

London Borough of Hackney  
Scrutiny Panel  
Municipal Year 2019/20  
Date of Meeting Monday, 3rd February, 2020

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

---

<b>Chair</b>	<b>Councillor Margaret Gordon</b>
<b>Councillors in Attendance</b>	<b>Cllr Ben Hayhurst, Cllr Mete Coban, Cllr Sharon Patrick, Cllr Sophie Conway, Cllr Sade Etti, Cllr Yvonne Maxwell and Cllr Polly Billington</b>
<b>Apologies:</b>	
<b>Co-optees</b>	
<b>Officers In Attendance</b>	<b>Michael Honeysett (Director of Financial Management), Sonia Khan (Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery), Jasmine Martins (LBH Graduate Management Trainee), Alison Potter (Deputy Head of Mayor and Cabinet Office) and Soraya Zahid (Strategic Delivery Officer)</b>
<b>Other People in Attendance</b>	<b>Mayor Philip Glanville (Mayor), Councillor Carole Williams (Cabinet Member for Employment, Skills and Human Resources) and Councillor Nick Sharman</b>
<b>Members of the Public</b>	<b>1 Member of the public</b>
<b>Officer Contact:</b>	<b>Tracey Anderson</b> <b>☎ 0208 3563312</b> <b>✉ tracey.anderson@hackney.gov.uk</b>

---

## Councillor Margaret Gordon in the Chair

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

- 1.1 Apologies from Ian Williams, Group Director Finance and Corporate Resources.

### **2 Urgent Items / Order of Business**

- 2.1 The Chair proposed an amendment to the order of business and advised the minutes would be taken at the end of the agenda.

<b>RESOLVED</b>	<b>Item 4 on the agenda was moved to the end of the agenda.</b>
-----------------	---

- 2.2 The Chair informed the meeting a journalist was present and may or may not be recording the meeting. The Chair asked members of the public in observation to please take this into consideration if they wished to participate in the meeting.

### 3 Declaration of Interest

- 3.1 The Chair declared an interest in relation to item 7a. The Chair works at the Department of Works and Pensions and will not be in the room for this discussion item.

### 4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2019 were agreed.

<b>RESOLVED</b>	<b>Minutes were agreed</b>
-----------------	----------------------------

#### Matters arising

- 4.2 The Group Director, Finance and Corporate Resources to include an update on the financial implications of the Council's new Waste Strategy in the next finance update.

This action was missed off the list sent to the Group Director. The information request has been rolled over for inclusion in the next finance update.

- 4.3 The Head of Business Intelligence and Member Services to provide a breakdown of the following:
- (a) the percentage and number of complaints which relate to traffic schemes
  - (b) for the most recent period, the number of complaints going to stage 2 which are then upheld
  - (c) further detail on what additional compensation is being paid arising from Ombudsman complaints
  - (d) further detail on why the number of days taken to resolve ASC complaints is high.

The update has been provided on pages 1-3 of the agenda.

- 4.4 Head of Procurement to provide examples of how they have worked in the last year with local SMEs to seek delivery of wider sustainability benefits particularly relating to contracts valued at less than £100k
- 4.5 Head of Procurement to share with the Panel Members the draft version of the guidance given to Heads of Service on examining the viability of in sourcing which they utilise when assessing contracts that are coming up for renewal within the next 2 years.

Information for the above 2 actions was circulated to Members on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2019.

- 4.6 Head of Scrutiny and Ward Forums to collate a list of issues to be raised with the Director of Communications, Culture and Engagement at a future meeting.

This item has been scheduled for the next SP meeting.

- 4.7 Head of Scrutiny and Ward Forums to add to the work programme a briefing from Group Directors/Directors on how the learning from Complaints is cascaded down within the service area and used to help make service improvements.

Members to discuss and confirm the service areas they wish to receive as an update. This will be discussed under item 8.

## 5 Mayor's Cabinet Question Time

- 5.1 The Chair welcomed the Elected Mayor of Hackney, Mayor Phillip Glanville to the meeting.
- 5.2 The Cabinet Question Time with the Elected Mayor of Hackney covered the following areas:
1. Devolution and Policy – local government requests to the newly elected government formed in December 2019.
  2. Brexit – The Council's preparation for exit from the European Union
  3. Climate change – the Council's response to the climate emergency and how it is being co-ordinated and monitored
  4. Organisational Development – Update on the Council's work in response to the harassment and bully claims within the workforce.
- 5.3 In reference to the questions above the main points from Mayor Glanville's opening statement were noted to be.
- 5.3.1 In relation Devolution and Policy this work covers an enhanced public affairs piece of work looking at the Queens speech and thinking about the impact the new legislative programme will have on the borough. The council identified 11 priority bills they will focus on such as EU withdrawal, building safety, fire safety, NHS funding, NHS long term plans, and Wind rush compensation and expenditure bills. This work is being led by the Mayor and Cabinet Office in the council conjunction with officers from across the council working in partnership with London Councils and Local Government Association.
- 5.3.2 The overarching priority is securing a funding settlements for local government. This follows local government experiencing a loss of approximately half of the local government grant income. Mayor Glanville highlighted this amounts to a £520 loss per Hackney resident. This is in addition to the costs pressures across the council s(social care, homelessness and no recourse to public funds) which exacerbate these challenges. The key priority for the Mayor is lobbying on these issues. The Council's aim with its lobbying on the fairer funding review is to ensure they secure the best possible deal for Hackney.

**Monday, 3rd February, 2020**

- 5.3.3 Mayor Glanville pointed out the housing crisis was absent from the Queens speech. Local Government had hoped there might be some propose changes in relation to the type of home ownership but the housing crisis remains a key challenge for the council.
- 5.3.4 In relation to Hackney's request to local government they are lobbying for investment in social and council housing. It was pointed out any reversion to that funding back into home ownership products would be a backward step. The Mayor of Hackney acknowledged the Mayor of London has secured some funding for councils and affordable housing and that the work to date was good.
- 5.3.5 Mayor Glanville highlighted specific local concerns in relation to the Government's consultation on right to buy. The Council is fearful of any redefinition of affordable housing and the impacts. In regards to welfare reform there is concern about the LHA caps challenges and the private rented sector continues to pose challenges too. Although it was acknowledged there has been progress in this area in relation to the new renters' rights bills on affordability and sustainability, Hackney's view is these changes do not go far enough.
- 5.3.6 In relation to the Council's work on climate change. They have lobbied in connection with the Environment Bill. Mayor Glanville highlighted he had attended the Parliamentary Select Committee's review on waste reduction and recycling. Mayor Glanville highlighted the Environment Bill appears to dilute the approach Hackney would like to see around the response to climate emergency. As Britain leaves the EU there will be questions about the regulatory framework.
- 5.3.7 Following confirmation that Britain has now left the EU. The council has 3 key priorities 1) leadership in relation to citizens' rights and the values that under pin hackney. Mayor Glanville pointed out Hackney values its EU residents and will continue to advocate for them, their rights and immigration controls. The Hackney Life publication also provides updates to all residents about the position for citizens and the settled status scheme.
- 5.3.8 In relation to emergency planning, gold groups and coordination groups post Brexit remain in place within the council. The position is not as stark as previously feared. Questions remain around workforce, food supply, procurement and emergency planning but currently stand at a reduced status of emergency. There are still significant challenges as they approach the end of the Brexit transition period. However if in 12 months' time the challenges they have talked about remain unresolved then the effects of this will have an impact on Hackney. The Council continues to monitor the situation.
- 5.3.9 In terms of direct funding from the EU for the Council and local projects, within Hackney this is quite limited. There was social funding going to third sector organisations. Historically funding was drawn for some of the council's social work. The Hackney Works predecessor previously drew heavily on this source of social funding but currently not the case.
- 5.3.10 There is shared concern about London being able to access the new shared prosperity funding pot. Further thought will be given to how that funding is distributed to London.

