

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23

Report to Full Council 27 September 2023

By Chair of Scrutiny Panel - Cllr Margaret Gordon

Chair's Foreword

Introduction from Cllr. Margaret Gordon

I am proud to present the annual report of Hackney's Scrutiny function for the Municipal Year 2022/2023.

This report presents the work of Hackney's overarching Scrutiny Panel and our four thematic scrutiny commissions. Scrutiny is an essential check and balance of the Mayoral system and the primary way that backbenchers of all parties hold the executive to account in public on behalf of the communities we serve.

Scrutiny in Hackney: provides a constructive 'critical friend' challenge; amplifies the voices and concerns of the public; is independent of the executive; and drives improvement in our services.

We have made sure that the actions of the Council and our statutory partners have been subject to robust challenge where required and made impactful contributions to policy development in a number of areas. We have been unafraid of tackling the most difficult and controversial issues.

In Scrutiny Panel we have focussed on the impact of the cost of living crisis on residents, making recommendations on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the impact of the council's Poverty Reduction Strategy. We also published our cross cutting review of the Council's work to meet 'net zero' targets in a way that is affordable, efficient and fair.

The Child Q case rightly caused widespread concern in Hackney and beyond, and our joint scrutiny work provided public challenge and oversight of the local response and made recommendations aiming to avoid future incidents. Likewise, our investigation into housing support for care leavers led to their needs being explicitly stated in the new Housing Strategy.

The Children & Young People Commission continues to work for and with our local young people. Our work on childhood food poverty kick started the Council's food commission. We continue to scrutinise the whole range of Hackney and partner services including support for young parents, accessibility of CAMHS and provision of foster parents. Particularly valuable have been the contributions of Hackney's Youth Parliament, Hackney of Tomorrow and the Young Futures Commission.

Chair's Foreword 2/2

Health in Hackney examined the health impacts of poor air quality, provision of local GP services, the pressures on adult social care and the planning for future accommodation options. Living in Hackney examined the policing of drug use, widening access to arts and culture and social housing accountability and performance. Skills, Economy & Growth worked on changes to local bus routes, the future of library services and adult skills and retraining.

As ever, this report summarises hundreds of hours of work and the contributions of hundreds of individuals. In particular the chairs and vice-chairs Cllrs Adejare, Billington, Conway, Hayhurst, Joseph, Patrick and Potter, and other commission members, the Mayor and Cabinet, officers, contributors from outside bodies and, very importantly, members of our local community who have given up their time to contribute to our meetings and reports and engaged with our work whether in person or online.

We have also benefited from reports in the press which have brought our work more immediately to a wider audience.

I would like to thank Jarlath O'Connell, Martin Bradford and Craig Player, the brilliant members of our Scrutiny Team, led by Tracey Anderson, who all take huge pride in their work and continually challenge us to push the boundaries of what can be achieved by a Council's Scrutiny function.

Cllr Margaret Gordon

Chair
Scrutiny Panel 2022/23

Structure of Scrutiny in Hackney

Scrutiny Panel
(Chair and Vice Chairs of all Scrutiny Commissions)

Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

Housing,
Community
Safety, Public
Realm

Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

Health Service,
Adult Social Care

Children & Young People Scrutiny Commission

Education &
Schools,
Children's Social
Care

Skills, Economy & Growth Scrutiny Commission

Employment,
Economy,
Transport

Scrutiny Panel

Chair: Cllr Margaret Gordon

Scrutiny Panel

| Link to papers | Topics covered |
|------------------------------|--|
| 14 July '22 | Ageing Well Strategy 20-25; Quarterly Finance Update; Overview of Commission work programmes. |
| 3 Oct '22 | Complaints and Enquiries Annual Report; Chief Executive Question Time; Quarterly Finance Update; Improving engagement and involvement of CYP in Scrutiny. |
| 20 Feb '23 | Hackney Council Constitution update - review of O&S sections; Quarterly Finance Update; Recommendations discussion for Council Tax Reduction Scheme review. |
| 24 April '23 | Poverty Reduction - Voluntary Sector Partners update; Call In of Executive Decision (Introduction of parking charges for motorcycles); Council Tax Reductions Scheme Task and Finish Group; Net Zero review. |

Financial overview

As part of our Budget Scrutiny role at each meeting we receive *Quarterly Financial Updates* from the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Group Director for Finance and Corporate Resources. As a standing item we consider the latest *Overall Financial Position* (OFP) report which is prepared for Cabinet and which gives the latest on the finances of the Council and we look at the most recent *Capital Programme* and *Housing Revenue Account* reports. Throughout the year, in the lead up to the Budget, the Senior Leader Team, statutory finance officer and the Cabinet Member will seek our input on draft savings proposals as they are being developed. We provide comments and challenge to these draft proposals and are joined for these sessions by the Chair of the Audit Committee.

