkages to
 safeguarding concerns relating to risks to young people who were absent from
 education. On education and mental health, there were questions around
 whether in some cases punitive approaches were followed in cases where
 children were expressing trauma, and whether these punitive were put in place
 more quickly for black boys compared to for those from other community
 groups.
- A wide range of aspects Aspects around culture and trust would be explored and addressed including through the delivery of work led by peers including the Inspirational Leaders. The workstreams focused on enabling paths to success. A Graduate Trainee working in support on the Programme was leading on the production of visual schematics which would enable audiences to gain an insight into the Theory of Change which would was informing the work. This sought to set out the steps and actions which were required in order to meet its targeted outcomes.
- 8.4 Coming in at this point, the Service Manager, Children and Families Service made the following points about the Lead for Reducing Harm Working Group:
 - The Group were now close to having a finalised plan for the workstream.
 - The work was based on three main principles;
 - That those causing harm have often been exposed to harm and trauma during their lives
 - That in order to reduce a co-ordinated response was needed across all relevant agencies

- To reduce harm there needed to be a focus on three environments; the family, the school, and the community
- It would aim to deliver 4 outcomes; to reduce incidence of young black men experiencing or causing harm within their family, school and or community (reflecting the settings where harm could occur), and improving the understanding of the impact of harmful behaviour across the life course for young black men in Hackney.
- Within each of these 4 broader outcomes there were accompanying objectives (for example reducing domestic abuse) and – underneath this headline actions (for example to establish and review domestic abuse interventions and outcomes for Black and Mixed ethnicity families).

9 Panel Discussion on items 6 - 8 - DISCUSSION

9.1 The guests in attendance for this item were:

Inspirational Leaders, Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men Programme:

- Oj Odebode
- Ayo Ogunjimi
- Oluwatosin Adegoke
- David Ogana
- Lamide Olusegun

Other guests:

- Deji Adeoshun, Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS
- Tim Shields, Chief Executive
- Karen Law, Partnership Strategic Analysis & Performance Manager
- Aled Richards, Director, Public Realm
- Cllr Caroline Selman, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Policy and the Voluntary Sector
- Jason Davis, Policy Advisor
- Dina Sahmanovic, Senior Operations Manager Victim Support
- Cathal Ryan, Service Manager, Children and Families Service and Lead for Reducing Harm Working Group
- Sonia Khan, Head of Policy and Partnerships, and Programme Manager for YBM Programme

- 9.2 The Chair thanked guests for their presentations within items 5 8. This item would see a group discussion on what had been heard.
- 9.3 She wished to welcome the Inspirational Leaders from the Improving Outcomes for Young Black Men Programme. She thanked them for having observed the previous items. She invited each to make any opening comments.
- 9.4 Lamide Olusegun advised that his work through the Inspirational Leaders Programme involved the delivery of arts and crafts workshops for young people.
- 9.5 The workshops enabled therapeutic work. During them he would ask young people how they were and how they were feeling. He saw first-hand how much they enjoyed the sessions as opportunities to express their creativity and also be given a space to talk.
- 9.6 He the Inspirational Leaders initiative was helping to fill a gap; there were currently not enough people in teaching and guidance roles who young people would trust and be open with. He had noticed how as a young adult he had found it easier to build productive relationships with and to be listened to by young people. Older figures in the community were sometimes given less credibility.
- 9.7 He had established his own business, which had been hugely aided by the Free Market Stalls initiative for 18 to 30 years olds. He had started trading his art products on Well Street Market, before expanding to other markets also.
- 9.8 The example he had set had sparked the interest of young people in the community. They had noted that it was possible to start-up businesses. A lot actively sought his advice and asked him how he had managed this.
- 9.9 It was clear that young people were ambitious and interested in succeeding in careers. However, there was a gap in terms of lack of guidance and also physical space available. He himself had noticed when he graduated that there were no suitable facilities for him to pursue his projects. He had needed to adapt to this, creating products which were possible without these facilities.
- 9.10 The Mayor of Hackney had shown a commitment to promoting business and the positive activities of young people in the borough. The Council had helped to publicise his work. He agreed with previous points around the vital importance of communicating the very positive contributions that the great majority of young people in the borough were making. More positive communication around the achievements of young black men in the borough was needed.
- 9.11 Deji Adeoshun, Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS advised that the Inspirational Leaders initiative was in part a response to the negative connotations sometimes associated with young black men.
- 9.12 When a workshop run by Hackney CVS had asked a group of young people what the first things were that came to mind when they thought of a young black man, the three things that they said were gangs, knives and crime.

