

Overview and Scrutiny

Annual Report to
Full Council 2021/22



Chair's Foreword

It is my great pleasure and privilege to introduce the annual report for Hackney Council's Scrutiny function for 2021/2022 - the fourth and final report of the 2018-2022 term.

Fearless, focussed and effective back-bench scrutiny of the Executive in public is an essential safeguard of the Mayor and Cabinet system. In a rapidly changing and often bewildering world, scrutiny in Hackney has sought to shape the Council's response to the many of the challenges we face and to push the Executive to deliver better services for the residents we serve.

The last year has seen great challenges for the Council and our communities. As we emerged from the first phase of the Covid pandemic and began to restore services following the cyber attack, the shocking assault on Child Q propelled Hackney into the national spotlight. Scrutiny has a vital role in shaping our local response to these events and giving voice to our communities and, in particular, in the ongoing response to Child Q, we have been able to draw on relevant evidence from previous investigations which have highlighted conditions leading up to this incident. The impact of the climate crisis and the cost of living crisis has affected our priorities across the Commissions.

We continue to innovate in scrutiny, retaining hybrid meetings which allow a broader range of voices to be heard and having scrutiny in the community. Commissions have worked jointly on pieces such as Housing for Care Leavers or on Disparities in Maternal Mental Health provision.

Scrutiny Panel has continued to develop our cross cutting role, focussing on the accountability for the Climate Action Plan and the Council's poverty framework. As we move towards the 13th year of austerity our Budget Scrutiny function has taken an increasingly central role across the Commissions and within the Scrutiny Panel itself, particularly with the work on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission has published a review on the outcomes for children excluded from schools, many of the recommendations having already shaped policy, and they are continuing with a review on adolescents entering care. In response to public concern, the Commission has also held a meeting on the reconfiguration of Children's Centres, prompting a reconsideration of the proposed changes.

Living in Hackney continued to focus on trust and confidence in policing, particularly from global majority residents and it has made specific recommendations around Stop and Search. Following on from the Scrutiny Panel's work on the climate emergency, Living in Hackney has also investigated Energy Strategy and Energy Systems, Climate Change and Buildings and the Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure.

Skills, Economy and Growth has examined the impact of Covid and other economic shocks on local businesses and has put a spotlight on the role of Council in influencing the recovery and setting Hackney's economy on a trajectory that is inclusive, green and fair. In particular the Commission has shone a light on Net Zero Skills, Cleaner Greener Transport, the Night Time Economy and support for smaller businesses.

Health in Hackney has had an ongoing focus on monitoring the response to the Covid pandemic and vaccine uptake across our communities, particularly for those working in health and social care. A spotlight has been shone on support for long covid and the mental health impacts of the pandemic, as well as business as usual changes to provision arising from the ongoing integration of health social care.

As ever, this report reflects the contributions of hundreds of individuals, in particular, the chairs and vice chairs - Cllrs Conway, Hayhurst, Patrick, Billington, Adejare, Potter and former councillor Snell, as well as all the Commission Members. We have relied on contributions from the Mayor and Cabinet, officers, outside bodies and, very importantly, from individual members of our local community who have given up their time to contribute to our meetings and reports. We have benefited from reports in the press which have brought our work more immediately to a wider audience.

I'd also of course like to thank Jarlath O'Connell, Martin Bradford, Craig Player and Timothy Upton (with us for part of the year), the brilliant members of our Scrutiny Team, led by Tracey Anderson, who all take enormous pride in their work and are instrumental in pushing the boundaries of what can be achieved by a Council's Scrutiny function.



Cllr Margaret Gordon

Chair of Scrutiny Panel 2021/22



Responding to climate change was a key focus of our work this year

The Overview and Scrutiny function is required to report annually to Full Council on its activities over the previous municipal year. This summary report covers the municipal year 2021/22.

Scrutiny in Hackney comprises 4 themed Commissions which meet 8 times per year:

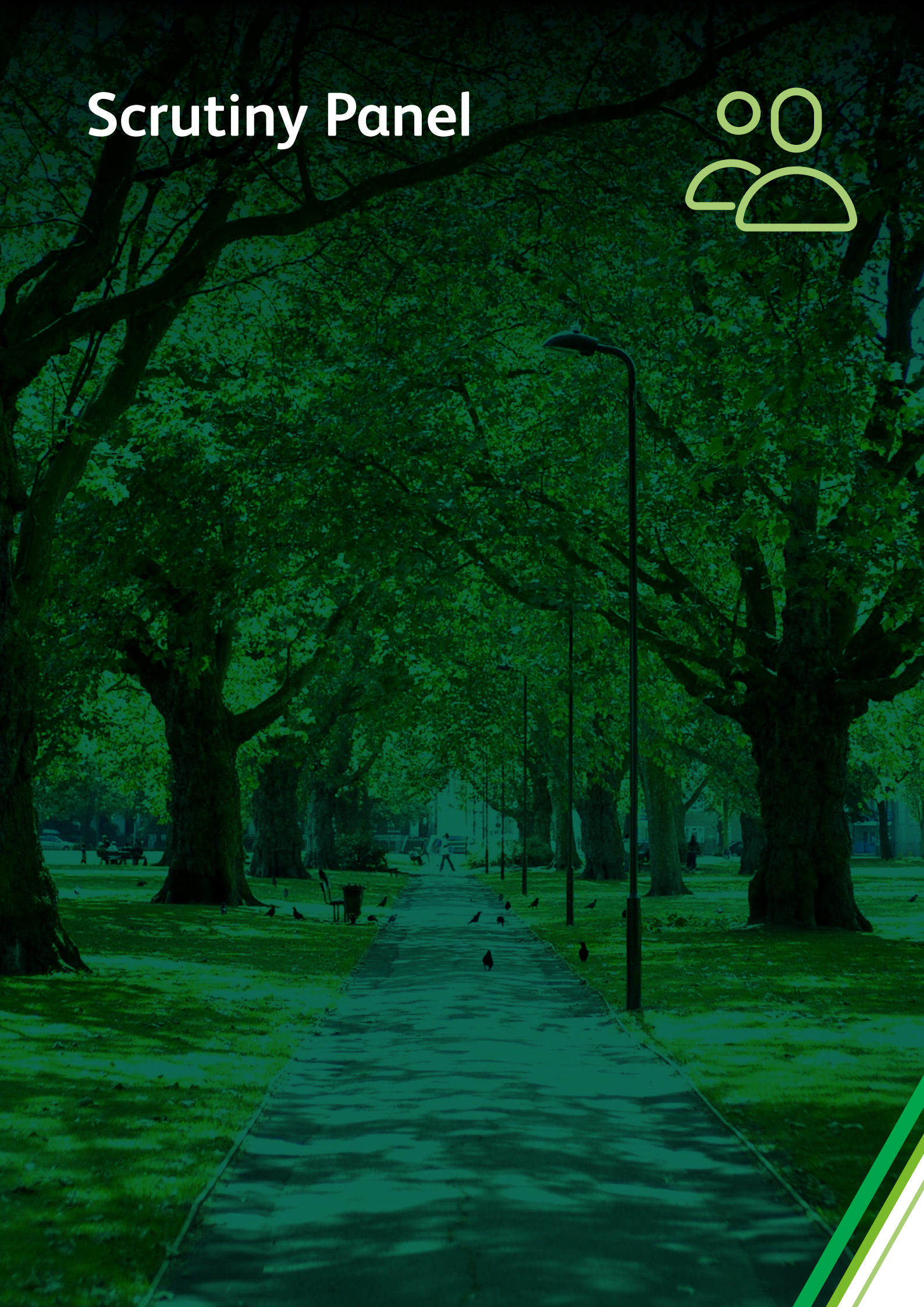
- **Children and Young People**
- **Health in Hackney**
- **Living in Hackney**
- **Skills, Economy and Growth**

The Chair and Vice Chair of each panel then comprise the **Scrutiny Panel** which meets 4 times per year and which also holds a Vice Chair post for the opposition party. Members are appointed annually at the Council's AGM. Scrutiny holds the executive (Mayor and Cabinet) to account for Executive Decisions and contributes to policy development. It has no role in relation to 'Non-executive functions' such as Planning, Licensing, Pensions or Audit.

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Scrutiny Panel



Scrutiny Panel



We meet four times a year and our meetings are a mix of our standing items which provide overview and looking at some issues which cut across the 4 themed divisions.

Net Zero, Sustainability and Decarbonising the Economy

This year we decided to initiate a cross cutting piece of work across the Scrutiny Panel and the Commissions focusing on the impact of the Climate Change challenge on the council and the borough. The purpose was to ensure that the Council is on 1 track to meet its Net Zero carbon emission targets by using both its statutory powers and its soft power to affect the necessary organisational, business and behaviour changes required. We also wanted to ensure that the necessary resources, finances and plans were being put in place to help make this happen.

The sessions focused on the actions being taken to achieve Net Zero, the road map to decarbonise the economy and the consequent impact on supply chains, procurement and service delivery. We heard from the London Councils Head of Climate Change about their Climate Change Programme and asked sustainability engineers from Buro Happold to set the wider context and share best practice

Senior officers from the Council set out the sustainability challenges facing the borough. We looked at the current governance framework to support this work and discussed it in detail with the lead Cabinet Member and the senior officers noting the elements that would feed into the preparation for the COP 26 conference. We urged officers to ensure that this work is better coordinated and embedded within service delivery and to examine how procurement processes and the whole supply chain can be optimised.

Key next steps were identified including: Developing Hackney's *Climate Action Plan*; *Delivering a Carbon Literacy Programme*; further developing the *External Communications and Engagement Strategy* and developing a robust Monitoring and Review Framework. In terms of funding there needs to be further applications to the government's scheme for building retrofit and a range of schemes which will subsidise electric vehicle (EV) charging points. New investment in fleet, changes to residual waste collection and blending, funding schemes such as the Green Homes programme, and helping to create commercial opportunities locally where risks may still be significant, all need to be explored as well as possibly using Hackney's own energy service company -



Summer heatwave - impacts of climate change

¹ Net Zero is a statutory target set by the Climate Change Act 2008 for at least a 100 % reduction of UK greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 (compared to 1990 levels). It replaced the UK's previous target to reduce emissions by 80 % by 2050.

Hackney Light and Power, as a vehicle for investments and transformative change.

We noted that one of the key challenges is pacing and the need to avoid implementing changes faster than technology and people can adapt but also, not moving so slowly as to lose momentum. Other aspects of the work were carried forward by the Commissions (see their chapters for more) on a continuous basis but starting with the following:

Living in Hackney	Retrofit of council houses and council buildings A review of the Council's Energy Strategy Electric Vehicle Infrastructure
Skills Economy and Growth	'Green jobs' and the shift to new skills; Ensuring the council's procurement strategy aligns with the energy strategy Developing cleaner, greener transport for Hackney How the council supports SMEs to decarbonise
Health in Hackney	The 'Net Zero' strategies of each health partner The science on the health impacts of poor air quality

The outcomes from each Commission's work will feed into a combined report to the Scrutiny Panel and this work will be ongoing.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme - Task and Finish Group

In July we set up a **Task and Finish Group** to look at the **Council Tax Reduction Scheme**. The Scheme replaced Council Tax Benefit which used to be administered by DWP. This represented a fundamental move away from a demand-led benefit to a fixed budget scheme and meant that the Council had to provide financial assistance to those taxpayers on a low income who had difficulty with paying their Council Tax.

The Task Group focused on the impact of CTRS on poverty in the borough and considered options to achieve an eventual reduction to a zero CTRS model. It held 3 themed meetings and it was composed of current Scrutiny Commission Members.

We welcomed the focus on designing a more bespoke system for Hackney and we expressed concern about the underclaimed hardship fund which does not appear to be working as intended and we highlighted the need for a greater focus on care leavers. A final report from the Task and Finish Group will be presented to Scrutiny Panel later this year.

Mayor's Question Time

Each of the Cabinet Members are required to attend a Cabinet Member Question Time Session with their relevant Scrutiny Commission. The Mayor's CQT Session is a duty of the Scrutiny Panel and we ask questions on three pre-agreed areas. This year they were:

Decarbonising policies: The Mayor outlined his approach which is to continue to prioritise actions that are being delivered now to complete the *Climate Action Plan* and to recognise that progress this decade will be vital in delivering Net Zero by 2030. We wanted to understand whether climate goals were being delivered equitably.

Housing: We asked about actions the Council can take to *increase housing supply* and the impact of the pandemic, of Brexit (on the workforce), and of inflationary pressures on building materials and of supply chain challenges. We got reassurances on the risk to the existing programme. We noted that the Council had built over 1,000 new homes and has 2,000 in the pipeline, but it could not build new social housing without cross-subsidising them through other tenures.

The biggest challenges and opportunities for Hackney over the next 4 years: The Mayor talked about an important move to focus more openly on issues around poverty; the need to rebuild trust with local residents in the aftermath of the cyber attack, and the opportunities for new ways of working that had arisen through the Council's response to the pandemic. He also welcomed the opportunities to progress more 'place based' development with local partners and agencies e.g. in health.

Additionally we asked him about the implications for inner London of the government's 'levelling up' agenda; on the need for more council investment to support local businesses and on early help and early years education particularly in relation to groups such as young black boys.



Our Overview Role

We also looked at issues which cut across the 4 Commissions and which would benefit from a wider perspective:

Recovering from the Cyber attack

In July the Scrutiny Panel began the year with an update on the cyber attack, particularly in relation to the recovery programme, the restoration of key services and the financial impact that it had upon the Council. Due to the continuing criminal investigation into the attack, the amount of information that could be put in public domain at that time was necessarily limited. Those services areas which the Council had migrated to cloud based systems had benefited greatly from the additional security and resilience that those provided and we noted that recovery work was accelerating this migration focus and Google had become the key communication platform.