- 5.3.11 In reference to climate change there are other places that have gone for strategy first and action later. In Hackney they have opted for the reverse. In terms of the council response to the motion and climate emergency. The Mayor advised the council is proposing to provide an annual update about their work on the climate change emergency declaration made in June 2019.
- 5.3.12 A decision was taken not to proceed with this years planned citizens assembly (this was cancelled due to purdah for the general election). The next citizens assembly will be during the sustainability weekend. This gives the council time to review how citizen's assemblies are working across the country and take on board best practice.
- 5.3.13 In relation to the update on organisational development with regards to the harassment and bullying claims. Mayor Glanville pointed out the council took the allegations seriously and for individual cases have reached a conclusion. This process has highlighted some areas of learning that will enable them to address some of the challenges they face in their workforce and organisational development plan. Following feedback taken from a number of sources (trade unions and the staff survey, political leadership and senior officers across the organisation) the Council has made a commitment to inclusive leadership.
- 5.3.14 In reference to the housing contact centre there has been continuous engagement from the Acting Group Director and the Housing Transformation Team. The council is moving towards permanent recruitment and addressing some of the issues raised in the review. The Council is keeping the trade unions up to date on the work and progress.
- 5.3.15 The Council is commitment to its workforce development programme. Its objectives are aimed at more insourcing of services, reducing the use of temporary staff, compulsory training for management around equalities, harassment and bully and making sure they are in constant communication with the workforce about these principles. This was a strong theme in the Chief Executive's roadshow this year. Every member of staff attend these sessions. The Council is also doing some work locally aimed at recruitment which promotes an inclusive approach. This will be rolled out.

#### 5.4 Questions Answers and Discussion

- (i) **Members referred to the update on climate change and the short term measures being put in place to respond and achieving a just transition. Members asked how the council will link it its work with the economy and how the council can support a just transition for workforce and/or jobs that do not translate into a sustainable greener economy.**
- (ii) **Members pointed out this work spans across more than one cabinet member. How will the cabinet members link their cabinet portfolio areas together for this topic and create greener jobs?**
- (iii) **Members referred to the action first and strategy approach and commented the council has a climate emergency narrative and is communicating what they are doing. Member commented the council has set a target of achieving net zero earlier than the Government's target but**

Monday, 3rd February, 2020

**this is a science based target Members pointed out benchmarking and monitoring is important too to demonstrate effectiveness of the work. The government's target is science based Members were interested in understanding how the council will use a science based target without a trajectory of benchmarking and monitoring. Members enquired if the council had any support with regards to effective monitoring and benching of the council's actions in relation to climate change? Members also asked what support has there been from central government for this work and has there any recognition from central government about a borough's role in meeting the net zero target?**

- (iv) Members referred to the Audit Committee's work in relation to the target and identifying the key tasks to achieve carbon neutral. Members enquired about the council's plans to achieve its target in 2040 and if this would involve investment and culture change to achieve the long term target.**

In response to the questions above the Mayor Glanville informed the Panel:

The Council's is one of the sector leaders for local place and local government. Hackney's aim is to take the very best of science and innovation to deliver on achieving the target. The Council's work aims to go beyond the set standard, whether that relates to trees, energy switching or its ambitions related to EV.

In reference to greener jobs the Council is working through the ZEN network and their sustainable transport work to embed the principles of just transition. The council was aware of the tighter regulations being proposed for transport and pollution and started a dialogue with Hackney's small businesses (these make up the vast majority to local businesses in the borough). This work helped to create leadership and peer to peer networks to help businesses to transition. Through their work in Shoreditch, Hackney has obtained access to the first roll out of zero emissions fleet for large corporate organisations to deliver to Hackney businesses. This has provided some learning to all businesses from the pilot work.

The council needs to ensure its work with business and around employment takes on board these principles as they move into new areas around climate change. There will be a challenge not to train people for jobs that will not exist in the future.

The Council is exploring solutions for heating that moves us away from large scale combined heat/power system powered by gas for future home developments. Mayor Glanville highlighted there are challenges with looking to use a system that does not have proven technology and how this can work for the council. This requires ensuring they have the correct workforce and skills. Their work will have to involve making sure training is available within a devolved skills system in London. The Council is feeding in their views at both a regional and sub regional level. They will also look at how they create a network of Hackney businesses to respond to this agenda.

The Council does not have a clear picture of the new jobs. But from their experience of rolling out photovoltaic (PV) at Bannister House they propose to

**Monday, 3rd February, 2020**

train local residents to be involved in the work. In the past the council has used local social enterprises in relation to education on the use of energy.

This immediate work will evolve into a strategy. The Council is aware it needs a clear baseline for measuring this area of work in terms of demonstrating impact, spend and monitoring the carbon saved. Any strategy being developed will have the core principles around sustainability embedded alongside revisions made to local plans and policies.

The council is developing an energy strategy to look at the impact of the council's energy use across all the functions. This is critical to driving down the council's energy use to make it greener and more efficient. The council will also conduct carbon budgeting by department in order to drive forward culture change to reduce energy and carbon impact.

Better reporting is starting but this will need some financial infrastructure and will be reliant on individual departments recognising this is the direction of travel.

The council is also doing some work with citizens to create opportunities for people to feel involved. The council does not want to just pass a motion but look at how citizens can be actively and practically involved. E.g. through activities like tree planting.

Mayor Glanville explained highlighted progression could be made through small work. An example of this was the Council's work on plastics with the half marathon and ongoing work with their markets team to reduce plastics and waste.

Mayor Glanville confirmed there had been very little support from Government or national leadership on the role of local government in this agenda.