- 9.13 The Inspirational Leaders programme was about countering this by showcasing the positive talents and contributions of young black men and as part of the wider Improving Outcomes for Young Black men programme raising hope and aspiration for this group.
- 9.14 A recent initiative had seen the Council recruit to a post within the programme, and restrict applications to young black men. That had created a real interest in the community, had been positively received, and had been seen as an opportunity.
- 9.15 He agreed with the point made by Lamide around the need for young black men who were creative needing the opportunities and space to express this.
- 9.16 Reflecting on discussions earlier in the evening around gang activity and street drug dealing, he felt that a key reason for any increase in this activity was due to the easiness of it. If he chose to, he could leave the room and within five minutes start selling drugs. Strategies and policies needed to work towards making other alternative opportunities as easy to access as possible.
- 9.17 Barriers and systems in place often made these inaccessible, bringing the risk of some young black men turning to the more open route of drug selling and gang activity. It was not about simply giving young people things. However, greater opportunities and support were needed around employment, self-employment service access, and organisations needed to work creatively to enable this.
- 9.18 Evidence showed that these barriers extended to mental health support. The Inspirational Leaders were working with the East London Foundation Trust around increasing accessibility. Through working with them on an initiative where practitioners and therapists came into the community and worked with young people in their own settings, take up of one to one therapeutic support had increased by 70%. The work had helped to reduce stigma around mental ill health in the community.
- 9.19 Opportunities such as the one in this meeting where young black men were given an equal platform to discuss issues were important and welcome.
- 9.20 Oluwatosin Adegoke advised that he was involved with facilitating workshops involving both young people and local police at the Stoke Newington Police Station. These workshops enabled both the community's perception of the police and the police's perception of the community, to be explored and challenged. The work was finding that the views of one group around how they were seen or perceived by the other, were often different from the reality. Acting as the bridge in these discussions provided an opportunity for the relationships between the police and the community to be improved.
- 9.21 As a young black man himself, since graduating he had formed a view that there were opportunities available in terms of employment, but that these were quite restricted. Jobs in financial services were relatively accessible. However, for other areas including jobs in the media and in computer science, he felt that greater barriers were in place.

- 9.22 Oj Odebode had been facilitating discussions between young people and Police Officers in his local area. This was part of wider work to change the narrative around young black men. He agreed with earlier points around the great majority of the cohort being highly aspirational. From his involvement in the programme he had become aware of the range of opportunities which were available, and of the many organisations which could provide help and support. However, there was little awareness of these opportunities in the community. As a Hackney resident, he had been unaware of the breadth of support available until that point, when he was 23.
- 9.23 There was a lack of connectedness to these opportunities. Once he had connected to one service HCVS he had learnt about others Hackney Youth, and organisations in the Wick area for example. From being generally unaware of the provision on offer, he had accessed opportunities including teaching older people to use computers. This in turn had helped him identify further opportunities.
- 9.24 This disconnectedness was leading young people to feel that the only routes open to them which appealed to them were around sports or music. The narrowness of these could bring the risk of young people following more destructive paths if and when these options did not work out. A long term approach was needed in which relationships were established with young people and consistent and ongoing support was available to them.
- 9.25 Ayo Ogunjimi advised that he had been delivering workshop sessions with young people within his role in the programme. They were generally very aspiring at a young age. Often they wanted to be footballers, sportsmen and musicians. However, it was the case in most cases it would be harder to achieve these outcomes that they might feel currently. Young black men lived in an environment which told them that there were few avenues they could excel in.
- 9.26 He himself had a keen interest in performing arts, and had set up a theatre company. This was enabling his peers with the same interests to train and perform as actors and performing artists. Currently, it appeared that initiatives like these always needed to be established at a grass-roots level, with little support from public agencies or others. More facilities like these in performing arts and other areas also needed to be provided. They could enable young people to express themselves and to feel that they were continuing and progressing on a route to where they wished to be.
- 9.27 Noting that other leaders had mentioned employment opportunities in detail, an Inspirational Leader said that he wanted to raise points around access to mental health services. He had been part of the Inspirational Leaders programme for two years. In that period he had helped run a number of workshops between the community and the NHS. They were delivered partly in the form of group therapy, with the option for those who would benefit to gain one to one support. The programme was enabling more people from the community to access help at earlier, more preventative stages. The programme had enabled him to develop his perspective and awareness around mental health, which was better enabling him to perform his mentoring and guidance role in the community.