Ways of Working

We noted how working patterns brought about by Covid pandemic had also reduced the council's paper and energy usage significantly and so contributed to the Net Zero target. It was likely that whilst the Council would ensure that staff remain connected to local workplaces, some proportion of homeworking would be maintained in the weekly routines of staff. With less demand for office space therefore, the Council planned to rethink how it used its current estate. Such an approach would contribute to reducing the need for staff to travel and help improve the balance between work and other life commitments.

Poverty Reduction Strategic Framework

In February we looked at the *Poverty Reduction Framework* prior to it going to Cabinet and we provided some challenge on it to the four Cabinet Members and the senior officers responsible for it. The aim was to review the work of the Council in relation to developing a poverty reduction strategic framework to achieve the broader objectives and aspirations to reduce poverty.

The initial mapping made clear the need for better coordination of local efforts and the pandemic response had acted as a catalyst for developing a more preventative approach, as had the new Community Partnerships Network. We welcomed the ambition of the work and explored their three priorities: *addressing the immediate needs of food poverty* as a stepping stone to address wider needs; the very clear evidence base supporting the need to *prioritise early help and early years* and the need to *prioritise ways of working in the poverty response* which will ensure that front-line workers are better equipped to meet local needs. We noted now there needs to be a greater understanding among all staff of the totality of the local offer and then how to communicate that.

Annual Complaints and Members Enquiries Report

Each year we consider this report from the Head of Business Intelligence. Complaints had risen slightly, up about 7 % in the year, but they were still below the three previous years. Members' Enquiries were up about 10 %. The number of Stage 2 complaints going to the Ombudsman had reduced from 34 % to 22 % as officers were resolving more complaints in-house. There was however an increase in the length of time taken to answer complaints owing to lack of quick access to data because of the impact of the cyber-attack. We learned about the new 'case work' system which allows Managers to see more granular data and we commended the progress being made.

Our Financial Overview

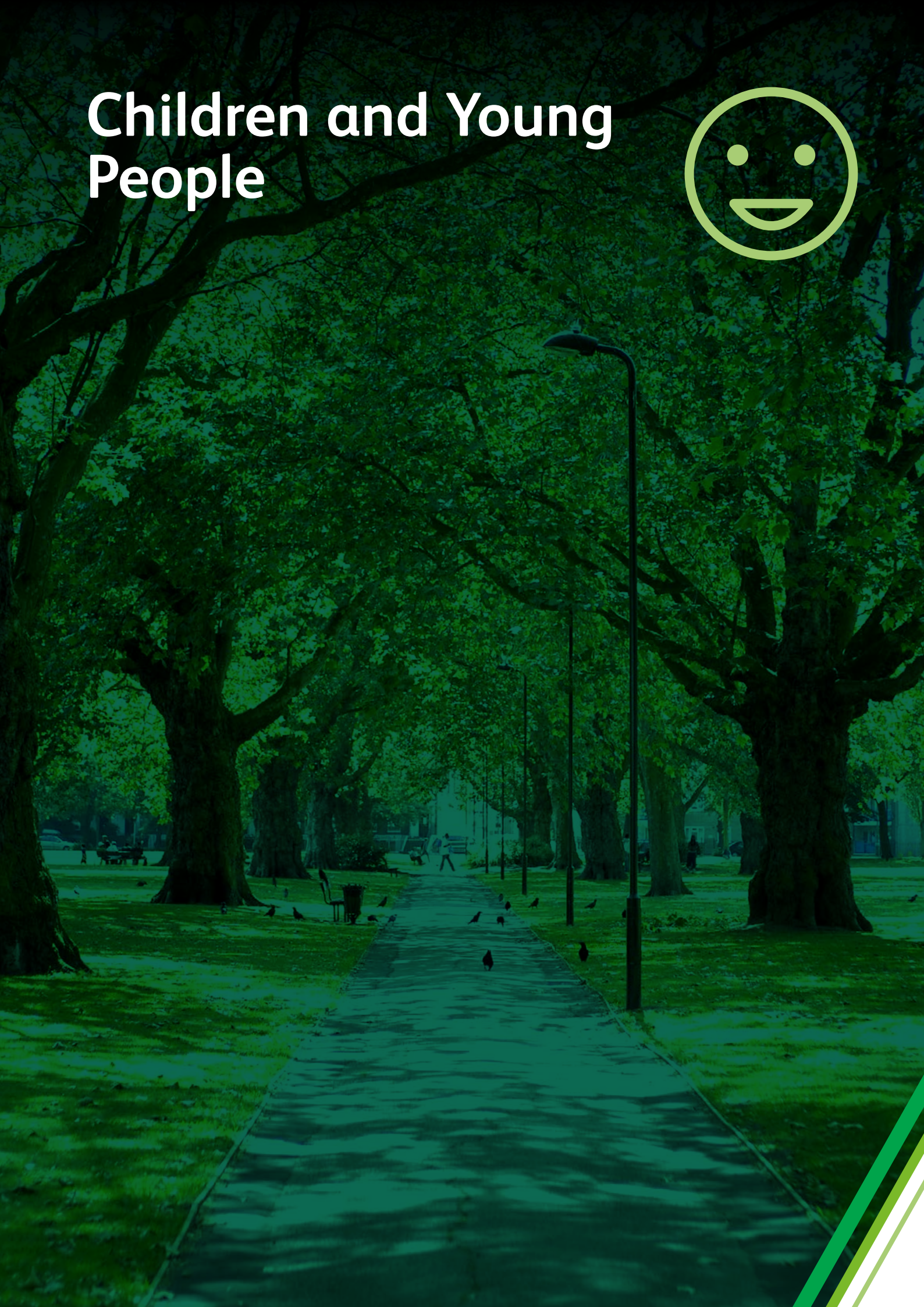
A key part of our work is Budget Scrutiny and we invite the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Group Director for Finance and Corporate Resources for **Quarterly Financial Updates**. At each meeting we consider the most recent reports on: *Overall Financial Position (OFP)*, *Capital Programme* and *Housing Revenue Account*. Then in February we receive a summary of the key points of the Budget prior to it going to Cabinet and Full Council for formal approval. We are joined for these sessions by the Chair of the Audit Committee.

Financial Performance

Over the course of the year we provide some challenge to the Group Director on the progress of the budget against targets and discuss what the key drivers of overspends might be. At our first meeting in June for example we discussed the then projected overspend. By February, even after Covid and Children's Services set-asides were added this was being projected as £4.99m. We noted how pressures within Childrens and Adults Social Care were key drivers here and discussed mitigation measures.

We heard about discussions with the Department of Works and Pension (DWP) and Cabinet Office around additional funding needed to recover from the cyber attack and we learned how it had impacted the ability to collect rent, council tax and business rates. We discussed the cost pressures from Children's Social Care, the Children and Families Service and from SEND and we learned for example that funding from S106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy would be less that year and the reasons for that.

Children and Young People



Children & Young People



We have completed a number of successful scrutiny projects this year, all of which highlighted a number of consistent themes which we aim to bring to our scrutiny work wherever possible:

- As a Commission, our work is more powerful and impactful when we directly involve the voice of children and young people;
- Bringing new evidence to the table, by talking to service users, consulting with front-line staff or other local authorities adds new perspectives and contributes to improved decision making;
- Scrutinising issues which are important to local people and which resonate with the concerns of the community builds engagement and involvement with our work.

Our work was broken down into: full reviews, single-meeting items, joint or cross-cutting pieces of work with other Commissions, pre-decision scrutiny, ongoing oversight, annual overview items as well as Cabinet Question Times including an aspect of budget monitoring.

REVIEWS

Outcomes of school exclusion

We did a full in-depth review on the outcomes of school exclusions which not only assessed the underlying disparities of those children being excluded from school but also looked at how exclusion impacted on children and families, and the support available to them locally. Evidence gathering included focus groups with children who had been excluded or who were at risk of exclusion, focus groups with parents about their experiences of their child's exclusion and we visited numerous alternative provision sites, where children who have been excluded continue their education.

We reached a number of key conclusions from this work:

- Permanent exclusions rates among Black Caribbean children was increasing, countering national trends;
- Around two thirds of children permanently excluded are diagnosed with SEND *after* they have been excluded, suggesting that undiagnosed needs may be contributory to their exclusion;
- Permanent exclusion leads to significantly worse outcomes for young people including lower attainment, greater likelihood of not being in education, employment or training (NEET), increased prevalence of mental health concerns and greater likelihood of criminal exploitation;
- Whilst some alternative provision was nurturing, supportive and enabled children to achieve, too often it did not meet their needs, especially the most vulnerable children.

We reported in December 2021 making 18 recommendations to the Council, all of which were accepted. Critically, the recommendations focused on the need for the Council and local education services to address underlying causes of racial disproportionality in exclusions data including earlier diagnoses of SEND. Other recommendations encompassed the need for improved transparency, monitoring and challenge to school exclusions; supporting schools to be more inclusive through greater use of positive behaviour management strategies, extending provision of the Reintegration Unit to secondary schools, improved safeguarding risk assessments prior to any permanent exclusion and the need to overhaul commissioning, oversight and support for local alternative provision.

Our work has been positively received by Hackney Education and has already achieved a number of positive local outcomes:

- All schools are being encouraged to sign up to an Inclusion Charter which is being supported by the appointment of a Diversity and Inclusion Systems Lead;
- The Reintegration Unit now supports secondary schools pupils at risk of exclusion as well as primary;
- A new role for the Pupil Referral Unit is being developed to help more children maintain their places in secondary schools;
- A dedicated officer was now working with alternative provision to improve commissioning, performance monitoring, quality assurance and to ensure improvements are delivered;
- Hackney Education now reports annually to Councillors on permanent exclusions alongside all other school exits (School Moves, moves to alternative provision or Elective Home Education).

It will be important to maintain oversight of this body of work in the coming years to ensure that there is sustained progress against our recommendations and improved outcomes for local young people.

Adolescents Entering Care

We also started a new scrutiny review in 2022, looking at the increasing number of adolescents (aged 14-17) who are coming into care and how effectively they are being supported by the Council. Over a third of children now entering care are aged 16 and over and three quarters of all children in care are aged between 10-17 years. Many of the adolescents entering care have multiple and complex needs and it has become more difficult to find appropriate placements for them. A significant number of these children are not able or want to be cared for by foster carers, and need to be supported in residential care settings, sometimes a long distance from their families and friends. As our budget scrutiny work has revealed, these settings are also very expensive with the Council paying up to £10,500 per week (average £4,600) for some placements which is generating acute budget pressures within the Children and Families Service.

In the context of the above there are four main aims for this review: to understand more work on the demographic profile and needs of adolescents coming into care; to assess how effectively this cohort of adolescents are being supported by local services;

to review financial, governance and quality standards which underpin commissioning processes for care placements and to identify if there are more localised collaborative solutions to meet the care needs of adolescents; and through analysing pathways into care, identify if there are opportunities for early help which may reduce the risk of adolescents becoming looked after children.

JOINT / CROSS CUTTING PIECES OF WORK

Housing Support for Care Leavers (joint with Living in Hackney)

In partnership with Living in Hackney, we conducted a review of housing support for care leavers. A critical part of this review was a focus group with 10 local care leavers who clearly expressed the range of challenges they faced in finding stable affordable accommodation in Hackney to support their pathway out of care. We heard from key officers about the challenges faced in finding a range of accommodation to support the varied needs of care leavers, in particular the limited way in which the Council can offer affordable housing through its own housing register. Further details of the meeting are given at pages 30-31.

From this work, we developed a set of *10 recommendations* which have been submitted to relevant Cabinet members for approval which include: the need to improve the consistency and quality of housing advice for care leavers across both Corporate Parenting and the Greenhouse (the Council's homeless service); the need to increase the social housing quota for care leavers to 30 units; the need to improve transparency around eligibility; to ensure that Housing supports care leavers seeking accommodation in the private rented sector (PRS) which is of parity with other housing options. We asked that the Council should consider the development of an Accredited Landlord Scheme, act as Guarantor for deposit and rents for care leavers and provide assistance through Housing projects to help care leavers transition to PRS. We also suggested increasing the housing supply and options for care leavers through, for example, a property audit across both HRA and General Fund.

Our recommendations are timely as a new Housing Strategy is in the process of being developed and we hope to influence that. We are currently awaiting the Cabinet response to our recommendations.



Maternal Mental Health (joint with Health in Hackney)

Jointly with Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission (see also p.50), we looked at the disparities in maternal mental health i.e. perinatal health. It was noted that there were disproportionalities in the number of Black and global majority women accessing IAPT services and being diagnosed with mental health conditions. From the report it was clear that there was a patchwork of service providers where there was a possibility of some new mothers falling through the cracks. Both Commissions concluded that these services needed to be more integrated with clear lines of oversight and accountability. This was a complex area however and further investigation was needed particularly in relation to support for younger mothers, which would hopefully be picked up next year's work programme.

SINGLE MEETING ITEMS

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

Concerns were raised to us around the provision of independent SEND education and support at a setting in Hackney. We requested a report from Hackney Education to review commissioning arrangements, quality control and financial oversight of independent SEND provision. In separate budget scrutiny work, we learned that, then, over £14m is spent annually on commissioning independent SEND provision, an area of spend which is rising significantly for the Council. Hackney Education acknowledged that there were deficiencies in financial controls and the oversight of quality monitoring of independent provisions and provided details of new improved accountability arrangements. We will continue to review and maintain oversight of these improvements to ensure that there is effective budgetary control and quality standards.

Children and Education's Anti Racist Action Plan

In March we received an update on the *Children & Education Anti-racist Action Plan*. Previously Hackney Education and Children and Families had produced separate anti-racist strategies but we wanted to see more evidence of a unified approach to addressing disproportionalities across all children services and to see progress in a unified children's strategy. Whilst we welcomed progress in developing common principles and approaches, on the basis of what was presented to us we still felt that there were two parallel strategies and further work was needed. In light of the outcomes of Child Q (the case of a young black girl who was strip searched in school by the police) Safeguarding Practice Review, we felt it was important that local services have a shared understanding of anti racist practice and a common understanding of safeguarding risks and approaches to Black and global majority children. Scrutiny's response to the Child Q issue will be covered in the 2022/23 Annual Report.