- (v) In relation to Brexit Members referred to the Government announcing their plans to move further away from EU standards. Members enquired how this will effect Hackney and asked how the council would remain a pro EU borough to ensure its EU residents feel welcomed and supported in obtaining permanent residency?**
- (vi) In relation to devolution Members pointed out following the general election the government announced it was planning to reward the North for Brexit support. The suspicion is that this funding will come from areas like London. How can the borough protect its self from potential disadvantage?**
- (vii) Members asked for more detail about the Council's work on citizen's assemblies and how they are capturing more local voices? Members also asked what the council could do to make greening on existing council estates easier?**
- (viii) Members enquired about the impact of Brexit on funding for Hackney Council?**

**(ix) Members referred to antisocial behaviour and robbery across the borough and asked how the council can reassure their residents and assist with confidence building among residents?**

In response to the questions above the Mayor Glanville informed the Panel:

In his view there is a mixed picture about the rewarding for support. There is a continuation of the Osborne northern power house agenda around infrastructure and that can have an impact on London in terms of the investment into Crossrail 2 and entries into London via HS2. In a rhetorical question he asked will London receive further funding for transport infrastructure for TfL. He explained London does not have day to day subsidy for its public transport system. Access to the public transport system in London - when considering frequency of access to services - compared to other parts of the UK is good. However, there are still hot spots and poorly served areas in London that need to be advocated for like Kings Park Ward in Hackney.

In terms of funding and changes to the funding there are challenges. The Council is expecting to lose out on areas like deprivation. It is anticipated there will be movement towards rurality in the funding formula and this would have an impact on Hackney. The LGA demonstrated some figures in relation to social care recently that showed there would be continued cuts to many of the red war towns and cities. Therefore in relation to funding and potential cuts it was not clear where it will end up. The Council will continue to lobby for London and Hackney Council's settlement within the funding formula.

Regulatory alignment is important but there has also been a values driven alignment around environmental and agricultural standards and things the public care about. Mayor Glanville expressed he would be concerned if there a move towards lowering these standards and a fall away from regulatory alignment. There does seem to be some query about this now but this is a question for the Government. Government will need to demonstrate how serious they are about maintaining standards in relation to regulation about the environment. In terms of practical regulatory alignment locally this would be in the area of procurement and supply chain.

In relation to being an open space this will be determined by the immigration system implemented by the Government and keeping up the support to help residents to get settled status. The council aims to ensure there is no cliff edge for the most vulnerable residents. However, there is still some risk for people who do not have a full set of documents or cannot articulate themselves through the system.

In terms of Brexit and funding there are small pockets of funding that are part of consortiums of VCS organisation. There is no significant level of funding that is of immediate concern or that effects the delivery of projects from loss of funding. Many of the projects that do get funding the government has pledge to keep the funding going. Access to the shared prosperity fund will be key and this depends on how it is constructed and what proportion will be made available for London as well as sub regional distribution.

In terms of settled status Hackney has 14,000 EU nationals. The Council gets quarterly updates. The next set is due this month.



With regards to resident engagement there are a number of methodologies for citizens' assemblies such as reporting back mechanisms, involvement in co-producing solutions and leadership. If the Council was to conduct this work now it is likely to be some form of reporting back type process. Ideally the Council would like to have a process that looks at the year's work and also provides some challenge to go further and co-produce solutions.

In terms of relationships Mayor Glanville explained the Council will not always agree with all campaigns and activist. However in his view the council does have good relationships with all campaign groups and openness and transparency in the councils work. The Council is willing to consider new ideas and challenges. It is important to take these ideas into a citizen model. The Mayor expressed an interest in the jury type model which is based on a representative demography of residents to look at an issue. Mayor Glanville highlighted to get true 'Just Transition' you will need to involve people who are supportive as well as sceptical.

There is scope in scaling up VCS and volunteering to bolster the work of the council in their green infrastructure work. This will not take away paid roles within the council but aims to train up people so there is capacity to address the challenge e.g. mentoring and peer to peer support.

In terms of recycling on estates the council obtained some significant learning from their pilots on estates. They learned that closing shoots helped. It was pointed out shoots are difficult to maintain and allow people to forget about their deposit. The design of estates will be a key factor and needs to take into consideration people who cannot transport their waste around, either through disability, health or age. The council is exploring the next phase of recycling on estates and highlighted the cost for this is significant but it does deliver results. An example of this was the rubbish reconfiguration on St Johns Estate in Hoxton West. This work needs to continue and investment but key will be winning hearts and minds of people to achieve it. This work led to higher rates of recycling, better estate environment and lower ongoing revenue costs. It was pointed out the council is still committed to comprehensive waste service for their estates and properties above shops. As the council moves to fortnightly collection it will be key to reassure residents they are aware of density and the challenges with living in density where you do not have places to store waste like street properties.

In relation to community safety the Council has had some intensive discussions with the Police. There has been ongoing work around school safety in response to the awful muggings that have been taking place. Particularly around Stoke Newington School and Clissold Park. The Council has taken a community leadership role in ensuring parents have information on how to keep young people safe. The Mayor emphasised that young people are more likely to be victims than perpetrators. The community safety response is aimed at ensuring children are safe. In relation to this the Council is looking at the safe haven model for the community businesses and public infrastructure. This will enable a young person who feels unsafe to enter these businesses. This is being explored with the Police. The Police have put in place safe routes resources to ensure they are policing school drop off and pick up and the routes young people are taking to school.

Hackney will see an increase in police numbers over the next year. The Borough Commander is working out where he will deploy the additional police resource paid for by the Mayor of London. To the Mayor's knowledge the local priorities for policing are: schools, neighbourhood policing, reducing violence and the night time economy.

In relation to hate crime the Borough Commander is also keen to develop a resource to tackle the rise in hate crime reported recently. The Council is supporting this work through its Community Safety Team, the work that Young Hackney does, contextual safeguarding on trusted relationships and CCTV investment. They continue to work in partnership.