Net Zero - overarching review 1/2

The issue

Reaching the UK's net zero ambitions will require all tiers of government, business, institutions and communities to work closely together. In response to climate change Hackney Council declared a 'climate emergency' in 2019 and has been building its vision to transition to net zero ever since. Hackney, and the UK generally, has made good progress in reducing emissions over the last decade, but it is recognised that faster and coordinated action will be needed to protect communities and the environment from the effects of climate change. We decided to initiate a cross cutting review in October 2021 to look at what is needed to meet both national and local net zero targets, and to ask how the Council could better meet its ambitions in a manner that is affordable, efficient and fair. The review was an amalgamation of work by the overarching Scrutiny Panel and the thematic Scrutiny Commissions: Health in Hackney, Living in Hackney and Skills, Economy and Growth during the municipal year 2021/2022

Our findings

Our report published in April made 27 Recommendations across: Monitoring, Governance and Leadership; Investment and Finances; Housing and Corporate Property; Transport, Energy; and Education Skills and Economic Development. These focused on the key areas relating to *decarbonising transport, buildings and waste, installing clean energy projects, encouraging green growth, and ensuring a sufficient skills supply for new green jobs*. Throughout the review the importance of using the Council's convening power to agree solutions across the borough, rather than just focusing on the Council as an institution, was evident.

Internally we heard from:
Sustainability and Public Realm
Housing Services
Inclusive Economy, Regeneration and New Homes
Strategic Property Procurement
Chair of Planning Cttee
Cabinet Members

Externally we heard from:
Harrow Council
Waltham Forest Council
GLA
London Councils
Department of Work & Pensions
Homerton Healthcare
New City College
Hackney Resident Liaison Group
2 x Tenant Management Groups

Net Zero - overarching review 2/2

Next steps

There is a growing understanding that climate action needs to be holistic, and we hope that the Council will prioritise the continued involvement of Hackney's residents, businesses and organisations in any future action it takes in response to our findings. We hope that our findings and recommendations will help the Council and other local stakeholders to understand not only the barriers which are challenging the delivery of climate action, but also the opportunities that can support them in their Net Zero journey.

In 12 months we will check on the implementation of recommendations and consider what has been happening in the interim in this now, fast changing, policy context.

Key reports consulted:

**A Green New Deal (GLA)
London Net Zero 2030 -
updated pathway (GLA)
Climate Change
Programmes, (London
Councils)
and the full suite of relevant
LBH Strategies and Action
Plans**

Council Tax Reduction Scheme - Task & Finish Group

The issue

Like all local authorities Hackney has been impacted by the Government's decision to delegate responsibility for council tax relief to local authorities without providing the necessary funding, meaning that councils then faced the dilemma of having to balance levels of funding for essential services with providing support to its most vulnerable residents with their council tax bills. Council Tax Benefit used to be delivered by DWP as a nationwide means-tested benefit but in 2013 the system changed and it was devolved to local authorities who were then required to publish a *Council Tax Support Scheme* for their area.

Our findings and recommendations

The Mayor and Cabinet made a commitment to review Hackney's rate of council tax support which is offered to eligible working age adults and we decided to establish a cross cutting Task and Finish Group to feed into this work. The Group was open to all Scrutiny Members and it met 3 times between Sept '21 and Feb '22. It looked at the design and impact of localised council tax support schemes elsewhere in England and considered proposals by Hackney for a model that would give a 90% reduction on council tax bills by 2026 and a full 100% discount by 2030.

We heard compelling evidence about the impact of these policies during a cost of living crisis. Our relatively high collection rates indicates that residents are willing to pay for services they value but, there are limits when vulnerable people are facing growing household debt. This is compounded by the fact that liability can change with very small changes to household income or circumstances. We made 11 recommendation covering: need for better clarity in communications and consultation; engagement with local advice services; the need to capture better quality ethnicity data to aid future planning; the operation of the Hardship Fund; support to residents via the Money Hub; and the need to advise care leavers leaving the borough about their possible liabilities.