Sexual Harassment in Schools

In response to the *'Everyone's Invited'* revelations of sexual harassment of girls and young women, we looked at how Sexual Harassment was being addressed in local schools and by Hackney Education. *'Everyone's Invited'* is a website which serves as a safe place for survivors of rape, sexual assault or wider misogynistic experiences to anonymously share their stories. A number of local schools were named within this data. We invited the head of a local secondary school to set out the nature of sexual harassment in schools and the action taken to address it. A consistent theme coming from this session was the need for more robust and open Relationships and Sex Education to be taught consistently across schools in Hackney. We were aided in this scrutiny by the participation of members of Hackney Youth Parliament, who helped to provide additional and informed challenge to the local school and education leaders.

The role of the School Improvement Partners (SIPs)

We assessed the role of the School Improvement Partners (SIP) in early 2022, as this service is central to the way in which Hackney Education challenges schools about their performance and routes to strategic support. Hackney Education has 14 SIPs working with 81 local schools and 30 schools elsewhere (it is also a traded service) offering 3 core visits a year to work with school leaders on school improvements. Whilst this is clearly an important service providing a useful connection to local schools, we felt that the standards used to improve performance did not sufficiently reflect local priorities and ambitions (such as inclusion) and were more geared to Ofsted assessment frameworks. It was however encouraging for us to note that all schools, including academies were engaged within this programme.



PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

We assessed early drafts of important new strategies before they were finalised and agreed by Cabinet. Pre-decision scrutiny gives non-executive members an opportunity to positively contribute and influence decisions before these become the agreed approach of the Council.

Early Years Strategy - Reconfiguration of Children's Centres - Following sessions we ran involving feedback from local parents our consultation response highlighted the unsatisfactory nature of the original consultation arrangements which had conflated proposals for the development of Early Years Strategy alongside plans to close two Children's Centres. Whilst we noted the financial context in which Children's Centre closures were put forward, we were unhappy about how these closures would impact on the availability of subsidised childcare given that there is a lack of comparable local alternatives. Subsequently the Council ceased the consultation and put any changes to the establishment of Children's Centres on hold. We will be returning to the issue next year.

School Estates Strategy - Hackney Education faces two key challenges in the coming years: falling school rolls and the need to increase maintained in-borough capacity for children with SEND. The School's Estates Strategy sets out long-term plans on how to best utilise the school estate to respond to these and other local challenges. Our main focus for scrutiny was to seek assurance that Additional Resource Units would be located where they are most needed and not in those schools where falling rolls had opened up capacity. In addition, we felt that improvements could be made to proposed commissioning arrangements for children with SEND from the Orthodox Jewish Community to involve local leaders further and increase in-borough provision. Finally,

the future environmental sustainability of the school estate was not fully reflected in the proposals we received and we asked that this be included in the final strategy.

Early Help Strategy - Early help is non-statutory support that is provided to children and families at risk of poor outcomes and who need additional help to achieve a good level of well being. We noted that this review has been in progress since 2019 and that the early help offer detailed proposals focussed solely on Hackney Council services. In examining the strategy, we agreed with the principles and processes to support its implementation but noted that it would be helpful to have a much tighter vision of what outcomes were expected from this strategy, particularly in relation to local disproportionalities. We felt that the final iteration of the strategy might also benefit from closer examination of the consensual nature of early help services and those circumstances where such help may be refused, as well as further details as to how the community and voluntary sector would be involved in delivery of the early help offer.

ONGOING OVERSIGHT ISSUES

Responding to Ofsted Inspection Report

In the light of recent inspections we maintain regular oversight of the necessary improvements required by Ofsted and we continue to monitor the action plan from the last full inspection, where children's social care was judged to 'require improvement'. We also see reassurance from officers that there is sufficient progress to achieve 'good' or better assessment at the next inspection. The key takeaway was that further improvements were necessary in information sharing across the partnership as well as the management challenge of having children living in neglectful environments for too long.

Ofsted also undertook a focussed visit in July 2021 to assess arrangements for Children in Need and those children on a Child Protection Plan. The outcomes of this inspection confirmed our previous concerns in relation to the impact of the cyber attack and use of temporary records systems. We received assurance from officers that the temporary record system would be replaced and Mosaic was reinstalled in April 2022.

Unregistered Schooling

We continue to maintain a watching brief on the oversight of 'Unregistered Settings' in Hackney, which was the subject of a previous review. In excess of 1,500 boys predominantly (though not exclusively) from the Orthodox Jewish Community continue to be educated in settings for which there is no regulatory, health and safety or safeguarding oversight. As we were reminded this year, the child safeguarding risks of unregistered schools remains high, boys at an unregistered school in Manchester had to be rescued from an ill-planned mountain hike, and there was a fire in a local unregistered school in Hackney.

Progress in this area however remains minimal, as efforts by local Safeguarding Children Partnership and Hackney Education continue to be rebuffed by local community leaders, as they fear that improved safeguarding arrangements are a precursor to changes to the curricula of their schools, to which they are vehemently opposed. We note that the Independent Safeguarding Chair continues to liaise with political leaders, highlighting

the inadequacy of legal framework to bring about safeguarding improvement in these settings. We do however expect some movement next year, as legislation currently going through parliament will introduce a much tighter definition of what constitutes a school, which will bring many unregistered settings into the regulatory and enforcement framework. It is hoped that improvement will be apparent when we revisit this subject next year.

CABINET MEMBER QUESTION TIME

Once a year we invite the two Cabinet Members with specific responsibilities in our area to attend a Cabinet Question Time and explore a specific area of focus that is agreed in advance.

In response to the widespread and growing concerns around **increased prevalence of mental health issues for children and young people**, we questioned the *Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Children's Social Care*. Local CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health) services were under pressure with the number of referrals to East London Foundation Trust doubling from 400 to 800, and the proportion diagnosed with a mental health condition increasing from 8% to 18%. We examined plans to improve access and ensure that services reach vulnerable groups of children. We noted we were not reaching the national standard for access to the eating disorders service and that a local summit of CAMHS partners had been convened to assess what improvements could be made.

Whilst it was acknowledged that CAMHS was clearly under pressure and that some young people were waiting a long time for mental health support, City & Hackney was performing better, comparatively, than many other areas, and it had the shortest waiting lists for talking therapies and other broader CAMHS assessments.

In terms of improving access, whilst there were no plans to introduce open access mental health hubs for young people, local services were focused on improving capacity across the CAMHS network. There has been limited progress in developing a 'no wrong door' approach across CAMHS and we will pursue this further in next year's work programme.

With **growing pressures within SEND services**, we questioned the *Cabinet Member for Families, Early Years, Parks and Play* on how increasing numbers of children were being diagnosed with Social Emotional or Mental Health concerns (SEMH) was contributing to rising demand for children to be put on an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Given our ongoing work on disproportionality, we wanted to understand more about the demographic profile of this cohort of children, the intersecting factors which may increase prevalence of SEMH and cumulatively, how the needs of these children were being met.

We noted that contributory factors to increased diagnosis of SEMH among children include: attachment history, a lack of emotional response and positive feedback by a caregiver. SEMH may also be related to trauma history such as abuse, domestic violence, bullying, exclusion and crime. We noted that additional provision for children with SEMH would be provided through the School Estates Strategy which would provide additional mainstream school support as well as more specialist school places in Hackney.

BUDGET MONITORING

We monitor in-year budgets of both Hackney Education and Children and Families Directorates to help identify service pressures and to ensure that identified savings proposals are on track to being achieved.

For *Hackney Education*, we focused on the SEND services as this is an area of ongoing significant budget challenge. In particular, we looked at the commissioning of independent and non-maintained SEND provision which accounted for £15m of the £48m high needs budget. We noted that in Hackney over 13 % of children with SEND were attending an independent and Non Maintained sector, which was twice that of the national rate (6.2 %) and the 5th highest of any English authority.

SEND services were expected to run up a £4.5m year end deficit, contributing to cumulative SEND overspend (at the time of our meeting) of around £14m. Whilst there was an understanding that central government would compensate for this, it was not clear if this would be for the total accumulated debt (or proportion thereof) or what the terms might be (such as service reform). As such, this remains a significant financial risk to Hackney Education and the Council more widely, and an issue over which we will retain oversight.

In examining the Children and Families Service budget we heard that the corporate parenting budget continued to be a significant area of overspend, totalling about £4m. From our questioning it was revealed that residential placements were the main contributor to this deficit, where over 40 children were placed in residential care at an average cost of £200k per placement per annum. We heard that with many young people entering care with particularly high levels of need, more were being placed in residential care especially as Covid had also impacted on the numbers of foster carers who might also be able to care for these children. As this was a nationwide issue, increased demand was also restricting supply and further fueling costs for residential care.

Similar issues were also highlighted in relation to the provision of semi-independent care which was needed to support the increase in the number of 16 and 17 year olds entering care in acute housing need. Both these discussions were helpful, as they assisted us in our other scrutiny work in relation to adolescents entering care, and underlined the need to review commissioning arrangements for residential social care placements.

ANNUAL UPDATES FOR OVERVIEW

Every year there are a number of standing items which we take to monitor key aspects of the performance of both our schools and the children's and families service and our Safeguarding Board. These updates help us maintain an overview of key services for children and young people and help us to identify if additional scrutiny is needed:

Children & Families Bi-Annual Report (twice yearly) - Two issues stood out we noted that a third of Child Protection Plans were in place for 3 months or less, which suggested that risk averse assessments were being made. We also noted the decline in front

door assessments being made, which we were reassured was because a new triage and helpline had been set up for local practitioners to advise them on the appropriateness of referrals.

City Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP) - With many practitioners moving to on-line consultations, we sought reassurance from the safeguarding partnership on how local practitioners were ensuring that the *voice of the child* was maintained in this environment. CHSCP countered that in their investigations they were broadly impressed with the ways children and young people were engaged and involved by practitioners. We noted that this has become a much wider concern and would result in national system wide recommendations for improved practice.

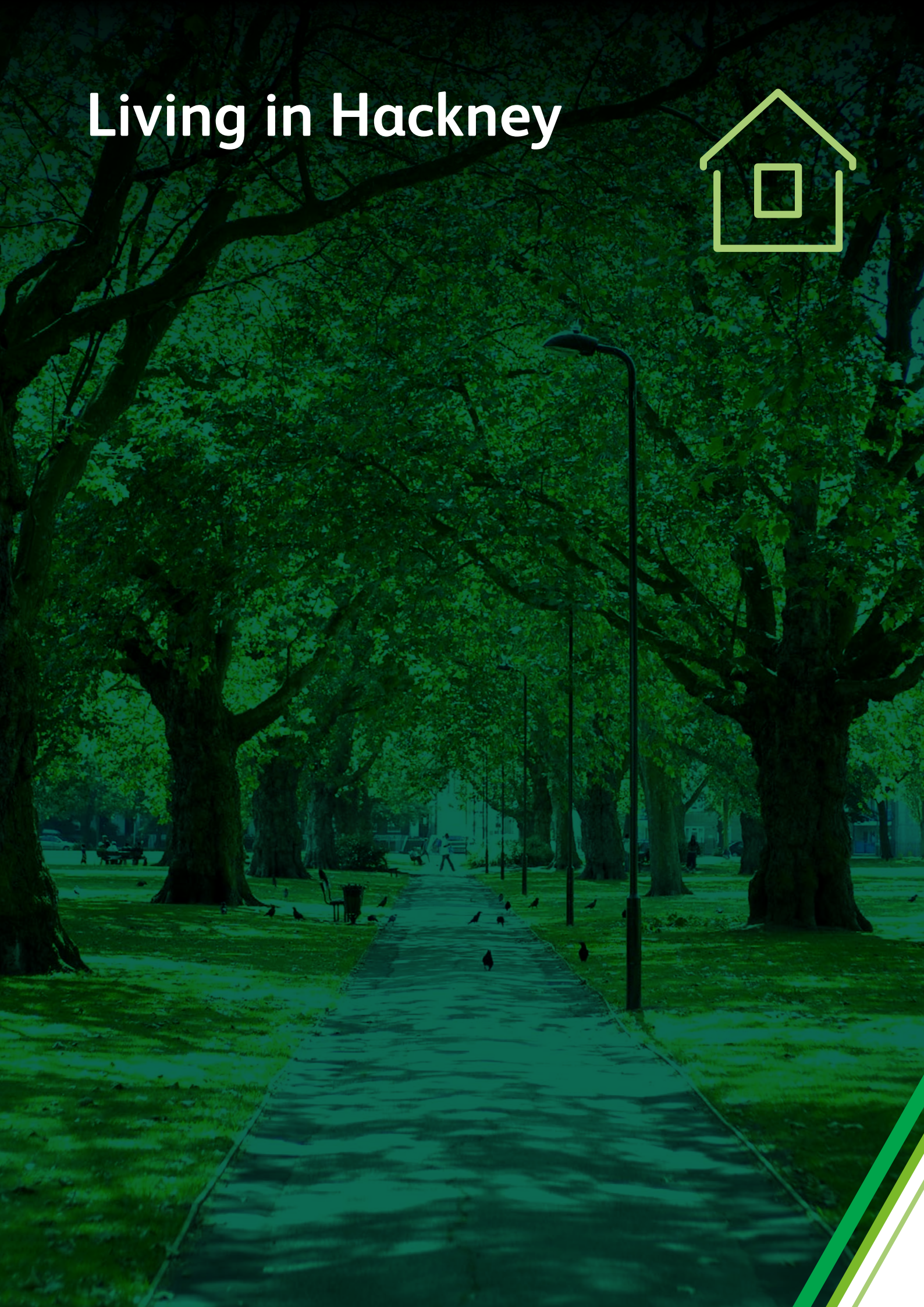
School Admissions - this is to ensure that there are sufficient school places at reception and secondary entry and that appropriate future planning is taking place. A key takeaway from the data was that falling school rolls were beginning to impact on local primary schools, with a number of schools agreeing to restrict their form entry numbers. We heard that falling school rolls would continue in the short-term at least, yet this additional capacity could help in response to growing numbers of children with SEND and the need to find in borough placements.