- (x) Members referred to the devolution of health and the possible merger next year to a single CCG across 7 boroughs. Members pointed out this could lead to a loss of accountability and funding. One possibility discussed to counteract this is to have an agreement that keeps Hackney funding in Hackney. Members enquired how likely would it be for Hackney to retain an accountable CCG and Hackney's health money in the borough?**
- (xi) Members referred to the work of the Audit Committee on the SEND budget and agency staff. The Council's targets for both areas of work were referred to and highlighted that for both areas challenges remain. Members referred to the SEND budget and the gap the Council is facing despite an extra funding commitment from Government. Members enquired how this will be taken forward. In relation to agency staff Members referred to the ambitious targets for each department. Members enquired about the targets for the reduction of agency staff?**
- (xii) Members referred to high streets and challenges with rate increases and the impact this is having on local SMEs and the demise of Hackney Walk due the challenges retail is facing. Member enquired about the Council's support to SMEs and how the Council is protecting Hackney's high streets from demise?**

In response to the questions above Mayor Glanville informed the Panel:

The Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission was scheduled to receive an update in relation to the plans for the CCG. The Mayor of Hackney expressed concern about the NHS halting the public engagement about the long term plan and future structures of the STP regions (due to purdah) and proceeding with the sign-off deadline for the plan as originally scheduled and not restarting the consultation. Mayor Glanville highlighted the Hackney CCG worked well and was one of the best in the country. There are parts of London where the CCG has not worked well and the demise of those CCGs may not be missed, therefore those areas may welcome a different approach. Hackney is pleased that it's lobbying and the strength of Hackney's health system has helped to keep it as a standalone system within the STP currently. If the 3 systems are finally merged the level of governance, freedom, financial resources available at our system level will be critical.

**Monday, 3rd February, 2020**

The Council continues its work to embed the 4 integrated commissioning work streams. Embedding the neighbourhood model, looking at more preventive work and ensuring that they do more with the community and the third sector. The average person does not appear to see any of the operational changes and neither does it appear to be effecting the services they receive. The key aim is for Hackney is to get a commitment that works locally.

On SEND and agency staffing, he did not have that information available at the meeting however the Mayor pointed out there is a manifesto commitment to reduce the use of agency staff. The Council anticipates having data available shortly that will give them information about the hard targets by service areas and directorate to look at the reductions of agency spend in a structured way. The Mayor pointed out there will be areas experiencing pressure but the commitment is absolute and part of the Council's Workforce Strategy.

On high streets there is a growing trend that is common to retail across the country. In his view Hackney's high streets are more resilient than other areas. The resilience's that underpins the local high streets revolves around people walking, cycling or taking public transport to their local high street. They see that services are often independent, culturally specific and highly valued. That is different from high streets that are suffering from the increase of out of town retail and the squeeze of online shopping. Mayor Glanville also pointed out Hackney's markets are doing well too. However, universal pressures on business rates still impacts the boroughs local town centres. The introduction of exceptions, particularly for small businesses, has been welcomed. Although it was pointed out local businesses are still dealing with the consequences from the previous business rates review and a new business rates evaluation is due shortly. The Mayor of London and Hackney borough have expressed to Government that a full review of business rates is needed. There is still uncertainty for the Council about the level of funding that will come from business rates for the Council's budget.

If there is a move towards 100% business rates for council's budgets and a move away from grant top ups. The questions will not just be about how viable the high streets are but also about the viability of the council's budget. It was pointed out generally London does badly when it comes to receipt of funding from government funding pots. Noting that either, London is not able to apply or they have done badly in the level of funding allocated. This is an area London boroughs and the Mayor of London will need to continue lobbying on.

In terms of the units on Morning Lane (Hackney Walk) this has its third set of owners. The Council is engaging with the new owners and communicating their desires and the principles Hackney Council wishes to see. One of the challenges is the original agreement in place with the Arch Company (previously network rail) such as no food and beverage companies. The Council's town centre team is in dialogue with them to look at the possibility of getting a different range of businesses in those spaces. Mayor Glanville advised he has had positive conversations with the business owner and they have a commitment to investment as well as a broad portfolio. The council has communicated their desires in terms of the planning policies and the council's aspirations to ensure their town centres are not one dimensional. In terms of planning policy all the Council's high streets are protected through Article 4 which the Council implemented.

## 6 Single Equalities Scheme Update

- 6.1 The Chair welcomed to the meeting Cllr Carole Williams Cabinet Member for Employment, Skills and Human Resources and Sonia Khan Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery.
- 6.2 This is an update on the Single Equality Scheme for Hackney 2018 -2022 covering the priorities and progress of the scheme. The officer commended by providing some background information about the scheme and its development. The main points from the presentation were:
- 6.2.1 In terms of the Council's response and its approach to promoting equalities. The officer advised they want to ensure equalities is embedded and delivered in all services and engages residents in a business as usual way.
- 6.2.2 The Council's Single Equality Scheme does not articulate everything they would like partners or services need to do in relation to promoting equalities. For example this scheme would not outline the work schools need to do to ensure children have the best education. The scheme outlines how they wish to proactively tackle specific inequalities. From the Council's assessment a main stream approach for all services would not be enough to shift the borough's complex inequalities. This is because it may be that there are external factors and structural inequalities a group faces that leaves them more disadvantaged than others. Through this scheme the Council aims to proactively eliminate discrimination and disadvantage that may be faced by certain groups.
- 6.2.3 The scheme sets out the key objectives and associated actions they wish to take. It also shows how the Council meets the Equalities Act and its public sector equalities duties.
- 6.2.4 The scheme was developed drawing on the insight gathered from the Community Strategy and produced an equalities evidence base - this is publically available. This information was reviewed alongside other sources of information (resident insight, staff surveys, assessment on progress and scrutiny reviews).
- 6.2.5 The objectives in this scheme look at both work to tackle poverty and tackling discrimination and disadvantage linked to protected characteristics. This recognises socioeconomic disadvantage as a key driver. However, there are other drivers too and the scheme acknowledges the relationship between them. The third objective is about building a cohesive and inclusive borough.
- 6.2.6 The officer referenced the objectives in the scheme. There are 2 enabling objectives.
- a) Embedding prevention into service delivery - the Council has done a lot of work to trail preventative approaches. The Council has a body of work it can use to share across the council to look at how they tackle root causes.
  - b) Promoting a culture of inclusive leadership and developing a more diverse workforce – this aims to have a more diverse workforce that thinks diversely in terms of inclusive leadership. A diverse workforce better

represents the demographics of the borough and helps to address some of the inequalities.