- 9.28 The Chair thanked the Inspirational Leaders. She noted points around the need for the community to be made more aware of the range of opportunities on offer. She said that one of the aspects that the review was keen to explore was the level and nature of provision for young adults aged 18-25. This was in line with the remit of this Commission. She noted that the paper presented under item 6 in terms of the mapping exercise, had suggested that provision in this area was an area of focus. She said she would welcome views of all guests towards gaps in provision for this group.
- 9.29 Another Member asked Lamide Olusegun if his experience showed that facilitating the availability of markets in Hackney was one of the ways which the Council could enable business opportunities to young people. He was aware that the Council's Markets Service was looking to expand its offer to supporting people with business plans and marketing. He asked if this is something that would help.
- 9.30 Lamide Olusegun agreed that markets had really helped him and others establish businesses. He had been given a free stall, enabling him to sell products directly, gain an insight into footfall, and get to know business generally. It had offered an excellent grounding in entrepreneurship. Any expansion of support would be welcome.
- 9.31 This would help meet a gap in terms of the support given to young people after leaving full time education. He had found that after graduating there was limited support available. This lack of support upon finishing school, college or university could leave young people finding themselves staying at home all day and missing the direction previously given to them in school or college. This could cause issues around self-esteem, and also mental ill health. It could also leave young people vulnerable to making poor decisions.
- 9.32 The Chief Executive came in at this point. Both in this session and at the community reassurance event in April he had heard from the Inspirational Leaders. They were amazing young men who were able to speak eloquently about the issues. They had an understanding of what these were and the actions that were needed to address them, across a range of areas. He wished to place on record his thanks to the Inspirational Leaders for the huge contribution they were making. They were creating a movement around setting examples, supporting their community, and working with public bodies to help identify and deliver the improvements they needed to make.
- 9.33 In this meeting and others he had heard evidence that young people in the borough were not fully aware of the opportunities and provision which was in place. This was something that needed to be addressed, but the answer as to how this could be achieved would come from people like the Inspirational Leaders. They had the answers. For the Council's part (and that of other public bodies) there was a need to ensure these answers were listened to and acted upon, and that they drew on the support of Inspirational Leaders in taking them forward.
- 9.34 The Chief Executive reflected on points made around a lack of facilities and spaces for young people to develop businesses. The Council was currently looking at how it could provide more workspaces in unused places in the

- borough. He could not see why they could not take action to ensure that some of these were provided to young people wanting to start-up businesses.
- 9.35 The Council was also exploring how it could set up a Landing Pad for businesses seeking to move into the borough. This would better ensure that they had access to relevant information around who to contact for business planning, financial and other advice. He would reflect on how this advice could be made available more widely. He noted the comments in the discussion around risk points at the end of education. These were areas that needed to be explored further, in discussions with the community.
- 9.36 A Member wished to echo the points made by the Chief Executive. Also, she was aware of how much football featured in the lives of many boys and young men. She asked how much work the Inspirational Leaders did to engage with the football clubs in the borough.
- 9.37 She also noted the work of the Parents Voice initiative being delivered by The Crib. She celebrated this work. She wished to explore whether workshop sessions with young people delivered by the Inspirational Leaders could join up with Parents Voice discussion sessions, at some points. She felt this might help issues be addressed which affected both young people and parents. She also said it was so crucial for effective messaging around Hackney and the successful and positive lives that contrary to what was sometimes suggested in the press the great majority of its citizens were leading.
- 9.38 OJ Odebode advised that he and Lamide Olusegun had delivered coached summer holiday football sessions to 7 to 14 year olds living on the Pembury Estate. It had offered a route to engaging the young people in a therapeutic way. In discussions with young people and perhaps surprisingly a lot of children said they did not play football regularly. He felt that the attraction of the sessions was that it offered an activity and not necessarily that it was football specifically. He said that a session of arts and crafts and basketball would have attracted similar numbers.
- 9.39 He agreed that opportunities to engage children and parents in tandem would be useful. This was in terms of seeking parental involvement at sessions like the football coaching. This would enable parents see how their children engaged with the peers and adults.
- 9.40 Regarding the question around football, the Youth Leadership Manager, Hackney CVS felt that the large professional clubs might do more in terms of resourcing work in the community. Arsenal Football Club's Foundation was established and delivered initiatives. However, it was the case that this body applied for external pots of funding, sometimes in direct competition with community services including Hackney CVS. He felt that the Council might make the case to clubs to release more of their own resources to deliver initiatives rather than seeking other funding to do so.
- 9.41 Moving the discussion on, the Chair noted that the Commission had heard that young black men were disproportionately affected by violence. She asked for views on what could be done to address the fact that young black men were over represented amongst victims of violent crime, and suspects of it.