Pupil attainment - we review the educational achievement and progress of children in Hackney each year and review how the council is supporting underachieving groups. Due to the pandemic, teacher assessments replaced public examinations in both 2020 and 2021 which meant that it was not possible to compare results to previous years. Public examinations resumed in 2022.

Exclusions and Pupil Movement - this is a new standing item on our agenda which helps us maintain oversight of school exclusions as well as the number of children moving between schools (School Moves) and out of school (into alternative or Elective Home Education) in any one year. A key takeout from this item was that permanent school exclusions had fallen dramatically over school lockdowns, and that Hackney Education was working across schools to share best practice on how to sustain low levels of exclusions. We were also struck by the consistency of the disproportionalities in this data, with children from traveller communities and Black ethnic groups over represented in all pupil movements categories.

Childcare Sufficiency - this is also a standing item on our agenda where we can assess whether there is sufficient childcare across the borough, it is of sufficient quality and reaches those children and families in most need. At this session we noted that the pandemic has fundamentally changed the way parents utilised childcare services, where greater homeworking had reduced the need for childcare and where many parents restricted use to their free entitlements. In this context, many private nurseries were struggling as they had reduced demand for places and their ability to cross-subsidize free provision with paid for care was limited. We therefore questioned officers on the range of business support which was available to independent and voluntary childcare settings, and whether this could be extended.

Living in Hackney



Living in Hackney



The past year has been challenging for the Hackney community as a whole and this is recognised in the work we have undertaken in our Commission. At the forefront of our undertakings has been an overwhelming desire to ensure that the voices of residents are central and represented in our scrutiny of the services which residents receive.

Ensuring that services meet the needs of all and that, within the multiplicity of procedures and processes, all residents have a sense of agency was our key line of enquiry this year, across a very broad programme of work.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

We have a statutory duty to scrutinise the *Community Safety Partnership for Hackney* and to monitor its *Community Safety Partnership Plan 2019-2022*. Each year we conduct a review looking at a specific area of the Partnership and its work in relation to community safety.



Trust and Confidence and Inclusive Policing

A key part of our focus was on the need to reduce the disproportionality among ethnic minority groups being stopped and searched and to seek further progress on ensuring their community engagement structures are properly representative. This was the main concern coming out of our previous session in Nov 2020 and we had requested written updates from all the key parties. We began the year therefore by devoting a whole meeting to Community Safety hearing from the local Borough Commander and the London Lead for Violence and Stop and Search from the the Metropolitan Police as well as senior officers from MOPAC (Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime) and Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC).

We discussed **better use of police powers** (handcuffing, tasers, use of force and stop and search). MOPAC acknowledged that there was a disproportionate impact on some communities causing wider public concern. They acknowledged that while police's community engagement structures had been in place for some time they were not as representative as they should be and so their action plan contained a commitment to overhaul them. We pressed them for action on this while welcoming first steps such as their new race equality data dashboard.

On **data transparency** we asked them for a commitment to do more to better promote what data they currently put in the public domain and to make it much more accessible. MOPAC explained they have regular oversight boards led by the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime where they review MPS data sets and the MPS business plan.

We questioned why a large proportion of **complaints or appeals** were not upheld by the IOPC. They explained that the latest figures showed 32 % upheld and 68 % found in favour of the police. This compared with a previous figure of c. 50 % upheld. The IOPC replied that this reduction pointed to an improved performance by the police.

We also asked about whether it was possible for the IOPC to have a role in helping to establish the **standard for accountability of police officers**. We asked how officers could aid the public to understand how the IOPC, MPS and MOPAC work together to build trust and confidence. We asked for better reassurance to the public that the MPS does have robust processes in place to hold police officers to account. Referring to the IOPC website we pointed out that it was unclear to the layperson what the difference was between appeals and reviews. We asked the IOPC if they could assist Hackney Council officers and MOPAC to promote to local stakeholders and to take part in public meetings.

We challenged the MPS on a recently published **Public Inquiry** concluding that it had institutional corruption and we queried why IOPC's systematic reviews of the MPS hadn't highlighted this earlier before a Public Inquiry was necessary. We pressed them on the role of the IOPC in getting the MPS to be more candid and to view itself and its procedures more critically. The Borough Commander acknowledged that the MPS was a very large organisation but was not, in his view, institutionally corrupt or institutionally racist. He acknowledged that they did have areas where they do need to improve and added that these types of behaviours will be rooted out.

We commented that often the processes in place by the MPS may not address people's complaints in full because these actions are considered 'normal policing' by the MPS, however the public may see these things differently and this needs to be understood. We stressed that the public would like to see the recommendations of the public inquiry implemented in full. We acknowledged that there were no quick fixes but we asked that changes need to happen fairly quickly to provide reassurance to the public that there is a robust system in place and one in which the public can have some confidence.

On MOPAC we took issue with the failure of the Commissioner of the Met to acknowledge in full that there is **disproportionate treatment of black citizens** by the police across London. We asked how the MPS carried out local recruitment for its community Review Groups.

We questioned the effectiveness of **how the MPS is currently organised** across London, having regional and some centralised functions e.g. the tactical support units and the ways these are mobilised, in our view, breaks the link with local communities. The Borough Commander disagreed however stating that the TSG (Tactical Support Group) had the highest positive stop and search outcome rates in London and that there were unfortunately many misconceptions about its performance.

We challenged the **profile of MOPAC** pointing out that many in the community had never heard of it. We acknowledged their engagement efforts and enquired whether its budget had increased and noted it had not.

We discussed the contentious issue of **body-worn cameras**. The Borough Commander stated that the local BCU was establishing a Police Encounter Panel which would involve

an independent process looking at body-worn video footage or incidents that are shown in the media. We pressed them on who would be on it and if it would include local young people and how they would be recruited. We discussed the issue of identification and sanctioning of police officers who are not using body worn cameras as required and how this is handled. We asked about the MPS communication strategy for when police officers are disciplined or retrained when they are deemed to be not acting professionally.

We asked about the regular use of **Dispersal Zones** and their impact on trust and confidence in those neighbourhoods. The Borough Commander clarified that these zones do not make it easier to carry out stop and search as police officers still need to show a proportionate lawful and balanced use of stop and search.

The Borough Commander did highlight that in the previous 6 months they had stopped between 600–850 people per month in Hackney. The average positive outcome rate was c. 28 %. He added that, unfortunately, they also do need to stop people as young as 12 yrs old who have been found carrying zombie knives or drugs or who are suspected of being engaged in serious violence. He explained that he would continue to direct his officers to use stop and search in a proportionate and lawful way in order to keep people safe.

Following on from the meeting Members accepted the Borough Commanders offer of a 'ride along' with police officers in Hackney to observe them on duty. We concluded that trust and confidence remains a key concern within our communities and it is important that we continue to monitor the progress of change. We will of course be returning to these issues.

CLIMATE CHANGE

In October Scrutiny Panel embarked on a cross cutting piece of work in response to the Climate Emergency (see p.6) and as part of this each Commission was asked to explore different aspects of the issue within their remits. We decided to look at Energy Strategy and Energy Systems, Climate Change and Buildings, Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure and the learning from London Councils' 'Net Zero Carbon Workstreams'.

The context for this work has been a number of resolutions at Full Council committing Hackney to deliver on the tougher stretching target of achieving a 45 % reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 (from 2010) and Net Zero emissions by 2040 across all the Council's full range of functions. The idea is to surpass the headline decarbonisation targets wherever possible.



Energy Strategy and Energy Systems

We examined the Council's Energy Strategy, and what will be needed to meet the Council's Net Zero target. We explored the trade-off between new technologies and 'going greener' vs. higher energy bills, and we looked at local planning policy and how it might be amended to help achieve Net Zero targets.

We heard from the Cabinet Members, Chair of Planning and the relevant senior officers. We welcomed the focus on increasing cross departmental collaboration as well on innovating and upskilling and on simplifying existing practice by focusing on the need to balance what can be achieved at pan-London level vs. borough level. We questioned the use of offset funds when development sites can't meet their Net Zero requirements. We discussed the Retrofit programme for council housing and we looked at the use of engineered timber in constructions as a possible solution to achieving Net Zero. We discussed the types of heating systems (district heating, heat pumps, ground source heating, solar panels) that new developments were implementing.

We noted how regeneration projects can create the critical mass to really develop district heating schemes and they can also be used to decarbonise existing buildings. We learned how solar panel installation is an integral part of achieving Net Zero and that the government, then, was backtracking on it after having cut the subsidies.

Climate Change and Buildings

Over two meetings we focused on climate change and buildings, looking at Hackney's council housing, new build homes and regeneration developments and the council's corporate property portfolio examining what changes and improvements might be made.

We noted how the social housing sector is facing a huge challenge to achieve Net Zero including crucially a 'C' rating on Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) across all homes by 2030. The volume, type, age and current efficiency ratings of the UK's social housing stock means an enormous retrofit operation will be required to meet these targets. But this is happening against a context of tightening fire safety regulations and cladding retrofit in the wake of the Grenfell tragedy which is an additional financial challenge, and a housing crisis which means that delivery of new affordable homes must be a priority.

Housing Services

A key challenge for Hackney's housing is that 75 % of households are flats and most household dwellings were built between 1900-1930. Flats are often built with solid brick walls and 90 % of heating systems are gas individual boilers. 27 % of homes are also in Conservation Areas. It is estimated that the average investment per council property will be £22,300 and in the private sector this will be much higher. We questioned the Cabinet Members and senior officers as well as the Resident Liaison Group and Lordship South TMO Chair and the Hackney Downs Estate Chair on how we might tackle these challenges.

Housing Services took us through their approach looking first at the fabric of the buildings and then the services. The first stage of moving to Net Zero is to reach EPC C rating and the Council only has approximately 50 % at this level.

Then, in the private rented stock, the key characteristics are that there are often multiple owners, different incentives between owners and occupiers, a more transient population which is younger and more mobile, properties are often older and more complex and a lot of regulation adds to the pressures of housing values and tenure loss.

The Resident Liaison Group reps argued that while most leaseholders would be happy to contribute they were concerned about works showing little or no evidence to support them. They observed that most of the Government's 'Green Homes Grants' had been returned because of challenges in securing equipment or materials.

We asked about the effectiveness of heat pumps and people using secondary heating when these proved insufficient. We discussed solar panels and the challenges when they are not suitable for particular properties because of positioning.

We heard about the "holy trinity of retrofit" starting with 'fabric first', then services, then renewables. We debated this order with officers and they explained how it had evolved. The consequences of this approach could mean not moving to heat pumps in the first phase because it is focused on getting the fabric of the properties as energy efficient as possible. There might also be economies of scale to be found around heat pumps. We noted that there will be a whole range of different options that will need to be weighed up by the Council and they will need to understand each as the research is carried out.

Housing Regeneration New Homes Delivery

In a second session we heard from senior officers about how new-build homes and regeneration developments will help deliver Net Zero and how the Council's maintenance programme and retrofit, as well as work on the non residential council properties.

We discussed two regeneration projects demonstrating a positive trajectory of change to achieving the Net Zero: Kings Crescent Phase 1&2 and De Beauvoir. King's Crescent had used a hybrid approach of refurbishing units and new buildings. A key change was to move from gas CHP to air source heat pumps using electric technology. The expectation was that these measures would help to reduce the on site carbon emissions by 49 %.



Kings Crescent

Council's Strategic Property (non-residential)

We looked at the Council's non residential housing stock comprising mainly offices, depots, libraries, and the Town Hall (excluding schools and highways). The corporate assets are the buildings the council occupies to deliver the council services and the key challenge here is the age of the estate. We noted the successful re-adaptations of Keltan House, the Annex Bldg, Maurice Bishop House and 280 Mare St, where the Council was able to invest, against the future revenue streams, in the fixture and fittings of the building and heating system to make them more efficient. As a result, in the last few years the council had moved out of 100,000 sq ft of office space and this had the biggest impact on its carbon footprint as an organisation.

We discussed the need to upskill the Corporate Property team itself. We discussed whether the Council should insist that its commercial tenants should have their own Net Zero targets. We discussed the sheer variety of the nearly 400 commercial and VCS properties in the portfolio which range from buildings like Principal Place, the state-of-the-art HQ for Amazon, to small launderettes on estates.

Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure

We examined Electrical Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure in the borough and discussed the major plans to extend it with the Cabinet Member and key officers. We learned how EVs are currently too expensive for most residents, however the Council wanted to have the correct infrastructure in place for when they are ready to switch. There is an ambition to have 3000 charging points by 2030 and we stressed that they need to be located in areas that will create the most demand.

We learned that it was not about switching all vehicles to electric but creating the environment that supports people to switch when ready, however the Council's existing objective to achieve an overall reduction of vehicles remained a top priority. We noted that charging at home is relatively inexpensive but of course most residents don't have access to off-street charging using their own home tariff, therefore the aim must be to provide equity and access to a cheaper tariff.

We debated with officers that the new infrastructure must not clutter pavements, noting that the preference was to locate the charging points on 'build outs' and not on public pathways. We noted concerns about out of borough residents using Hackney's charging points as EVs do not require a parking permit.

We sought assurance that Hackney's 'no car' policy is maintained with a focus on greater use of public transport and campaigns against cuts to bus routes and for adequate funding for TfL. We noted that it was not the aim to have EVs replace the current car numbers and discussed the need to 'future proof' tenders and contracts to



account for technological advances. We explored what consultation will take place before the siting of charging points and how the Council will need to understand potential impact on streets and communities.