- 6.2.7 The scheme has overarching measures of success that are being monitored for key inequalities and gaps. To ensure that inequalities in education, employment and health do not worsen and if possible are narrowed.
- 6.2.8 In reference to the resident's survey. The Council would expect to see that satisfaction rate improves for equality groups where there is a difference and that the borough's cohesion indicators remain at their high levels.
- 6.2.9 Through the equalities work they are developing a Poverty Reduction Strategy to make sure they have a more cohesive approach to tackling poverty and are delivering tangible new actions that benefit those in poverty and seek to keep people out of poverty.
- 6.2.10 The officer explained the equalities evidence base is complex and highlighted the key inequalities as school attainment, life expectancy and Hackney's unemployment rate.
- 6.2.11 The officer informed the Commission the progress update being provided was in advance of the formal update in May 2020. The update has focused on the actions in the scheme which require proactive crosscutting work, rather than the ongoing work which is referenced e.g. Housing Strategy or early years.
- 6.2.12 The priorities for the first year involved developing a Poverty Reduction Strategy. The Council is currently developing a framework that seeks to embed an approach to poverty reduction in council plans and policies; to support residents who are living in poverty and seeks to prevent poverty. Within this area of work they have also developed a food poverty action plan and the Inclusive Economy Strategy.
- 6.2.13 The second objective in the priority year was tackling disadvantage and discrimination for groups based on structural inequalities or prejudice and discrimination. The key focus has been on the following areas:
1. Improving outcomes for young black men - Three work streams: education, mental health, reducing harm - moving to a youth led accountability structure from April 2020
  2. Young Futures Commission - Commission will share findings and recommendations early in 2020/21
  3. Older People's Strategy - Ageing Well Strategy being developed through co-production with stakeholders and older people - to go to Cabinet early in 2020/21
  4. Trans and non-binary inclusion in services and facilities - Focus groups to capture lived experience of services in February to inform recommendations
  5. Inclusion and access to leisure centres, parks and libraries - Focus groups going on in leisure centres, Parks strategy being developed
  6. Hackney an accessible place for everyone - Visits to areas, involving staff, residents and Members will begin in February 2020- to look at access and mobility and identify changes that can be made to specific sites and to Policy.

7. Integrated Communities Programme - Identified and mainstreamed improvements to services supporting migrants.

- 6.2.14 The third objective in the priority year was about cohesion covering the adoption of a cultural strategy and inclusive language guide; to help staff understand how to think inclusively about different people and communities. The aim of the guidance for staff is to help improve engagement with the Charedi community. This information does not provide an exhaustive list but touches on the areas that have been developmental.
- 6.2.15 In terms of the enabling objectives they are beginning to share learning from all locality based approaches that seek to take preventative approaches. Embedding a user led approach to service design.
- 6.2.16 The second enabling objective was the work to promote an inclusive leadership culture. This was launched last year and they trained champions. The champions have trained senior managers. The Council expects to have all senior managers trained by March 2020. After the training they will look at how to embed the principles into the organisational culture and training.
- 6.2.17 In addition is the Council's work about BAME staff progression. The Director have talked to over 300 staff and issues a separate survey for anonymous contributions. They have now worked with staff to shape an action plan which was shared.
- 6.2.18 The priorities for 2020-21
- Turkish Kurdish inequality - looking more closely at the needs of the community and identifying how outcomes can be improved
  - Encouraging men to seek help earlier (link to wider work to encourage earlier engagement)
  - LGBTQ Equality plan -scoping and actions. Last reviewed in 2014/15 so doing a refresh of this work.
  - Undertaking further development work into social isolation
  - Making it easier for residents to contribute to community life
  - Developing actions to improve digital inclusion
  - Developing a better understanding of the nuanced views of the Council - understanding lived experiences of austerity, understanding differentiated views on satisfaction and trust, confidence and fair treatment.

6.3 **Questions, Comments and Discussion**

- (i) **Members referred to the points made by the Hackney Independent Safeguarding Chair in the Hackney Citizen. The remarks were made particularly in relation to young people. He stated “that the problems they are dealing with in here are different from other boroughs because they are multi layered with people moving in with lots of money displacing other people who have been here for a long time, which creates a level of resentment”. Members commented the scheme highlights very complex issues and asked how much can the local authority do, to mitigate the effects of the inequalities described?**
- (ii) **Member queried what success would look like in relation to the objectives? Members referred to the engagement work with the Charedi**

community how many people from the Charedi community and enquired how many residents from this community were employed by the Council. Members also asked to what extent increased efforts have been made in that area.

- (iii) **Members asked for further clarity about the guidance asking if it was a full training programme, its aims and the measures it be judged against?**
- (iv) **Members referred to the Inclusive Economy Strategy and asked how ambitious is the strategy? Members enquired if the strategy covered the work of partners? Members pointed out the local hospital has 300 staff employed by a sub-contractor that does not pay the London living wage. Members asked if the strategy covered this through using the Council's power on the Integrated Commissioning Board.**
- (v) **Member referred to the report on page 50 in the agenda and referred to this statement "We need to see things from the perspective of the person who is in poverty, and the multiple and compounding ways that this impacts on their life". Members asked given the volume of impacts on a number of groups how the council proposed to hear their voices in a meaningful way that gets past the usual groups already engaged?**

In response the Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery advised the single equalities scheme has been honest on the stark realities. However, if we were to articulate - like we do in the Inclusive Economy Strategy – the links between change and growth this brings prosperity for some and inequalities for others (Using the links that have been researched). The principle is that although they recognise this is a big challenge they are starting with that policy position that the safeguarding Chair raised. Therefore just simply creating opportunities through promoting prosperity alone does not lead to economic and community wellbeing. The Scheme is a public articulation of that challenge and it is for officers to find a way to practically embed them.

In relation to strategy first and action later. The scheme outlines a lot of plans but also builds on the previous scheme. This has been a continuous learning process whilst recognising there has been a political reset. It is an articulation of a point in time based on the evidence at that time of what they need. The officer pointed out if challenges are reviewed on a service by service basis and do not take a holistic approach to cross cutting issues you will miss things that might help you to prevent issues.

In terms of what success looks like, they are scoping out a success criteria. But overall they will look at the inequalities and assess whether the gap is narrowing for different areas including cohesion and wellbeing. The officer pointed out this is not just about maintaining cohesion levels but monitoring for change as a result of the work; to assess their impact.

In relation to staff for their work on workforce diversity. There was an assessment of the gap. Looking at whether staff think the organisation is committed to equality in policy and in practice. This is covered by questions to staff about perception and if senior managers were committed to inclusivity. It's a combination of looking at resident perception in a granular way alongside the equalities evidence base and reviewing the changes.

In terms of the Charedi community and workforce diversity plans. The Council acknowledged they do not have a large number of Charedi residents employed. The officer advised they have worked on an employment programme in the past with partners like Interlink. The council is aware of the structural inequalities and barriers. There is now an approach looking at working with the community to consider employability overall as opposed to developing a council led programme. They recognise there are different barriers for different groups within the community. This will be their starting point with the community.

In reference to the Council's work on engagement it is about council services having a consistent approach in terms of understanding the different ways to engage, the different channels and how to engage. The aim is to create a body of understanding and wisdom for staff to draw on.

In reference to the question about the inclusive economy strategy they are started that dialogue. They held a session inviting local employers who are considered anchor institutions - within a community wealth building approach - the most significant employers, those we are procuring services from and those that have property. This is not full influence and all the levers but it is a start, the objective being to get employers to work with the council. This is discussed at the Integrated Commissioning Board.