Next steps

The Task Group endorsed the general direction of travel by the Council here and proposed a two-phased timeline. The Cabinet Response to our Review (in July '23) confirmed the 90% reduction will be implemented, earlier, in April '24 and the intention is to put the full proposals out for consultation in the autumn with the amended scheme being put in place in April.

We heard from:

**Institute of Fiscal Studies
Child Poverty Action Group
Citizens Advice Bureau
Hackney
Deaf Plus
Age UK (East London)
Lambeth Council
Camden Council.**

**Cabinet Member for Finance
Chair of Audit Cttee
Group Director Finance and
Resources and Finance Officers
Benefits and Housing Needs.**

We considered reports from:

**IFS
CPAG
Institute for Government
Local VCS groups.**

Scrutiny Panel - other areas of impact

- **Call-In of decision on introducing motorcycle parking charges**

A Cabinet decision on 27 March '23 to introduce *motorcycles charges* was called-in by 5 opposition members. On 24 April we considered it, hearing from the councillors who initiated the call-in. They argued that this decision represented a disproportionate targeting of a lower emission form of transport, was a misrepresentation of the context here and that the proposed changes were contrary to the Council's policy framework. The Cabinet Member, Group Director and Senior Parking officers responded in detail. After deliberation the Scrutiny Panel voted to *reject* the Call In commenting that there had been extensive long term consultation and engagement and an EIA on the issue, and that the proposals were in line with a number of the Council's policies and plans. The original Cabinet Decision was therefore implemented.

- **Poverty Reduction Work - updates and site visits**

We wanted to review progress on the the Council's *Poverty Reduction Strategic Framework* and how it has been embedded across Council services and the degree and efficacy of the partnership working here. The Council has been embarking on a new way of working with the VCS to provide more holistic support to residents and the pandemic of course gave this an added urgency. Prior to the discussion we went on **Site Visits** to *Woodberry Aid, Chicken Soup Shelter and Stamford Hill Community Centre* and we also heard from the groups *H.O.P.E. at Morningside* and the *Hackney Chinese Community Services*. We discussed progress with four key Cabinet Members, the Group Director for Finance and senior officers. We will return to the topic to assess the impact of the work.

- **Annual 'Chief Executive's Question Time' session**

In October we questioned the Chief Executive on three areas: how the Council was developing metrics and evaluating the outcomes for all Council services; how the Council was restoring public confidence in the organisation in the aftermath of such issues as the cyber attack and the effects of the pandemic and the methodology for developing a 'Whole System' approach to anti-racism and the ownership of this important work. Our annual Mayor's Question Time Session had to be postponed, and will appear in the next annual report.

Special Investigation- 'Child Q'

Child Q - background to the case

In December 2020, 'Child Q', a Black female child of secondary school age in Hackney, was subject to a strip-search by female police officers from the Metropolitan Police Service. The search took place on school premises, without an appropriate adult present and with the knowledge that Child Q was menstruating.

Given the seriousness of what happened, an IOPC review was initiated and, locally, a Rapid Review was initiated by the City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP). The Rapid Review report was submitted to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel in early 2021. Following this Jim Gamble (Independent Safeguarding Children Commissioner of the CHSCP) instigated a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (SPR) whose first report was published in March 2022. A central finding of the SPR was that racism was a likely factor in the decision to strip search Child Q. The case attracted major local concern, protests and national media attention and Scrutiny Councillors decided that a **joint review between CYP and Living in Hackney Commissions** was necessary.

Child Q - Special Joint CYP-LiH Scrutiny Commissions meeting 13 June 2022

The aim of this joint meeting was to help bring public oversight of the various reports made by the local agencies and to ensure that there are effective accountability and monitoring structures in place to oversee the implementation of recommendations and commitments made within them. There were 5 elements to the meeting: *Scrutiny of Strategic response; the Serious Case Review; the strategic response of the statutory partners; Accountability and monitoring arrangements; and summary and next steps*. The meeting heard from the Metropolitan Police Borough Commander for Hackney/Tower Hamlets, the Independent Child Safeguarding Commissioner for City & Hackney (Jim Gamble) and colleagues as well as the Mayor and Cabinet and all relevant senior council officers in education and children's social care.