Climate Change - London Councils' Net Zero workstreams

We looked at workstreams initiated by London Councils that are being led by other Councils and we heard from Members and officers from Harrow, Enfield and Waltham Forest. The 'Consumption Emissions Workstream' focused on food, electricals, textiles, and plastics. The 'Retrofit Workstream' refers to fabric improvements, heat decarbonisation and renewable energy in all domestic buildings. We welcomed London Council's ambition to get each council in London to work collaboratively, including with Registered Providers in multi landlord settings, by sharing data on property needs and existing investment plans and by looking to align programme delivery. We also learned about building market confidence by developing a retrofit plan, including clear targets, and mapping retrofit opportunities across the various housing tenures. We also discussed how a programme of low energy retrofit can form part of the ongoing housing maintenance programmes.

We discussed how a council can collectively procure and deliver retrofit at scale, including enabling home owners to access solutions and about the work with local educational institutions to promote the development of skills and careers in retrofit work.

HOUSING SUPPORT FOR CARE LEAVERS

In February we devoted a whole meeting to a joint session with the Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission to review the housing support and accommodation options available to care leavers in Hackney. We used the session to examine how well Corporate Parenting and Housing Needs teams work together to support care leavers, and how current and future housing needs of this cohort are reflected in the Council's Housing Strategy.

As well as all the relevant Cabinet Members, we heard from the Group Director for Children and Education, the Director of Children's Social Care, the Director of Regeneration, the Head of Benefits and Housing Needs, the Head of Corporate Parenting, the Head for Care Leavers and their teams. We also did some benchmarking by hearing from senior officers from Lambeth and from Islington and most importantly we heard from 5 care leavers themselves. We held a separate Focus Group in advance on 2 Feb involving 10 care leavers and we visited two semi-independent accommodation sites on 14 Feb, where we also spoke to support staff and care leavers. All this fed into our main discussion.

We considered a range of reports which made clear the increasing demand for services as the number of care leavers grows. As of January 2022, the Service was supporting 399 care leavers aged 18 to 25 and in terms of the future growth there were 413 children in social care, 129 of which were aged 16 or 17. On the Housing supply side just 400 social lets in total became available in 2021 which the council could re-let, of which 18 units were allocated to care leavers via a quota system.

From the Focus Group we learned how the circumstances and needs of care leavers vary considerably and this requires very specific and bespoke support. Except for those already in a social housing tenancy, all were uncertain or anxious about their future housing situation. We noted a concern that care leavers may not always be given adequate housing advice or in a timely manner, and there is a case for more specialist housing advice and guidance to be provided.

We were alarmed to note that some were reticent about going to university for fear it would impact on their ability to maintain a tenancy or impact on their future entitlement to social housing. We noted that other councils extend tenancies to 25 yr olds. With 40 care leavers attending university, Hackney has one of the highest nationally. Where care leavers do wish to attend, advice is focused towards those universities outside of London as this may be more affordable for them.

We made a number of recommendations to officers. We noted that care leavers had to be eligible for support from the Greenhouse, and in danger of becoming homeless in order to access the deposit for a property in the private rented sector and we felt that it was unacceptable that care leavers should be exposed to such uncertainty in order to get basic assistance. Our view is that the Council has a special duty of care to care leavers and this must be reflected in the language which officers use, so they are not referred to as just 'residents'. Care Leavers face a number of 'drop-off' points at various stages of their transition from care (18, 21 and 25) and the Council has to work harder to ensure that there is more effective support for them at each of these key points. We concluded that the Council as a corporate parent should also undertake to establish a truly 'corporate offer' of support for care leavers.

ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING

Hackney Leisure Services and Facilities

We explored our leisure services provision with Greenwich Leisure Ltd (the provider), council officers and the Cabinet Member. We asked why charges varied across sites, especially for swimming. We examined the concessions available, and how they are promoted to local residents. We examined how GLL works with Public Health. We asked why no cash was taken at leisure centres and why bookings were online only and why GLL does not have a Hackney specific website. We learned how cost is a big driver in usage and we pressed officers on better local promotion and in particular to those harder to reach sections of the community. We agreed that keeping leisure services affordable and giving access to facilities to support health and wellbeing is vital for residents in the current economic climate.

Fire Safety Checks

We continued our recent focus on fire safety in building with an update from senior officers on the arrangements in place to ensure fire safety products are fitted and checked and that they are the highest grade available. We were joined by the Co-Chairs of the Resident Liaison Group. We noted that the Fire Safety Team was not directly involved in the work of the New Builds Team and we asked officers to ensure much closer collaboration here as it seems an important oversight. We were pleased to hear

that Hackney was one of the few London boroughs which had committed to undertaking EWS1 surveys (cladding safety) for leaseholders on request.

Child Friendly Borough - Improving the infrastructure of our Play areas

We discussed with senior officers the significant work which went into the innovative *Child Friendly Places Growing Up In Hackney Supplementary Planning Document* which was approved in summer 2021. The SPD will help to set the Local Plan policies to ensure that subsequent developments maximise the benefit to children. It will be a 'material consideration' in the determination of planning applications and means that residential developments must devote some of their open space provision as child friendly spaces. The policy allocates 10 square metres of dedicated play space per child on a site of any new major residential developments and mixed-use schemes. We were pleased that the SPD built on the Hackney Young Futures Commission report and engagement work with Hackney Youth Parliament however we found limited input from Children and Families Service and asked that this be rectified in future.

Private sector housing licensing scheme

We looked at the work taking place to build the necessary evidence base for extending the *Private Sector Housing Licensing Scheme* borough wide. We heard from the Mayoral Advisor for Private Rented Sector and Affordability as well as senior housing strategy officers that there are now 30,000 properties in this cohort, up from 3,000 25 years ago, and Hackney has seen the fastest growing private rented stock in the UK. There are 3 licensing schemes: the borough-wide *Mandatory Licensing Scheme* for larger HMOs, the *Additional Licensing Scheme* for smaller HMOs and the *Selective Licensing Pilot Scheme* for everything else. Pilots are in Brownswood, Cazenove and Stoke Newington wards. We learned that the current national schemes will end in Sept 2023, at which point the Council could look to extend, although the process is bureaucratic and resource intensive. We encouraged the Cabinet to continue its efforts to build an evidence base to have these valuable schemes extended and expanded where possible.

Skills, Economy and Growth



Skills, Economy and Growth



Hackney's businesses and the wider economy have experienced some brutal shocks over the last couple of years and we have heard some devastating testimony from the voluntary sector, from entrepreneurs and from economic experts about the impact on individuals and our community. We have also heard some extraordinary stories of resilience and resourcefulness.

Our commission has examined in detail the impact of Covid and other shocks and tried to assess the role of the council in influencing the recovery and setting our economy on a trajectory towards one that is inclusive, green and fair. From skills provision to support for the transition to Net Zero, we will continue to focus on understanding better the powers the council has to shape the economy and how the council can best use those powers to improve economic outcomes.

Demand for Net Zero skills

We examined the demand for Net Zero skills, the creation of Net Zero jobs, and where the Council's responsibility lies here. We explored future skills in the construction, transport and energy sectors and the opportunities for local residents as we move beyond the pandemic and try to build back better.

We invited the Head of Employment, Skills & Adult Learning to share how the Council will respond to emerging green jobs, the skills demand, the skills of residents and the likely skills gap. Since Sept 2020, the Council's Adult Learning Service has been fully integrated with the Employment & Skills service enabling delivery of a more holistic offer. There are 3 areas of strategic focus: *Training with a direct link to employment opportunities*; *Building general and transferable skills*; and *Supporting our residents' wellbeing and positive mental health*.

We discussed the challenges with the Principal of New City College (part of Hackney and Tower Hamlets Colleges). We noted in particular how 16-34 year olds were the demographic most concerned about climate change, as they inevitably will be most impacted by it. The Principal strongly advocated for a greater parity of esteem between vocational and academic education and as part of this for the marketing of construction industry jobs to better reflect the reality now that 50% are office based while the incorrect perception is that all are on building sites.

Transport for a Cleaner and Greener Hackney

As the borough moves towards a cleaner and greener economy, clean transport will assume even greater importance in the race to Net Zero. We debated these issues with the Cabinet Member and senior Council officers.

70 % of residents do not own a car, 40 % of through-trips in the borough do not stop in Hackney, and 30 % of residents cycle at least once a month. It was noted that there are some key equality considerations so that while the majority don't own a car, others do rely on them a lot for a range of different purposes and cycling, while most valuable, is not available to everybody

We discussed the contentious issues around LTNs and noted that independent polling was taking place to make sure we got an accurate reflection of what people think. We cautioned that, generally, when data comes back that doesn't chime with residents' lived experience, it can feel like the council is not listening. There is a value therefore to finding a better way of measuring lived experiences. We welcomed the fact that Hackney has the largest programme of School Streets in the country with 49 in operation and 14,000 children now walking or cycling to school more safely. We welcomed that tailpipe emissions are down by 74 % as a consequence, outside school gates, and 30 % more children are walking to school. We also discussed Hackney's ambitious programme for EV (electric vehicle) charging points, noting that there should be 315 in place by year end.

We were pleased to hear how nearly 2000 businesses were now engaged with the Zero Emissions Network. We challenged officers on how the Council needs to be assessing its own attractiveness in terms of both investment potential and how transport schemes impact because there is nothing to suggest (from research around the world) that lower road usage has any adverse effect on a local economy. Streetscene cautioned however that 40 % of the traffic in the borough was through-traffic on the main road network, which doesn't stop in the borough, adding that if we're going to look after businesses and allow people to move around more freely, this needs to be addressed.

We asked about the impact of some people opting to travel by car instead of public transport usage because of anxieties around Covid and asked what kind of analysis was taking place to ensure better decisions are made in the context of recovering from the pandemic. Officers cautioned that TfL was focused on the cost of running the network rather than necessarily increasing usage.

We pressed officers on the importance of understanding the economic as well as the social benefits of transport policy so that we can see how transport policy decisions affect economic growth. We flagged an interest in the issue of support for bus services post pandemic to assist the Cabinet members in their discussion with TfL.

Supporting Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) to decarbonise

We looked at the crucial issue of how the Council can help support local SMEs to decarbonise their business model and operations to help them align with the aims and ambitions to meet Net Zero carbon emissions by 2040.

We explored how much local businesses understand what is required, what is within their control and what support they need. We asked what research has been done to assess the challenges facing them and what they think councils need to do. We explored whether business models and procurement are aligned to Net Zero and who holds responsibility to support this shift - the government, trade bodies or support networks?



Finch Cafe in London Fields

We heard from the Executive Director of Good Growth at the GLA about the Mayor of London's 'Accelerated Green Pathway' which is an analysis of the most practical route to get to Net Zero by 2030. We learned how the 'New Green Deal' aims to double the size of the Green economy by 2030 through retrofitting buildings, installing renewable energy and electric vehicle charging infrastructure and creating high quality green spaces and that there are over 1 million self-employed, micro and small businesses which need to be supported to achieve Net Zero. Managed well, the transition to a green and sustainable economy should create jobs, save on fuel costs and provide a cleaner and healthier city

We noted the range of grants for SMEs and commended their breadth but we pressed officers on what actions SMEs needed to take themselves. It was acknowledged that the scale of finance needed to support the Net Zero ambition was huge and with limited resources the Council must therefore prioritise its spending, which it is doing in the *Climate Action Plan and Economic Development Strategy*. The scale of the challenge also underlines the importance of working with partners both within the borough and externally. We explored whether Licensing can stipulate that business should be plastic free and what role Planning could play in relation to transport or even the development of a local scrappage scheme and asked if there was consistency in the regulatory levers being used.

We noted that success measures were not just numbers of grants taken up but, importantly, increased awareness within the sector i.e how many have engaged, how many have adapted and what can we learn from those who have not.

We queried whether there was enough information in the system to assess the environmental impact of green investment i.e. what is the return in relation to carbon removal of every £1 invested? This would help us to assess effectiveness better than just spending totals or grant allocations. We will need to understand better what are the activities in small business which would give the most yield in decarbonisation.

We explored how Business Rate Relief might aid transition to Net Zero and we asked the GLA to consider acquiring business spaces in local high streets to help shape small businesses to transition to Net Zero. We again welcomed the work of the Zero Emissions Network for businesses which was working on issues such as cargo bikes, small electric vehicles and street scene improvements.

Economic Stocktake and recovery of the Night Time Economy

The Covid-19 pandemic had an unprecedented economic impact both nationally and locally. Many businesses struggled following lockdown restrictions which shut them down or severely limited the movement of their potential customers. Although some kept going, many sectors such as the night time economy and hospitality saw huge losses of income.

We examined whether the Council's decisions and the government's measures had helped to stabilise the local economy and we asked what were the trends amongst those who survived or even thrived.

Government data estimates 24,000 registered businesses in Hackney although an estimated 40 % on top are not registered, and the data does not include sole traders not registered for VAT or PAYE.

We considered detailed reports from officers and asked what data the Council collated and monitored about businesses pre and post pandemic and examined the support given from central government as well as the bespoke solutions locally. We asked the same on the Night Time Economy and how the Business Regulatory Service feeds into achieving the Council's inclusive economy objectives.

We explored whether the business grants had resulted in any under-claiming from specific businesses and if any particular grants were not taken up and learned that false claims rather than underclaiming had been the issue. We explored the characteristics of the businesses which had rebounded since the pandemic. We pressed for a 'before and after' evaluation in order to understand the progress or regression of the economy, the economic scarring and resilience provided as a result of the support the Council had provided.

We discussed the live data dashboard showing the contraction and expansion of local high streets following the lifting of each different restriction. Officers cautioned that further analysis and investigation would be necessary to get a proper picture.