In terms of lived experience and poverty it is important to get information about the lived experience. For the food poverty work they carried out interviews with people in the community and developed case studies. Further work is being scoped. The Council wants to understand how people have come through their experiences of poverty. They will draw on the insight from other programmes (like the Young Black Men programme) whilst being respectful of people's time.

**(vi) The Cabinet Member for Employment, Skills and Human Resources asked Members for more clarity on why they had focused on the Charedi community within the borough?**

In response Members explained as a local councillor they had limited knowledge about the community and this session prompted them to ask the question about this community group. They wanted to understand if the structural barriers of employment are so great or if there is a way to bridge that.

The Cabinet Member explained there is interest about other similar research models from the UK and overseas to see whether they can be adopted. The Cabinet Member advised she will continue these conversations with officers.

**(vii) Members referred to the Council's Ofsted inspections and enquired if the inspection reports were used as an opportunity to reflect on the changes in the workforce where the organisation undergoes period of change. Members questioned if there was a need to monitor if particular groups are overrepresented in the numbers leaving the workforce e.g. women on maternity leave, single parents or ethnic minorities. Also if there needs to be further work to look at who is coming in to replace those leaving?**



- (viii) Members enquired about the involvement of businesses with the Single Equality Scheme objectives?**
- (ix) Members made the following enquires:**
  - a) The work of the council in the past?**
  - b) The measures being put in place**
  - c) The levels of awareness in terms of the different communications they need to put out to enable young black males to be as equally employable as young white males.**
- (x) Members referred to the incident in Streatham and enquired what communication the council is going to issue to reduce hate crime that is linked to these types of incidents and affects community cohesion.**
- (xi) Members referred to the incident in Streatham and enquired what communication the council is going to issue to reduce hate crime that is linked to these types of incidents and affects community cohesion.**
- (xii) Members enquired how the council is ensuring the environment is friendly for older people in the borough. Making it intergenerational friendly for both the older and younger generations.**
- (xiii) Members commented the scheme was an impressive range of actions to tackling a difficult challenge like inequalities. Members understood the long term outcomes was to narrow the indices raised. Members enquired how the yearly targets matched against the resources and how they will monitor progress against the longer term objectives. Members pointed out the report does not provide details about resources and they wanted reassurance there were resources and an intermediate plan to match this for each objective.**

In response to the questions the Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery advised the following:

In relation to how the council understands its workforce profile. This work came from the working groups carried out with black and ethnic minority staff. This was also highlighted as good practice. An organisation is encouraged to understand the workforce profile in detail and the dynamics. The Council has tried to do both. The Council has identified improvements which officers are working on. The Council aims to build on the profile information to provide a more nuanced and granular analysis. This will include the people coming into the organisation e.g. who is interviewed verses who is recruited; the pipeline of progression and the impact of organisational change. The Council recognises if it looks at the work force profile data they have now it does not give them an understanding of movements.

The Cabinet Member for Employment, Skills and Human Resources added in reference to the voluntary redundancy (VR) scheme and the overall impact this has had on the workforce. They are currently analysing the VR data. The Cabinet Members advised this will be shared with Members once it is complete.

There is work on a local recruitment campaign. This has been launched to ensure they have a representative workforce, one the council wishes to see

**Monday, 3rd February, 2020**

better reflects the local community. In addition the Cabinet Member pointed out the apprenticeship scheme achieved its aim of increasing the number of local residents working for the council. Highlighting the council monitors and reviews the diversity of the apprenticeship programme within the council. The Cabinet Member informed the apprenticeship profile represents the group's Members would like to see working for the council (single parents, part time workers, workers with a disability and neurodiverse conditions as well as mental health conditions) from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds.

**(xiv) Members enquired about receiving a written update on the VR and apprenticeship schemes when available.**

The Cabinet Member for Employment, Skills and Human Resources advised a briefing session was being prepared for the next day and information will be sent to Members following further analysis of the impact on the profile.

In response to the question about the involvement of businesses. The Council has adopted a charter and this outlines the Council's requests of businesses. In relation to this charter the Regeneration Team is looking at how the council can work with businesses on employment and sustainable procurement.

In response to the questions about the council's work with young black males. The Council is evaluating their work to address that inequality in terms of the demographic representations. Through the Improving Outcomes for YBM programme a group of corporates have put a funding contribution to the programme. There is work across London with employers to look at the inequality for graduates. This work is challenging an employer's idea of employability. In addition Department of Works and Pension (DWP) through their flexible fund DWP are funding work that is related to the group being discussed. The Council's work through the programme has identified what works. In partnership they are looking at how to mainstream this work.

In regards to the Council's tolerance strategy and policy there is an officer group looking at this area of work. The scheme seeks to address this before it becomes an issue and its aim is to help the community be as tolerant as possible.

In terms of older people they have worked with older people to help to develop the Aging Well Strategy and an update on the strategy's development went to Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission (HiH) before Christmas. Access and mobility is a key strand of work and staff will go out on visits to look at access and space.

In terms of the targets the officer acknowledged they were ambitious but pointed out the progress to date and what had been achieved in one year. The officer highlighted in terms of the Poverty Strategy work success would be achieving a cohesive approach to poverty by the end of the year. Currently the council has a number of different initiatives but not a cohesive approach. However after year one they will be in a better position to demonstrate impact. This is a longer term goal.

**(xv) Members referred to the Turkish and Kurdish and the actions presented. Members pointed out the challenges are not new and have been around**

for a number of years. Members referred to the point in the presentation that advised the council would be drawing on the approaches from the YBM programme. Members asked what this means practically for the Turkish and Kurdish community? Members also referred to the point about developing a better understanding of the specific inequalities. Members pointed out there are difference between the 2 community groups as well as difference within the groups themselves and; commented there does not always seem to be an understanding of these community groups and an assumption they can be put together.

**(xvi) Members enquired what outcomes would the council expect to see to show achievement?**

In response the Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery advised for their work on Turkish and Kurdish communities this has not been addressed in year one. Some initial research work has been conducted to understand the data and inequalities in relation to education, self-employment, health outcomes and issues for older people. The Council also needs to complete its work with the VCS representatives and the community. The next step would be to develop the granular data from insight work about what is driving inequalities to identify the cross cutting lessons. This means not just looking at an individual service response but taking a more holistic view.

In relation to the question about outcomes, for each area there are specific outcomes. This involves looking at the gap and narrowing the gap. However, this should not result in an overall drop. For example in the area of educational attainment, the gap for the community group and overall should not narrow because attainment overall has fallen.

The Cabinet Member for Employment, Skills and Human Resources agreed with the point made by Members about the differences within a BMAE group. Acknowledging that when the terminology BAME is used it is creating one cohesive collective group that is glossing over huge differences between different ethnic minority groups. Pointing out this is making the ethnic minority groups invisible when those groups want to be visible.