- 9.42 The Head of Policy and Partnerships advised that a report was close to being published, and would be submitted as evidence to the review. This provided a refreshed analysis of what was causing the disproportionately high risk to this community group. It drew on wide ranging data and discussions with the community.
- 9.43 One aspect which she felt worth exploring was the question around what happened when a young person recognised that a peer was at risk of engaging in or becoming the victim of crime, and whether in these cases there was an awareness of the support the person could be directed to.
- 9.44 In the work carried out in the programme so far, this had been identified as a gap. It was sometimes less an issue around the availability of provision and more one around the extent to which young people engaged with it.
- 9.45 She had heard examples where young people had had concerns around the mental health of a peer, but where they also lacked knowledge around the support which they might broker for them or direct them to. This was also applicable to parents in situations where they had concerns about their children, including adult children.
- 9.46 Lamide Olusegun agreed with this point. He had been in situations where he had concerns about a young person but had not been able to persuade them to reach out to the two services he could think of which might help the police or education. There was unfortunately a level of distrust in the community towards the police. Young people were also reluctant to engage with education providers, which may or may not have been due to their experiences in these environments.
- 9.47 Parents were another potential route. However, he felt that parents were most likely to raise the issue through schools. Parents were sometimes shunned by the young person as a result of this. This had helped lead to situations where a family member of a young person had confided in him. In these cases he had not been aware of who to go to. This was the case with parents also (in terms of who they should go to for support or to flag concerns). Nuanced avenues were needed.
- 9.48 A Member said that in his view, a crucial problem was the cultural gaps between parents and children. Hope and aspiration were crucial. The most important question was to raise hope and opportunity. Young people were suffering from a lack of careers advice, which was a major issue.
- 9.49 Support to parents was also very important. He felt that schools could offer a space for parents, young people and community organisations to come together.
- 9.50 Asked to provide any final comments, the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Policy and the Voluntary Sector thanked the Inspirational Leaders. She wished to emphasise the extent to which their opinions and those of the wider community were fully listened to and taken very seriously. The input that they had already had was making an impact. For example it was helping to inform the new cultural strategy which was in development and would seek to better

ensure that opportunities in the arts and media were secured. Their contributions were and would feed into change.

- 10 Recent escalation in serious violence and the response of the Council and Partners Review Draft Terms of Reference TO AGREE
- 10.1 The draft Terms of Reference for the review were agreed.
- 11 Lettings Policy approaches of Camden and Lambeth Cabinet Member response to Commission's findings TO NOTE
- 11.1 Members noted the response of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Housing Needs to the Commission's letter handing over its findings from its exploration of the Camden and Lambeth Lettings Policies.
- 11.2 A Member noted from the response that the service would begin a review of the Council's Lettings Policy early in the New Year, and at the start of this process would explore the potential viability for Hackney of the Camden/Lambeth approaches. He noted that an update would then be provided to the Commission on next steps.
- 11.3 He suggested clarity should be sought around the timings for the review, in terms of whether this would begin early in 2019, or at the start of 2019/20.
- 11.4 The Chair agreed with this point and asked the Scrutiny Officer to seek clarity on the starting date for the review. She also felt that the Commission should make clear that it would seek to receive updates during the lifecycle of the Lettings Policy Review.
- 11.5 The Scrutiny Officer agreed to write to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Housing Needs on the points above.
- 12 Minutes of the Previous Meeting TO AGREE
- 12.1 The minutes of the meeting of the 13th September 2018 were agreed as an accurate record.
- 13 Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission- 2018/19 Work Programme TO NOTE
- 13.1 The Commission's work programme was noted.
- 14 Any Other Business
- 14.1 There was no other business.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00 - 10.00 pm