We examined both the *Hackney Night Accreditation Scheme* and the *Hackney Nights Portal* which was a one stop shop for all the pubs and clubs to provide training and Covid protection support during the pandemic.

We discussed Temporary Event Notices (TENs) which had increased in number with the restrictions on indoor drinking. They are used as a useful barometer for assessing the health of the night time economy. Some Members remain critical of them however, arguing that they are too often used to circumvent existing licensing rules. We commended how the accreditation scheme enabled greater use of recyclable glasses and recyclable plastic.

We noted how Hackney was the first council to introduce the Ultra Low Emission Zone, in Shoreditch, which involved working with businesses to reduce the volume of vehicle deliveries and examining the potential use of cargo bikes.

Unlike many boroughs, Hackney managed to keep its Markets open by using careful Covid risk assessment management and we noted how across the sectors the Council had to create service specific road maps for phased reopening of all services.

Community Involvement in Planning & Area Regeneration

We examined the levers the Council has to influence community engagement with the Council's area regeneration programmes and looked at their progress. We heard from Area Regeneration and the Planning and Regulatory Service but also from an external voice, the Executive Chair of the Hackney Wick and Fish Island Community Development Trust.

We noted that the Local Plan (LP33) contains 33 key strategic development sites which are a mix of private, public and council ownership. It also contains site-specific development guidance and allocates particular uses for those. It also contains plans around the delivery of new homes, jobs, shops, community spaces and public realm developments all in the context of a quickly rising population.

We explored the opportunities to link regeneration with a 'fair recovery' and a more inclusive economy via the creation of new affordable homes, workspaces, jobs, transport improvements, community infrastructure and facilities and improved public realm.

We learned about the outcomes from two major recent consultations, the *Hackney Central Conversation* and the *Dalston Conversation* and looked at the *Hackney Wick Area Regeneration*. On the latter, we discussed the *Creative Enterprise Zone* programme that aims to support, retain and grow creative businesses in that area and better link them with local residents and other businesses via supply chain, jobs, training, educational opportunities and access to affordable space.

The CDT Chair described the lessons learned in Hackney Wick. Residents, community groups and businesses were more sophisticated in their approach than given credit for, he said, and there was a willingness to engage but not to be side-lined. Their model was moving away from passive beneficiaries, limited agency thinking and short-term results to one of increased partnership, devolving power, responsibility and accountability as well as long-term capacity building, and wealth creation, but this would need continuing resources to support such outreach.

We challenged speakers on which demographics were under-represented in engagement and what was being done to mitigate this. We cautioned how current models in Hackney Wick focused on creative space, but at least two thirds of the developments were not that. With the residential property market driving land values we asked whether such an overwhelming and vocal force can be challenged.



Hackney Food Network in action at Morningside and Gascoyne Youth Club

Voluntary and Community Sector recovering from Covid-19 pandemic

The local Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) has been through a transformation because of the pandemic and we asked for an update on how it came through and its future plans. We were keen in particular to hear from the Mutual Aid Groups which had come into their own during the pandemic.

We heard from HCVS (the local umbrella body for the VCS in Hackney), Volunteering Centre Hackney and from the founder of Woodberry Aid as well as council officers.

We learned how out of the pandemic new models had emerged for how councils work with VCS bodies and mutual aid organisations presented a key change to the Council's way of working. This represented a major culture change and we were impressed with the Council and the organisations' flexible response to the situation. We discussed how, by their nature, these mutual aid groups helped people to get jobs, acquire skills and dignity through their work helping their own community.

One of the challenges is to build on the achievements and develop a new network of these community workers that can sustain this activity borough wide. The work by Volunteering Centre and the Council was quite organic and at a hyper local level and we explored whether it was evenly spread across the borough.

We noted how the Council had dedicated capacity to this and worked with a digital support team to proactively develop a 'change program'. The support had to be scaled up and not just front line resources put in place but also management and leadership as well. We noted the success of the Food Network and how it had been necessary to ensure that all the council departments were working more collaboratively and that the correct framework was put in place to support the VCS.

The analysis and the experiences of the frontline organisations involved had demonstrated to us how a crisis became an opportunity for strengthening the relationship between the Council and the dynamism we have within our communities. How we might be able to support residents by harnessing the energy of the Mutual Aid groups is one aspect and resisting the temptation to be too centralising is the other. We noted how provision of food had become a key element, and this was not just related to food poverty but because food is such a connector beyond just providing sustenance. We encouraged officers to develop this area of work further.

Cabinet Member Question Time

For our annual CQT Sessions we invited the Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing Supply, Planning, Culture and Inclusive Economy to discuss the opportunities provided for greater investment in Hackney's future by the larger local businesses; affordable commercial rents and the impact of Brexit and the pandemic on this; and the rejuvenation of the night-time economy. On commercial rents we noted that most small businesses can only function in some form of lower-cost space as they cannot afford current market rates and we also noted the importance of the contribution to be made from the council's own voluntary and community sector property portfolio.

Health in Hackney



Health in Hackney



Our work this year encompassed a very wide range of issues: Covid-19, Adult Services including Public Health, Primary Care, Mental Health and the new Integrated Care System.

COVID-19

Monthly updates on the Covid 19 pandemic

Monitoring the response to the Covid 19 pandemic continued to dominate our work and because of the arrival of new variants it meant our regular monthly updates from the Director of Public Health continued right through to March. We also heard regularly from the Vaccinations Steering Group at the CCG on the latest incidence rates, developments with the vaccinations campaign and the evolution of the various outreach programmes.



From the outset we worried that vaccination rates amongst domiciliary care staff remained stubbornly low. They contribute to transmission because they typically have multiple vulnerable clients. We were similarly concerned about family carers. We explored the characteristics of our low vaccination rates, a lot of it down to our significantly young population as well as vaccine cautiousness within a number of local communities. This led on from hearing about the local project on vaccine hesitancy in African Heritage communities carried out by the group Support Where It Matters (SWIM) Enterprises. We discussed the value of personal contact by GPs in winning over the vaccine hesitant and examined the various financial support programmes..

We discussed the impacts on service provision and council staff, hearing from a Director on making office spaces ready for staff to return, supporting leadership skills for hybrid working and continuing the engagement with service teams. We debated what more needed to be done on future mitigation such as greater investment in ventilation and air filtration systems in schools. Public Health provides them with the latest Health and Safety Executive practical guidance on ventilation, but we noted that the task of assessing air flow or providing individual HEPA filters for every space in each school would be enormous.

Treatment pathways for 'Long Covid' - briefing from the Homerton

We learned from the Head of Adult Therapies at the Homerton about their new 'Long Covid' clinic which had 300 referrals alone by May '21. Admission was based on clinical assessment at primary care stage and a diverse multi-disciplinary team across physical and psychological services provided the service. In our discussions we encouraged the clinic to join up with the successful vaccination teams, as both encouragement of vaccine take up and outreach on long covid were needed simultaneously, as was closer working with Homecare Services and with Healthwatch on the awareness raising programmes.



Pop up Covid testing site in Hackney Central

Update on Covid and Elective Recovery at the Homerton

The Homerton's Chief Executive addressed the huge challenge in recovering elective treatments post pandemic as well as the increased concern about the usual winter pressures on acute hospitals as the virus persisted. In December they had opened up their escalation ward (an additional 22 beds) earlier than usual. Although nothing like the 201 Covid in-patients they had at the peak, there were still 27 in patients as the Omicron variant persisted. She warned that if those numbers increased they would have to convert another ward for covid only. We noted how they segregated patients into 3 categories: *no clinical indications and positive test*; *clinical indications and negative*; and *clinical indications and positive*. The combination of attempting to get elective treatments back on a firm footing, the normal winter pressures and the omicron variant was putting great pressure on the system.

Community Mental Health and recovery from Covid 19

ELFT, our key acute mental health provider, outlined their move to a mix of face-to-face and remote access consultations i.e. a blended model. While we had some reservations about this, officers reassured us that while face to face consultations were important for first assessment, remote consultations would remain. They added that remote consultations worked really well with certain types of clients e.g. those wanting to stay at home and in familiar surroundings or with young people who preferred digital connections. We also asked about how their 8 local teams will align with PCNs, the Neighbourhoods Programme and the IAPT Service.

ADULTS, HEALTH AND INTEGRATION

What is Adult Social Care - overview of current provision

The Group Director Adults, Health and Integration gave us an overview of the current provision and budget. We discussed how delayed discharges of care and shorter stays in acute hospitals were impacting on the system and whether budget flows were being redesigned accordingly to make them more sustainable. We explored the challenges of retaining staff because of non vaccination, a major issue at the time. They had to backfill vacancies left by those who had not wanted the vaccine offer. We also explored the lack of workforce development and the need for better employment packages to attract more social care workers. We explored the differing arguments around in-sourcing various services and also the need to return clients to Hackney who had to be sent out of the borough.

Transformation Programme for Adult Social Care

We considered the Transformation Programme for Adult Social Care and asked whether there was an 'invest to save' element here or whether it was about case-by-case bids. We heard that the focus was more on using resources in a different and better way.

We debated career pathways and heard that the social worker qualification was a national one but terms and conditions are not national and so there was a big step to be crossed between being a front line care worker and becoming a Registered Manager and the challenge was how to stop staff migrating to the NHS, where there were better career opportunities.

We challenged officers on whether key principles for ensuring staff wellbeing could be written into contracts with providers. We learned that the provider landscape locally was incredibly diverse with some individual firms, some voluntary sector, some profit making, and while some things could be included in contracts it depended on the nature of the contract and the service.



Redesign of specification for Homecare

We discussed the redesigned specification for the provision of Homecare services as it was being completely re-commissioned. Across the 8 PCN areas there would be 2 or 3 new Homecare 'patches' run by fewer providers. We explored the current barriers to in-sourcing but heard that it would add £4-5m to the budget. Employment costs and pension obligations were a key reason for the price differential but under the Care Act there was also a duty to maintain a stable market for services.

The Group Director reminded us that the councils' role in quality was a complex one. One of reasons for moving to the zone-based model they were adopting for Homecare was that they'll have fewer providers to work with, which should allow the council to develop stronger relationships and deliver more training and support to the staff. On

the concerns about zero hours contracts, the Council would be better able to tackle this if providers were given more consistency of work and hours and so better able to plan their workforce and offer better conditions, so there were a number of ways to achieve a more secure employment model. She added that it was demand-led service so care must be provided to anyone who requests it and is eligible and therefore the development of more preventative work and working with partners in Neighbourhoods was vital in order to help ASC manage rising demand.

Public Health Spend overview

This was prompted by discussions amongst Scrutiny Panel Members on the Public Health element in the budget. The Director of Public Health detailed the Public Health Grant and how it remains based on historic spend rather than current demographics or need. She explained how public health money also gets spent in other sections of Council when it supports the wider public health agenda e.g. additional environmental health or trading standards officers. On the issue of potential reduction we explored the tracking of Public Health spend across the previous two years which would feed into decisions.

We noted how sexual health services spend was high because it is an open-access service. She also explained that spending money on subsidised activities that people are likely to do anyway is not the best approach and that the emphasis instead has to be on driving behavioural change. She also explained that with statutory funding it is not that you are required to spend 'x' amount on 'y' but rather the statutory service is often demand driven, so the key factor then becomes the capacity of the team to deliver that service both effectively and safely.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-26

In December Public Health brought us a new draft *Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026* for our input. Hackney's Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) has a duty to produce it and it set out the priorities for the borough. The three agreed priorities will be: *improving mental health and preventing mental ill-health; increasing social connection; and supporting greater financial security and reducing poverty*. We commended the accessibility and reach of the consultation which had been undertaken and we examined how it drives policy development and serves as an important catalyst for change among the multiple partners involved.

NHS items

GPs AND PRIMARY CARE

Secondary use of GP patient identifiable data

The kernel of the issue here was the public giving permission to their GPs for their medical records to be passed on to the central NHS Digital database as part of a new scheme called *General Practice Data for Planning and Research (GPDPR)*. We noted that there had been previous failed attempts by the government to progress this issue which had created mistrust and yet this attempt appeared to have been launched without first winning over public consent.

We noted that data is already extracted from the primary care system for all sorts of reasons and it is pseudonymised by age, sex, medical condition etc. The new GDPR would require a new extraction arrangement however and Practices had a responsibility to explain to their patients what the data would be used for but were still awaiting Guidance. Practices have to switch on the data extraction process too, in each Practice, and none in NEL had done so. The Local Medical Committees had also been campaigning against it. GPs were in a difficult position as the government had made this a contractual requirement for them. We concluded that the government needed to quickly publish clear regulations and an informed public then needs to decide whether to opt out. Unfortunately if thousands do so it will create a large data entry burden for an already overburdened primary care system.

Neighbourhoods Development Programme

Health and Care Partners had been implementing the *Neighbourhoods Programme* in Hackney, since 2018, albeit hindered by the pandemic, and in parallel NHSE has been rolling out the *Primary Care Networks*. Fortunately in Hackney both are coterminous. The latter are very much about Primary Care but there is a wider system focus with the Neighbourhoods programme. We explored how some of the funding was used e.g. social prescribers; community navigators, or specific services such as first contact physiotherapists and how all are centred on effectively GP Practice hubs. We noted that the non-recurrent funding for Neighbourhoods was winding down but funding for PCNs would be increasing.



Peppa Pig's Flu & Polio Vaccination event at Richmond Rd. Partner GP Dr Gopal Mehta far left.

Richmond Rd Medical Centre - a case history award winner

Richmond Rd Medical Centre has had a series of successes in the National GP Awards and to celebrate this and share the best practice we invited the Lead Partners (one of whom is also a PCN Clinical Director), to discuss the current challenges in primary care as well as to hear about the innovative approaches they use.

For context Healthwatch Hackney also provided us with two very helpful recent research reports on local primary care. We also heard from: Chair of the Local Medical Committee who is also a Joint Clinical Director for two PCNs, the Co-Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, the new Clinical Care Lead for Primary Care in C&H and the Primary Care Programme Director from NEL CCG.