The Head of Policy and Strategic Delivery added for the Improving Outcomes for YMB programme where they can be specific about the inequalities for different groups and were possible; they have encouraged the approach of being specific and intersectional.

## **7 Quarterly Finance Update**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed to the meeting Cllr Rennison Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply and Michael Honeysett, Director of Financial Management to the meeting.
- 1.2 The Chair referred to items 7a in the agenda and explained the Director of Financial Management in attendance was unable to provide any further update on the information provided in the agenda for Universal Credit (UC).

- 1.3 The Chair proposed they moved to item 7b and postponed item 7a until the next meeting.
- 1.4 Members agreed. The Chair will not leave the room for item 7a as this discussion was postponed.
- 1.5 The Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply informed a drop in about UC will be running in the spring. This will provide an update on the position post the general election.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Group Director Finance and Corporate Resources to provide an update on Impact of UC at the next SP meeting.</b>
---------------	--

- 1.6 Member proceeded to item 7b finance update.
- 1.7 The Director of Financial Management referred to the report as set out in the agenda on pages 89-105. The officer advised the Overall Financial Position (OFP) report is as laid out and assumed read. The key points from the finance report highlighted to the Panel were:
  - 1.7.1 The Council is forecasting an approximate £6 million overspend. The major contributors to the overspend are adults and children's services in the areas previously discussed e.g. adult social care and for children SEND provisions etc.
  - 1.7.2 The officer pointed out they are managing the overspend in a couple of ways. At the end of the year they use one off resources to apply to the overspend in addition to the planned reserves. To manage the budget deficit they set up planned reserves know to have budget pressures.
  - 1.7.3 In relation to the financial settlement set out in the report this has been confirmed for 1 year and this funding is the same as the current year.
  - 1.7.4 The Council had forecast a £30 million deficit of which savings of £13 million have been found for the 2020/21 budget. The deficit has been pushed back by 1 year with the roll over financial settlement. The officer explained the council has acquired extra funding but that changes to funding formula have been delayed by 1 year. The Council is expecting the fairer funding review to come into effect for 2021/22 budget.
  - 1.7.5 The main factors they are expecting to affect Hackney in the fairer funding review are: deprivation, area costs adjustments and population. For Hackney the council is expecting to lose funding in the areas of deprivation and cost adjustments.
  - 1.7.6 In relation to the deprived areas they do not have the same deprived areas they had back in 2014/15. For area costs they are talking about including rurality and travel time. This will go against areas like Hackney.

- 1.7.7 The Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply advised this is expected to move more money out of big urban areas into the shires. The Council is expecting to lose a substantial amount of funding.
- 1.7.8 The Director of Financial Management advised in relation to the fairer funding review the Council is estimating they will lose £17 million. However one area of exempt funding is the better now social care funding.
- 1.7.9 The officer pointed out there is uncertainty in relation to the fairer funding settlement and key to this will be the transitional arrangements put in place between the new funding arrangements and the old regime. From past experience changes to the financial system have been implemented over a 2 years transitional period. The Council has assume this in their forecast but this has not been confirmed.
- 1.7.10 The Capital update report in the agenda covers the Council's investment and resources for future years linked to the manifesto commitments. The report is provided as a monthly update to Cabinet on the programme of works.
- 1.7.11 The report covers works such as Hackney museum refurbishment, London Fields learning pool, Stoke Newington library refurbishment etc.
- 1.7.12 The Cabinet Member pointed out the OFP report highlights the purchase of 2 properties previously sold under the right to buy. Pointing out 2 properties have come back into council ownership.

## 1.8 Questions, Comments and Discussion

- (i) **Members referred to the continued cost pressures and the need to continuously use reserves. Members enquired about the sustainability of the current deficit and if the Council is using its full reserves? Members enquired about the planning, preparation and estimates for worst case scenarios in relation to cost pressure areas like SEND, adult social care and other particularly high areas of spend.**
- (ii) **Members referred to the £4-5 million drawn down from the HLT reserves and enquired if they were from planned or unplanned reserves. If unplanned how sustainable is this?**
- (iii) **Members referred to the care support commissioning and highlighted that the adult social care learning disabilities service was a regular overspend area but care support commissioning is a new area being highlighted in the report. Members enquired what is the increase related to and if this was related to a loss of care support beds, local resources in terms of bed availability etc.**
- (iv) **Members asked if the gap assumption made by the Council for the fairer funding had this deficit built into the Council's budget gap or if this will be and addition to the gap already identified.**

In response the Director of Financial Management informed the Commission the reserves are a mix of planned and unplanned. Some reserves were set up

**Monday, 3rd February, 2020**

for areas known to have specific budget pressures and the resources are put in to smooth transition. It was pointed out part of the gap in the budget forecast is for growth provision. This is for a phased approach to growing the budget. The officer agreed that sustainability was important and a key factor to take into consideration when setting the budget each year. The officer confirmed the drawdown of unplanned reserves was not high and advised most reserves used were from planned reserves and used in a transitioned way.

The Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply added there are layers of contingencies within the financial framework. The Cabinet Member explained there are contingencies within the project, directorate and formal reserves. They also add any forecasted increased in income like council tax. This impacts on the amount available for flexible spend at the end of the year to balance the budget. The Cabinet Member explained it was getting more challenging to achieve a balanced budget but they are currently managing.

**(v) Members enquired about the Council's net reserve position now compared to last year and asked if it was decreasing.**

In response the Director of Financial Management advised the net reserves did decrease slightly but it was marginal. Most of its use was on capital spend.

The Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply clarified this was not the Council's formal corporate reserves they were still untouched. The Director of Financial Management explained the council still held the formal amount recommended for local authorities to hold in reserves. This was £15 million. However the council is finding it harder to manage with increasing costs.

The Cabinet Member highlighted it was getting harder to manage the costs and with each OFP the overspend was increasing. The Council is starting to see the impact of austerity through increased demand. Explaining the Council is trying to manage costs and cope with increasing demand at the same time. The Cabinet Member cited the housing needs service an example of a service area with an increasing number of overcrowded families. The Cabinet Member pointed out they needed to consider the long term impacts from this service on other services areas. This could lead to the children needing to access children services or the family requiring access to other types of support due to pressures like debit, universal credit etc.

The Cabinet Member pointed out they can consider prevention but there will be areas of increasing spend that the Council is unable to stop such as children services. In some cases the Council may not have the power to stop the increase in spend, therefore they need to find the budget and resources to meet the demand.

The Cabinet Members acknowledged there may be different ways to do things and more efficiently but this will not fully address the scale of demand.