The first meeting assessed what each partner did in response to the Child Q SPR and what further actions were planned. One of the key issues which emerged was the lack of a single body which meets in public and which has oversight of these issues and the joint meeting aimed to fill this gap. We also wanted to see that partner agencies developed a collaborative response to the outcomes of the Child Q SPR. Our own recommendations covered: a request for a local action plan in response to the Child Q SPR recommendations, strengthening of authorisation procedures around strip searches of children; auditing of school safeguarding policies; and the need for 'adultification bias' training; measures to improve trust and confidence of the community in local policing; and the need for ongoing scrutiny and oversight.

Child Q - what we did

Child Q - Special Joint CYP-LiH Scrutiny Commissions meeting 25 April 2023

A second meeting was held in April to hear the response to our Recommendations and to check on progress. This meeting heard from Dame Rachel de Souza (The Children's Commissioner for England), and again from the Independent Child Safeguarding Commissioner for City & Hackney, the Met Police Borough Commander, MOPAC's Director of Strategy & MPS Oversight as well as Mayor Glanville and Cabinet Members.

The contribution of the Children's Commissioner for England amplified our own concerns here and her research underlined that this was a national problem. The Commissioner's analysis of police data demonstrated that many strip searches take place without proper authorisation and without an appropriate adult being present. Our meeting also highlighted the issue of disproportionality in the ethnicity of those who are strip searched and the need for the Metropolitan Police to acknowledge and address this. There was strong representation at this meeting from Hackney Youth Parliament representatives who actively lead some of the lines of enquiry from the Commission.

The second report from City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP) was released on 20 June 2023. This report further examined the failures that led to the treatment of Child Q and provided an updated response from local safeguarding partners. From additional consultation with children and young people, the report highlighted that schools' behaviour codes and policies often override the need for a Safeguarding First approach. It also underlined that the mistrust of young people is not just confined to the police but also to other statutory services.

Our key reflection on this process is about the complexity of public accountability structures here and the nexus of local, regional and national oversight making it difficult for the public to understand where responsibility lies and how change can be instigated (for example, local staffing arrangements sit with the Metropolitan Police rather than the local Borough Commander).

Next Steps

The Commissions now await the publication of the report of the IOPC and we have pressed them to conclude their deliberations promptly and transparently and we reminded them that ongoing delays with this report undermines the community's trust and confidence. The Commissions plan to meet again once the IOPC report has been published.

Children & Young People

Chair: Cllr Sophie Conway

Children & Young People -overview of the year

| Link to papers | Topics covered |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <u>11 July '22</u> | School Admissions; Childcare Sufficiency Strategy; Outcome of School Exclusions - Cabinet response |
| <u>29 Sept '22</u> | Foster Carers: (i) Recruitment and Retention Strategy (ii) Assessing local support offer; Update on GCSE and A Level results in Hackney; Demographic Analysis of EHCPs in Hackney |
| <u>31 Oct '22</u> | School Exclusions and School Moves Monitoring; Ofsted Focused Visit Outcome; Childhood food poverty - eligibility, accessibility and uptake of FSM |
| <u>30 Nov '22</u> | Budget Monitoring - Children & Families Service; Children & Families Annual Report; SEND Strategy |
| <u>16 Jan '23</u> | City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership; Unregistered Educational Settings; Outcome of School Exclusions - Progress of Recommendations |
| <u>27 Feb '23</u> | Cabinet Question Time - Cllr Woodley (Early Years, SEND, Parks and Play); SEND Action Plan; Budget Monitoring - Hackney Education; Children and Families Annual Report |
| <u>20 Mar '23</u> | Support for Young Parents (Race, racism and children's social care); Pupil Attainment - Attainment Gap with focus on children in 'Alternative Provision' |
| <u>17 April '23</u> | Accessibility of CAMHS - strategic plan to reduce waits, single point of access, support for CYP on waiting lists; Cabinet Question Time - Cllr Bramble (Children, Education & Children's Social Care) |

Childhood food poverty

The issue

It is estimated that after the cost of housing is taken into consideration, 48% of children are living in poverty in Hackney. Now with the added cost of living crisis we wanted to understand the nature of the childhood food hunger locally and the role played by schools in response. The aim was to identify the extent of free school meal (FSM) and Breakfast Club provision across schools in Hackney and if were connected to local food poverty networks. We hoped this approach would establish what additional support schools might need to help them to address childhood hunger.