We explored with Richmond Rd how they made their Access Model work where others had struggled and how they managed demand when they were a staff member down. The answer lay in very careful advance planning and a concerted whole team effort. We noted that they funded everything from within their existing GP Practice budget and these services (yoga or special ante-natal classes) were free for patients. They argued that investment in their patients had generated positive results in the long run and we noted other examples such as working with local Black African Churches to talk to them about blood pressure and diabetes.

During the discussion we learned that 7 GP Practices were still, wrongly, demanding photo ID from prospective patients, a discriminatory process. We wrote to the CCG to ask that these Practices be brought into line and they have done so.

Developments in GP Services - the next five years

We ended the year by devoting a full meeting to the strategic issues which are driving primary care locally and to look forward to what GP services might look like in five years' time.

We invited an external expert to frame the discussion. Dr Jon Robson (Clinical Effectiveness Group at Queen Mary University of London) gave a detailed presentation on quality improvement in primary care and the work they do locally in Hackney and we heard from all the key players in primary care locally from - the CCG, the PCN Clinical Directors, the GP Confederation as well as the LMC and Healthwatch providing some challenge.

Dr Robson explained how disease prevalence will vary considerably depending on factors outside of a Practice's control so there will always be outliers. He argued that: more needed to be done to identify and target renal failure in east London; that childhood immunisation and control of blood pressure were key deliverables; and that prioritising highest risk groups was vital. Generally, we learned that targets were crude measures and you need to incentivise behaviour change instead in order to make progress.

The CCG described the process of retendering or list dispersal when a Practice closes and we asked how the council could assist more on estates development issues. The PCN directors described the potential for closer work with the GP Confederation and how capacity was a huge problem with NHSE's plans predicated on the promise of additional GPs who hadn't been secured. The Clinical Lead for Primary Care made a strong argument that the over emphasis on fast or convenient access to a GP was not where their main priority should lie because some people's needs will be greater than others. The push for digital access had created inequality of access and a 'digital inverse-care law', in her view, so that those who might need the care more aren't able to get it. There is a need to reframe this argument and make it about the need for continuity of care, she argued. The GP Confed CE cautioned that with CCG/GP Confed/PCNs/LMC there was a danger of fragmenting the strategic positioning of primary care locally and these strands need to be pulled together, in the context of the new ICS, so that a strong voice for Hackney can be made.



Medicines Optimisation Scheme (dosette boxes)

In March the Local Pharmaceutical Committee contacted us, concerned about plans to end the 'Medicines Optimisation Scheme'. This funded dosette boxes and blister packs, prepared by local pharmacists, which are typically given to frail and elderly to aid administering their medication. NHSE will now only fund a much smaller cohort who must be identified as having a need under the Equality Act. Local carers and care agencies, among others, strongly disagreed and argued that this will adversely impact nearly 4000 vulnerable patients in Hackney, who will lose out.

The LPC rep explained that pharmacies were backfilling the loss of this funding by already requesting GPs to give them shorter 7 day prescriptions instead of the longer period prescriptions previously used, and are using this as a lever with NHSE. Payment is per prescription and item.

The CCG's Medicines Management Lead detailed the long history of the scheme. They had been pushing back on NHSE London not to end it without proper mitigation being put in place and had also started to facilitate the evolution to a new system by analysing the underlying data and providing guidance to the local pharmacies. Some GPs were of the view (shared by NHSEL) that because many of the patients did not fall under the narrow Equality Act definition, pharmacies should therefore not be requiring them to write 7 day prescriptions for them, which created an added burden for the GPs.

We questioned the expectation that local pharmacies' core contract should backfill this funding cut by NHSE, one which has serious equalities implications, and we undertook to formally write to NHSE if this could not be properly resolved locally. We were subsequently pleased to hear that NHSEL agreed to extend the funding for 6 months to allow all parties time to review all those on monitored dosage schemes.

MENTAL HEALTH

Relocation of inpatient dementia assessment to East Ham Care Centre

In October we considered an update from the Clinical Lead for Older Adults Mental Health at East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT) on the move to make permanent the summer 2020 relocation of in-patient dementia assessment services from Mile End Hospital to East Ham Care Centre. We noted that the long-term aim had been to maximise the clinical benefits of co-locating services e.g. more flexible rotas, having expertise in one place, but that during the pandemic the move had to be rapidly expedited because of a Covid segregation issue at the Mile End site. We had endorsed that move at a special meeting in July 2020. We endorsed the permanent move, having made site visits to both sites and we welcomed the progress made since on their transport offer to families and carers which we had strongly championed.

Disparities in treatment in maternal mental health

In October we held a joint item with Members of the CYP Scrutiny Commission to explore disparities and inequalities which had been observed relating to the diagnosis and treatment of maternal mental health within City & Hackney.

We considered reports from CYP and ELFT and the Co-Chairs of the Black and Black-Mixed Heritage Group of the Maternity Voices Partnership, a group set up specifically to bring a patient voice to maternity service commissioning. We heard about the role of Health Visitors here and the work of the Family Nurse Partnership which itself provided 2 yrs intensive support to women under 25.

We raised a concern that the current patchwork of commissioners/providers means many users might fall between the cracks in provision but noted how this was a complex area at the intersection of mental health and maternity. We pressed ELFT about the *Patient Carer Racial Equality Framework* pilot and how this needed a higher profile among their own staff. We noted that the threshold to enter ELFT's Perinatal Service was "significant risk" otherwise a patient would be referred to IAPT. There was a single point of access and services had to work out which one of them needed to see the patient. We were reassured however that there was no 'wrong door' and referrals were never sent back. We asked whether a Neighbourhood Model of support might be preferable here and offer less rigid and less time-limited pathways which are hard to access.

We urged greater liaison with Children and Families Service to identify earlier the parents at risk and to figure out the touch points and identify where opportunities might have been missed. We were given assurances that the multi disciplinary teams were addressing this and we noted that CYP Scrutiny Commission would continue to pursue the issue of support to young mothers in its 22/23 work programme.

INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEM FOR NORTH EAST LONDON (NEL ICS)

In a number of sessions we continued to hold local health leaders to account about the development of the ICS and its particular impact in Hackney.

How will City & Hackney's 'Place Based System' operate within NEL ICS

NHS NEL came into being on 1 July 2022 and in the lead up we examined how it will operate. The Chief Executive of the Homerton is the designated 'Place Based Leader for City and Hackney' and she assured us that it was an evolution not a revolution, building on many years of partnership working. She explained that most of the out-of-hospital funding would come to 'place' level and that 'Place' would be predominant in all ICS discussions.

As well as the 'Acute Provider Collaborative' made up of the acute trusts, similar ones for 'Mental Health', 'Community Care' and 'Primary Care' were planned. We debated the governance structures and we urged the Cabinet Member and Healthwatch to ensure these are as transparent and locally accountable as possible. We noted that there was a big communications job to be done to explain all this to the general public.

Future plans for the St Leonard's site

Plans for the re-development of the St Leonard's Hospital site had been a burning local issue for many years. The site is old and requires significant investment to make it fit for purpose. An initial demand analysis found that users will soon run out of space unless there is a fresh approach. The Homerton currently holds the ring on the project and we questioned them on the progress being made with central government on building a business case which would see it retained as an anchor institution in the borough. We pressed them to ensure that there will be proper engagement, at each stage, with local residents in Hoxton and with Healthwatch.

New Pathology Partnership for east and south east London

We questioned the Chief Executive of HUHFT about the new pathology partnership for East and South East London which had been planned for some time but came into being on 1 May 2021. The new organisation is jointly owned by Barts Health, the Homerton and Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trusts and the 'GP Direct Access' element would move to a new hub at the Royal London. She gave assurances on the quality of service as local GPs had been concerned about turnaround times of tests from Barts Health. There would be no job losses but roles would shift around and this did not imply a merging of the Trusts involved; it was simply part of a national improvement programme for pathology services.

The 'King's Park Moving Together' project

We heard about this potentially transformative health project in King's Park, one of just 12 national pilots funded by Sport England with a focus on getting people to be more active. The Sport England officer responsible for the project described how it typified a new approach by them to working in a much deeper and on a longer-term basis with local communities than in the past. Up to now many projects have often been beset by stop-start funding. They were now 5 years into an 8-year funded project which will end in 2025. The Council staff member who heads the project described how they operated locally with 15-20 providers, who work with different population groups across a range of organisations. We heard too from one of the key providers, Journey Before Success CIC, about how it provides a wide range of activity programmes for traditionally under-served groups. We noted while the focus is King's Park ward, it will certainly influence future work across the whole borough.



A roadmap to Net Zero for Homerton Hospital

As part of wider programme this year, led by Scrutiny Panel, to look at the urgent issue of achieving 'Net Zero' by both the Council and its key local partners, we decided to look at each segment of the health and care sector locally and the progress they're making. We started with our largest acute provider, the Homerton. They outlined their strategy for achieving their climate change mitigation measures and we were pleased to learn how well ahead they were on these issues. We asked how they might be able to share best practice among local partners and we heard about the need to drive up the EPC ratings across their estate when buildings are of such varying ages and states of repair. We heard about the transport challenge for staff considering that many work unsocial hours and live out of the borough and so still use their cars. We discussed the big-ticket items such as replacing generators, chillers and air handling units and noted that HUHFT has benefited from some strong NHS national guidance.

Annual Reports of partners/stakeholders

Each year we hold local health partners to account in sessions where they come to answer questions on their formal annual reports. Healthwatch Hackney presents the report it submits to Healthwatch England and HUHFT presents the **Quality Account** it is required to submit to NHSE/NHSI. All acute NHS Trusts are required to formally secure comments on their draft Quality Account from the local scrutiny committee where they are headquartered. St Joseph's Hospice also sends their draft Quality Account although they are not under the same level of regulatory duty.

Once a year we question the Independent **Chair of the City & Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board** which provides a useful insight into this vital work and any problems in the system. This year we discussed pandemic impacts such as those in Residential Care being confined to their rooms and other Day Care users having to move into Residential Care during lockdown. We discussed the pandemic impact on those with learning disabilities or in supported living and struggling to comprehend an unprecedented situation. We discussed the learning from the single formal Safeguarding Adults Review during the year. We heard how the legal framework on Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards is changing and the requirements on local authorities and partner agencies will be shifting quite significantly.

We also questioned **Healthwatch Hackney** this year about them potentially carrying out further mystery shopping exercises on local services which are performing poorly. We also discussed with them how they will align with the other 7 Healthwatches in NEL. We encouraged them to lobby for high level representation in the new structures so that each council area can still retain its local character and we pushed for greater transparency and accountability to residents arising from the new ICS structure.

Cabinet Member Question Time – Council’s role in the ICS

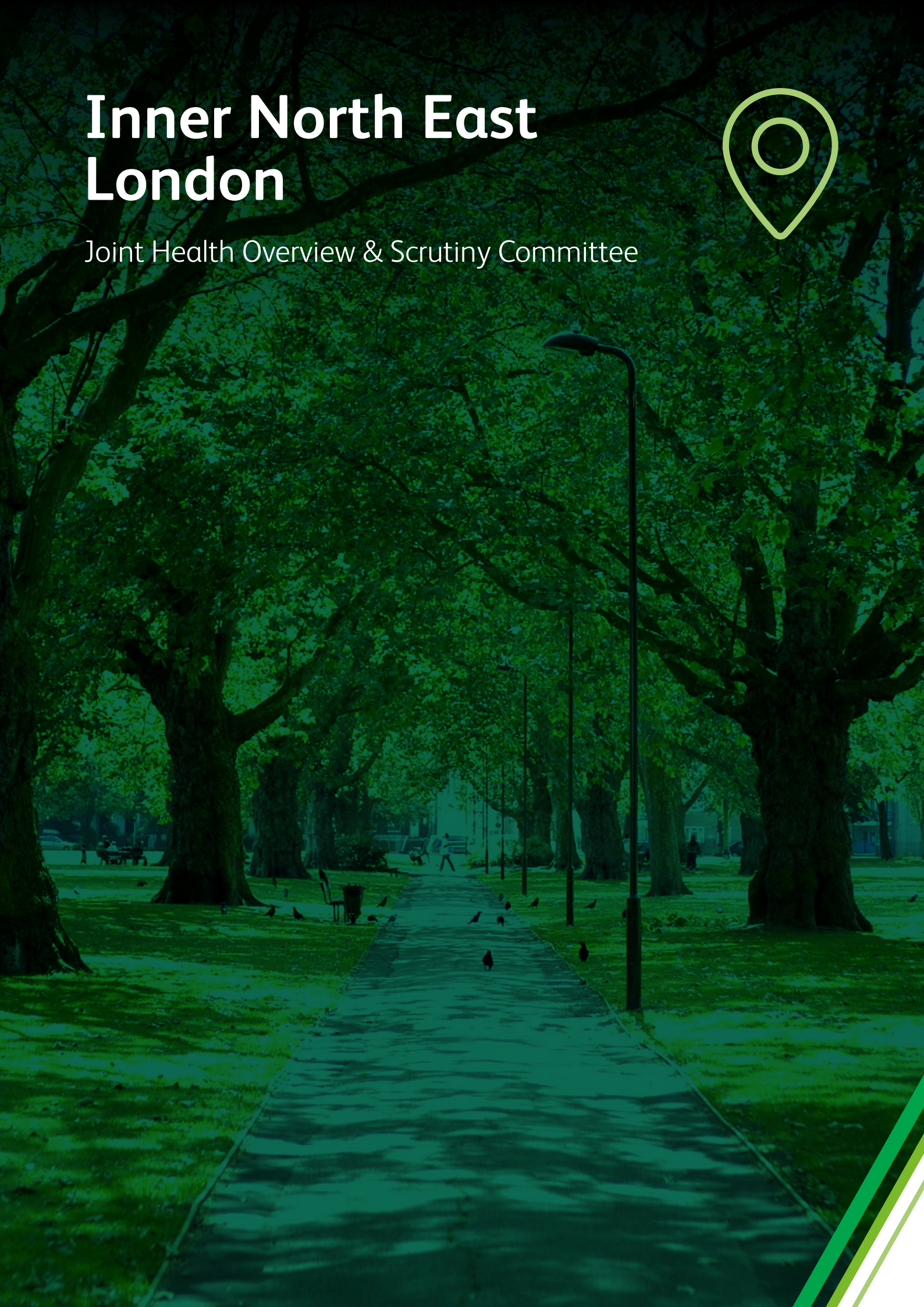
Our annual Question Time session with the Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social had him focus on one key topic - *the Council’s role within the emerging ICS*. He stated that the rationale behind the creation of ICSs was to move the NHS away from the focus on competition, introduced under the Lansley reforms, to a new structure which is more focussed on collaboration. A fair degree of flexibility had been built into the system and it could be made bespoke for each ICS area.