In response to the question about HLT reserves this was planned reserves for that year, but it was the last year of planned reserves. The forecast overspend in HLT is £9 million for this year. HLT have found some savings from other

**Monday, 3rd February, 2020**

services areas to fund some of the budget increase but work is continuing to look at how they can support this budget going forward.

The Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply pointed out the SEND position is not unique to Hackney, other local authorities are facing the same challenges. This budget is from Government the flexibility with spend has been reduced. This is a ring fenced budget that sits separate to the local authority's main grant funding. Currently the Government is providing just enough funding to keep the system afloat and local authorities are waiting for a steer from Government. In the meantime the Council will have conversations about contingency because SEND is not a service they will allow to fail or not operate. The SEND budget is not their budget it's a government budget and they have no clarity if it can run at a deficit. It is also unclear where responsibility lies if the funding runs out, if it is with central government or the local authority.

In discussions Members commented the service covers some of the boroughs most vulnerable children and all indicators point to a trend of increasing demand for this population.

- (vi) Members asked about representations from the Local Government Association (LGA) and other bodies to seek clarity on this issue with SEND services. Members commented the anxieties for families across the country will be profound and the Government has an obligation to reassure everyone that the funding will be there to meet needs. All local authorities with this responsibility need a clear steer from central government.**
- (vii) The Chair of Audit Committee highlighted that the Audit Committee did a review of SEND Services in Hackney. This review highlighted the Council was managing to control services to the best of their ability. The second conclusion was that SEND has a deeply unstable future because demand is increasing whilst resources are stable but diminishing. There is a time bomb in the system and councils needs to think about how to manage the funding over the next 3 years.**
- (viii) The Chair of Audit Committee commented the last Capital update report shows the cost scheduling and cost estimates are continuously moving and capital costs are shifting from quarter to quarter and year to year. There is a systemic problem with estimating, scheduling and costing. The Chair of Audit Committee pointed out raising and managing capital is becoming a more important activity. The Chair was of the view the Council needed to think about how they can manage capital in a more effective way.**

In response the Director of Financial Management informed the LGA alongside other bodies like the Society of London Treasuries was constantly lobbying. The officer pointed out there has been a large amount of lobbying which may have attributed to the extra one off funding received. The challenge for councils is the level of SEND provision. It was highlighted some council have opted to change their level of provision but the legal ramification from this type of decision have not concluded.

**Monday, 3rd February, 2020**

In reference to the capital update and budgeting he confirmed some budgets are moved from one year to the next for some capital programmes. The officer acknowledged the Council needed to get better at estimating capital spend because it does affect the budget position and borrowing activity. The officer confirmed to date the council has not borrowed in advance of need. This is closely monitored by the Director of Financial Management and he has ensured the council has not been in the position of borrowing ahead of need.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>Group Director Finance and Corporate Resources to provide an update on the key challenges in relations to SEND provision including an update on the national position.</b>
---------------	---

## **8 Work Programme 2019/20**

- 8.1 The Chair introduced this item and asked for an update from the Head of Scrutiny and Ward Forums about the budget scrutiny task groups' process for this area of work.
- 8.2 The Head of Scrutiny and Ward Forums explained the budget scrutiny task groups commenced in October 2018. The budget task groups were established as sub groups under the Scrutiny Panel and these have concluded and provided recommendations to the relevant Cabinet Member for the topic area reviewed.
- 8.2.1 The officer pointed out the majority of the task groups had to develop the area for review at the first session. In some cases this extended the number of meetings originally planned. The recommendations made were to feed into the budget decision for 2020/21-2021/22. Some saving proposals, if implemented, have moved to the relevant scrutiny commission for monitoring and update if required.
- 8.2.2 The process for some task groups morphed into a scrutiny review, conducting a number of site visits and bringing in external witnesses. The process was larger than originally planned and impacted on the work programme of the 4 main scrutiny commissions.
- 8.2.3 The budget task groups were Member led and each group had an independently selected chair. Each task group was supported by the Chair from one of the main scrutiny commissions. This process was viewed as very useful for Councillors (not part of the executive decision making structure) to understand the financial context to budget decisions.
- 8.2.4 The Head of Scrutiny and Ward Forums recommend Councillors continue with some form of working group to review budget savings proposals. However conducting this process in tandem to a full scrutiny commission's work programme had significant impact on the scrutiny work programmes for municipal year 2018/19.
- 8.2.5 In discussions about the process Members made the following key points.



**Monday, 3rd February, 2020**

a) Setting up a process that operates outside of the scrutiny function. It could be a working group led by the Cabinet Member with a membership of interested Councillors who work with the Cabinet Member to challenge and review proposals put forward.

b) There needed to be more structure coming from officers in relation to the proposed area for review. Particular if the topic area was broad and they needed to decide on the focus. In the current process this was left to the working group to decide and it was challenging.

c) This process should continue to be led by non-executive Councillors. Members commented having the process led by the decision maker may not provide strong independent challenge to the proposals put forward.

8.3 The Chair of Scrutiny Panel moved to the work programme and provided the following updates:

8.3.1 As a result of the pending GLA elections purdah is due to commence on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. Therefore the next SP meeting was moved from 27<sup>th</sup> April 2020 to 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020. Members were asked to note the date and the Scrutiny Officer will send out notifications.

8.3.2 The items for the next SP meeting are:

1. Quarterly Finance Update
2. Chief Executive Question Time
3. Scrutiny and Communications
4. Learning from complaints.

8.3.1 In discussion about the work programme Members agreed to have a more in-depth look at how a directorate uses the complaints data to make service improvements. Members agreed they would look at one directorate at a time and the first should be the directorate responsible for housing services. Members agreed this should not duplicate the work of the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission (LiH) but focus on how the service area uses the complaints data and how they learn from complaints with the provision of examples.

8.3.2 In relation to item 3 for the next SP meeting Members suggested they make a list of the previous requests and actions from their previous discussion with the Director Communications, Culture and Engagement to enable SP to monitor the progress.

8.3.3 The Head of Scrutiny and Ward Forums informed Members the Chair of SP and the scrutiny officer had reviewed the last discussion Members had with the Director and requested for information about communications support for scrutiny in other boroughs to use as a bench mark for comparison to the support provided in Hackney. The Director will also discuss with the Chairs having more autonomy with the communications to promote the work of scrutiny.

8.3.4 As a result of the next SP meeting date moving to the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020 so officers are unavailable to attend. The following work programme items will be moved to the next municipal year's work programme.

- a. Advice services review
- b. Poverty strategy.

8.4 The Chair proposed developing a survey to obtain all Councillors views about how scrutiny works and the impact of scrutiny's work in Hackney. The Chair informed Members a draft of the proposed questions would be circulated following the meeting.

## **9 Any Other Business**

9.1 None.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00 - 10.00 pm