Our findings

Despite a low threshold for FSM eligibility (£7,400) an increasing number of local children were receiving FSMs. In 2021/22, 39% of all local children received FSM, entitlement across schools varied with it being as high as 68% in some schools. As FSM eligibility is linked to Pupil Premium payments, and which contributed nearly £16m to local schools, it was important that sign-up processes were well promoted and easy to complete by parents. Our research found that universal FSM provision within local schools was more extensive than previously understood and much could be learnt from them. Our discussions also highlighted the limited access that children within the Orthodox Jewish Community have to the FSM programme, as most are educated in independent schools (that do not qualify).

We welcomed the establishment of the Cabinet's Task Force to establish what was currently provided, to share good practice and develop a borough wide approach to the problem. We submitted a report of our findings to the Task Force and we urged them to consider how universal FSM could be extended to more schools, and how the authority and local schools could work with a number of local charity organisations (Chefs in School) to support them in this.

Next steps

The Task Force have published a report into childhood food poverty in schools and have credited our contribution to this work. We expect to return to the outcomes from this work next year and to work out how the Mayor of London's commitment for universal FSM for all primary children in the capital can be continued beyond 2023/24.

We visited:

Urswick Secondary School
Morningside Primary School
Berger Primary School

We heard from:

Hackney Education

The heads of the following schools:

Gainsborough
Gayhurst, Kingsmead and
Mandeville
Our Lady's
Urswick

We considered data from:

Hackney Education
ONS
Food Foundation
Trussell Trust
National Breakfast Programme

Support for young parents

The issue

Following on from a joint item with Health in Hackney SC on ‘*Maternal mental health disparities*’ in Oct ‘21 we decided to look more broadly at the support for young parents in Hackney. While the under-18 conception rate has dramatically fallen from 40/1000 in 2009 to 10/1000 on 2020, there is still a significant number of young parents (i.e. under 25) requiring help with their health and wider care needs.

Our findings

We learned about the *Family Nurse Partnership* which provides antenatal support to under 24s commissioned by Public Health. They also separately commission: community based peer mentoring, advice and signposting service for vulnerable pregnant women and new mothers; the Young People’s Clinical Health and Wellbeing Service; YPs Substance Misuse Service; and PAUSE (focused on women who have experienced, or are at risk of having, multiple children removed from their care.) More widely there is other support from Children’s Centres, Looked After Children services, Perinatal mental health service, maternity services and specialist midwives and we discussed these.

Mapping the terrain of provision here we were impressed overall with the level of support and the degree of practical partnership working. Whilst we acknowledged the limitations of the Family Nurse Partnership and the licensing restrictions which limited eligibility (e.g it can only support first time mothers under the age of 25, first child only and up to the age of 2, etc.), we do have concerns about decommissioning of this service (from September 2023) and replacing it with an *Enhanced Health Visiting Service*. Under questioning, officers suggested that the new service could be provided more flexibly, support a wider range of young parents and better placed to respond changing needs (being a step-up and step-down service).

Recommendations

Our key finding was the need to ensure that the specialist knowledge and understanding of young parents’ needs is not lost in the new commissioning framework, and we will be looking out for when we revisit this subject in the future. We also noted that a defining feature of the needs of young parents, particularly those with care experience, was that many of these young people were socially isolated who did not have an extensive network of support from families or friends. Our report will make recommendations to address this, particularly in how local service providers can facilitate peer support.

We visited:

The mother and baby supported housing unit in Hackney

We consulted:

7 young parents through two focus groups

We heard from:

LBH Public Health
LBH Children’s Centres
LBH Corporate Parenting
Chief Executive of Family Rights Group

Accessibility of CAMHS

The issue

Referrals to CAMHS (*Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services*) spiked dramatically during the pandemic. Although this spike appears to be diminishing, referrals remain higher compared to pre-pandemic levels. In the light of this we decided to review the accessibility of (CAMHS) in Hackney, in particular local progress on developing a Single Point of Access (*No wrong front door initiative*) and what support is provided for children and young people who are on waiting lists to be assessed or receive treatment.

Our Site Visits and Focus Groups

We met in focus groups and at committee with all the key stakeholders who comprise the *CAMHS Alliance for City and Hackney*. We spoke to lead clinicians at Specialist CAMHS at the Homerton and observed First Steps at The Ark (who support the Single Point of Access). We also visited Off Centre a VCS organisation providing counselling support to young people from vulnerable communities. It was particularly useful to hear directly from practitioners to learn more about the needs of young people presenting for support and the effectiveness of local efforts to make sure that they were seen promptly.