Hackney Keep Our NHS Public, who object to the move to ICSs, argued at our meeting that ICSs would allow more contracts to be handed to corporate interests and they asked how these might also be kept out of the ICS governance structures. This is an issue where Cabinet and Scrutiny would need to keep a close eye. They also expressed concerns about the travel impacts on Hackney patients when services are centralised. The Cabinet Member countered that, partly to clear the NHS backlog, ‘areas of excellence’ were being established and some patients would therefore face longer journeys to consolidated centres for treatment, but the view was that most patients were content with this if it meant getting treatment faster.

Inner North East London



Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee



Inner North East London



Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

INEL JHOSC comprises 3 councillors each from Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest and one from City of London Corporation. Its function is to scrutinise sub-regional plans for the NHS and respond to formal 'case for change' proposals when appropriate. NEL comprises the 5 INEL boroughs above and the 3 Outer East London boroughs of Redbridge, Barking & Dagenham and Havering. The latter are scrutinised by a separate scrutiny committee ONEL JHOSC. We meet 4 times a year.

Implementation of North East London Integrated Care System

An Integrated Care System for North East London (NHS NEL) came into being on 1 July 2022 replacing the previous 5 CCGs, covering 8 boroughs. Over the two years leading up to this we held a number of discussions about its evolution with all the senior officers and Chairs involved as it gradually transformed from 5 CCGs to NEL CCG to NHS NEL.

NHS NEL draws together the various health networks in the region in a formally constituted and governed system and it takes on commissioning and finance functions of the old CCGs. It has a statutory Board (ICB), containing key statutory posts, alongside representatives from providers and local authorities as well as a larger Integrated Care Partnership Board (ICPB) which has a wider remit and wider membership from across the 8 boroughs.

We provided an ongoing challenge to what appears to be a general move from GPs to the large local Providers dominating the system and we queried how they will have a System focus when they also have a responsibility to their own Trust boards. We asked whether there was an evidence base that governance was more effective when you consolidated trusts and spread it across a large number of organisations and how they would be judging quality and effectiveness.

We expressed concerns about the potential of forcing the creation of an umbrella body for all VCS bodies across NEL and asked for commitment to not having private providers on the ICB. We heard how the Healthwatches and the VCS across the region would be embedded in the structure in order to guarantee a patient voice and a local voice.

North East London Save Our NHS (NELSON) came to our meetings to lobby for greater transparency in the ICS, demanding that all key meetings and papers be in the public domain. We expressed concern that the strong community links in the old commissioning structure might now be lost when incorporated into the much bigger NEL system. We urged the ICS to ensure that the representative of the local authorities on the ICB should be an elected member, as councils are member-led bodies. This was initially resisted by the NHS, and prohibited in their draft regulations, but was subsequently altered after national lobbying.

We expressed concerns about the Homerton not having its voice on the ICB as the only acute rep on it will be the Chair in Common of Barts-BHRUT (Barking Havering & Redbridge NHS University Hospital Trust). We received an undertaking from her that she would be a voice for all acute health trusts and had agreed to liaise with the Homerton's Chair.

We asked how the 'Payment By Results' system, which drives Acute Trusts, would be consistent with the new approach to joint working. Officers countered that a purely activity driven payment system had not served us well in tackling inequalities in the past and so the new system would help deliver the backlog by being better able to flex capacity and deliver results in a more coordinated way. We asked about the duration of the new budget settlement for the ICS. Towards the end of the year we asked for an update on the changes to funding flows comparing the 5 old CCGs to the new ICS, with the aim to understand how, apart from the significant slice going to the Acutes, the other budget lines will map across in the new ICS and which will end up 'system' level and which will remain 'place-based'.

Health updates from the East London Health and Care Partnership

At each meeting NEL CCG/NHS NEL would provide an overview of the key health issues across the acute trusts and the Chief Executives of all the trusts and the Clinical Chairs from each 'old' CCG area would attend our meetings.

Challenges of building back elective care post Covid pandemic

Over the year we questioned the senior officers on emergency surgery backlog targets and changes to pathways for cancer patients, reconfiguration of surgical centres of excellence the important subject of staff morale and burnout. Elective recovery was a challenge because even before Covid it was usual to do less planned elective work in January because of winter pressures.

Structure of Barts Health and developing provider collaboration

Across two sessions we examined the 'Acute Provider Collaborative' that is being developed between the 3 large acute health trusts which aims to improve elective recovery by using capacity across the trusts more effectively, sharing managers in areas of operational pressure and working on joint recruitment and retention.

Covid-19 vaccinations programme in NEL

At each meeting we received detailed updates on the latest 'vaccination dashboard'. We discussed among other things: the siting of vaccination sites, the work to challenge anti vaccination myths, work to tackle the low uptake among domiciliary care workers and within certain communities, work to vaccinate the homeless and asylum seekers, and about the availability of data on antibody prevalence.

Community Diagnostic Centres.

We examined the proposals for new Community Diagnostic Centres which are freestanding, digitally connected, multi-diagnostic facilities that will offer a range of testing (*imaging, physiological measurement, pathology, endoscopy*) and will complement existing provision in GP surgeries and acute hospitals. They will be located either adjacent to acute sites, in existing NHS community sites, or in new sites on high streets/shopping centres.



Artist's impression of the new CDC at Barking Community Hospital's site

Harmonisation of Continuing Healthcare policies across NEL

We examined proposals to consult on harmonising Continuing Healthcare (CHC) across NEL. Continuing Healthcare is a package of non-acute care for adults covering health and social care needs and which is funded entirely by the NHS. We urged them to consider that provision of a related advocacy service be included with the offer to ensure greater equity of support. We expressed a concern that greater budgetary pressure not be put on council Adult Services departments as a consequence of any change and we urged that the review is co-designed closely with Directors of Adult Services from the 8 boroughs, before it progresses.

Harmonisation of Fertility Policies across NEL

We examined a proposal to harmonise the 5 previous fertility policies in each of the old CCGs into a single equitable policy across NHS NEL. The aim was to ensure a single, more inclusive policy that reflects the most up to date views on eligibility recognising the variety of fertility situations and needs e.g. within LGBTQ+ community. We requested a preview of the consultation documents and set up briefing in Hackney for Members on the changes.

Accountability for managing future changes of ownership of GP practices

In January '21 concerns were raised to us about a decision of NEL Primary Care Commissioning Committee to approve, under Chair's Action in late Dec '20, the transfer of ownership of 8 GP surgeries in the NEL area from AT Medics Ltd to Operose Health Ltd, part of a wider sale of 34 such Practices across London.

The wider purchase of GP Practices by Operose, itself owned by the American Centene Corporation, made national headlines and INEL Members were unhappy about how the decision was made and communicated. We debated the issues raised by this transfer of ownership and in particular the accountability and transparency of current processes for managing changes of ownership of GP Practices. Two local GPs who are Chairs respectively of the Local Medical Committees in City & Hackney and in Tower Hamlets and who were campaigning against these developments came to argue their case.

We received assurances from the Independent Chair of the then NEL CCG that such changes in future are better communicated to local stakeholders and are given due time and consideration. Following the meeting we wrote to all INEL region MPs lobbying for a change in NHSE legislation/regulations, so that when groups of GP Practices are taken over, this should automatically trigger a full review of their APMS or GMS contracts, and we received assurances from Dame Meg Hillier MP that she was pursuing the matter.

Whipps Cross redevelopment programme and the special Whipps JHOSC

A special JHOSC was created hosted by Waltham Forest to deal only with the redevelopment of the Whipps Cross Hospital site. It first met in Oct and we agreed to defer to it on Whipps Cross items from then on. It comprises only the directly affected boroughs in the hospital's catchment area: Waltham Forest, Redbridge, Essex CC and Epping Forest DC. Its Chair, Cllr Sweden, is also on our committee and therefore gives regular verbal updates to us on the complex, major redevelopment.

The Review process



How we identify topics

The Commissions' work is divided between **single meeting** items, **mini reviews** (over 2 or 3 meetings) and a **Full Review** with items over perhaps a 6 month period as well as site visits. The pressure on agendas and the need to be both responsive and topical means that, of late, in-depth reviews have taken second place to the need to look at a number of short topics over the year. Each Commission tries to achieve a balance of giving sufficient space to an issue to be effective and productive while trying to cover as many areas as possible over the course of the 8 scheduled meetings.

Commissions in their overview role have to consider a number of **fixed annual items** such as: CYP (Schools Achievement, Children's Social Care, Safeguarding Children's Board annual reports); or Health in Hackney (Safeguarding Adults Board, Local Account of Adult Services and Healthwatch annual reports as well as Quality Accounts of local NHS providers and national consultations; or Living in Hackney (the annual Community Safety Plan).

At the start of the municipal year each Commission **writes to all its own key stakeholders**, the relevant Cabinet Members, relevant Directors and requests suggestions for topics.

The function also carries out an **annual Scrutiny Survey** where the public are invited to submit suggestions. This year we had over 30 responses covering a wide range of issues and all of these fed into the discussions at each of the Commissions.

They are also influenced by issues in the **media and social media**, issues coming up through **Member surgeries, performance reports** on local services e.g. poor CQC or Ofsted ratings, concerns of local third sector, community groups, TRAs, local health or schools campaigners etc. They are also influenced by the need to ensure the **manifesto commitments** of the Mayor are being delivered and the priorities of backbench councillors as well as the need for the borough to respond to or be ready for a major **change in the law or new government guidance** which might have significant local impact. All of these are weighed up and the Commission tries to come up with a balanced programme of work leaving space to be able to respond to **urgent issues** (a health crisis, floods etc) which will demand their focus and attention.

Each Commission runs a **Cabinet Member Question Time** session with their relevant Cabinet Members where they are held to account. The Mayor's CQT sessions are held by the Scrutiny Panel. Scrutiny Panel as well as ensuring no overlap of the work of Commissions also looks at cross cutting issues in single items and requires the Cabinet Member and Group Director for Finance and Corporate Resources to present regular updates on the budget and the Overall Financial Position of the Council.

Commission Members for 2021/2022

Scrutiny Panel*

Cllr Margaret Gordon (Chair), Cllr Sophie Conway, Cllr Ben Hayhurst, Cllr Peter Snell, Cllr Sharon Patrick, Cllr Soraya Adejare, Cllr Polly Billington and Cllr Clare Potter

**comprises Chairs and Vice Chairs of the 4 Commissions and a Vice Chair allocated to the main opposition party, during 21/22 that position was vacant.*

Children and Young People

Members: Cllr Sophie Conway (Chair), Cllr Margaret Gordon (Vice-Chair), Cllr Sarah Young, Cllr Anya Sizer, Cllr Lynne Troughton, Cllr Humaira Garasia, Cllr Katie Hanson, Cllr James Peters, Cllr Caroline Selman and Cllr Anna Lynch; Co-optees: Richard Brown (until June 2021), Justine McDonald (until July 2021) Steven Olalere, Shabnum Hassan, Jo Macleod, Ernell Watson, Salmah Kansara and Michael Lobenstein, up to 5 young people from Hackney Youth Parliament and /or Hackney Care Council.

Health in Hackney

Cllr Ben Hayhurst (Chair), Cllr Peter Snell (Vice Chair), Cllr Kam Adams, Cllr Kofo David, Cllr Michelle Gregory, Cllr Deniz Oguzkanli and Cllr Emma Plouviez

Living in Hackney

Cllr Sharon Patrick (Chair), Cllr Soraya Adejare (Vice-Chair), Cllr Anthony McMahon, Cllr M Can Ozsen, Cllr Ian Rathbone, Cllr Penny Wrout, Cllr Ajay Chauhan and Cllr Clare Joseph

Skills Economy and Growth

Cllr Polly Billington (Chair), Cllr Clare Potter (Vice-Chair), Cllr Richard Lufkin, Cllr Sam Pallis, Cllr Steve Race, Cllr Gilbert Smyth, Cllr Nick Sharman, Cllr Patrick Spence and Cllr Vincent Stops

INEL Membership for 2021/2022

City of London

Common Councilman Michael Hudson

Hackney

Cllr Ben Hayhurst (Chair) (also Chair of Hackney HOSC), Cllr Kam Adams, Cllr Peter Snell

Newham

Cllr Ayesha Chowdhury (also Chair of Newham HOSC), Cllr Anthony McAlmont, Cllr Susan Masters

Tower Hamlets

Cllr Gabriella Salva-Macallan (Deputy Chair) (also Chair of Tower Hamlets HOSC), Cllr Faroque Ahmed, Cllr Shah Ameen

Waltham Forest

Cllr Nick Halebi (also Chair of a Waltham Forest HOSC), Cllr Richard Sweden (also Chair of a Waltham Forest HOSC), Cllr Umar Ali

Observer (non voting) from ONEL JHOSC:

Cllr Neil Zammett (also Chair of Redbridge HOSC and current chair of ONEL JHOSC)

CONTACTS

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