Our findings

We got an overview of service demand, the waiting times and compliance with accessibility standards. We examined access to therapeutic services and what cohorts were waiting for therapeutic support, noting that there are significant waits for young people on the ASD pathway. We explored the development of the Single Point of Access initiative across the alliance, and understood that this was having a positive impact and was generating data which was adding to local understanding of young people's mental health needs. We learned that it is vital that early help and support interventions are put in place before clinical interventions become necessary as these are not always successful. The long term aim is to have an effective Open Access Mental Health Hub for young people, which will allow young people to access support through a non-clinical setting and to extend the early help offer in order to build young people's resilience.

Next steps

We are developing recommendations from this work and we will report in the autumn. Given the importance of the accessibility of CAMHS and early help, it will continue to feature in our future work programme e.g. work on Emotional Based School Avoidance.

We visited:
First Steps
Specialist CAMHS
Off-Centre

We held:
Focus group with mental health practitioners from the above and other members of CAMHS Alliance

We heard from:
CYP, Maternity and Families
Integrated Commissioning

CYP Emotional Health and Wellbeing Partnership/
CAMHS Alliance/ Hackney
Education

C&H Place Based Partnership
Mental Health Programme
Manager

Foster Carers - recruitment and retention

The issue

Recruitment and retention of foster carers is critical to Hackney because it is vital to make sure that we have high quality, local care that is aligned to local support services. The financial aspect is also critical in that the unit costs for using independent foster carers are twice that of our in-house team of carers. In 2018 we carried out an extensive investigation of the subject and reported to cabinet with 10 recommendations for improvement. In 2022, the local Foster Care Council (the foster carers themselves) approached us to review and update progress against these recommendations.

Our survey and focus group

For this update we decided to carry out a detailed survey of our 160 local foster carers (mainstream and connected carers) and we held a focus group to discuss progress made on our previous recommendations. We also questioned officers from the Children's Social Care team on their recruitment and retention plans. Almost 50 foster carers responded to the survey which provided a rich and detailed feedback for this update.

Our findings and recommendations

A key issue to emerge was how the cost of living crisis was impacting on foster carers. Increasing household costs was impacting on the foster carer role with just 8% of indicating that the current system of fees and allowances enabled them to meet *all* the needs of their children. Foster carers praised the support from the fostering service, especially via the *Mockingbird Project (a hub and spoke model of respite care)*. Given the staffing turnover, foster carers noted that it was difficult to build relationships with social workers and that their views were not always taken on board when making decisions about children in their care.

Our recommendations will be agreed in September but they cover key areas such as: how to develop *peer support mechanisms* around the local in house Foster Carers; the more rapid roll-out of *Mockingbird* (a hub and spoke model of support for fostering households); the need to *benchmark financial support* to make sure it is in line with similar councils and to make it *more transparent*; to need to ensure a *greater consistency of support from the social work team* to all foster carers; and recognising the role and value of foster carers in the *decision making around the life choices* of the child. Our previous recommendation on *waiving council tax for foster carers* was finally implemented in April 2023.

We surveyed:

160 in-house foster carers and connected carers in Hackney.

We held:

A Focus Group with 11 foster carers and members of Hackney Foster Carer Council.

We heard from:

**Chair and Vice Chair of Hackney's Foster Care Council
Group Director CYP
Head of Corporate Parenting
Head of Fostering Support Unit**

CYP other areas of impact 1/2

Unregistered educational settings

We continued to maintain regular scrutiny of *Unregistered Educational Settings (UES)* to keep this issue in the public spotlight and have regular assurance that local agencies are doing all they can to protect and safeguard children in Hackney.

Even with a clear strategy, sound intelligence and strong inter-agency collaboration, local efforts to address safeguarding risks within these establishments have been limited, particularly as the operators are reluctant to engage.

On the back of our review we wrote to the Secretary of State pushing for new legislative requirements to bring unregistered educational settings within regulatory oversight in order to reduce the associated safeguarding risks. We explained that up to 1,500 local children were at risk now as they were being taught out of ‘line of sight’ of safeguarding, health and safety and educational standards agencies.

The Minister responded that it remains the department’s intention to legislate on the safeguarding measures that were in the discontinued 2022 Schools Bill “when parliamentary time allows”. In the meantime, she urged that many practical steps can be taken now using existing powers (while waiting for new legislation), such as more effective use of School Attendance Orders. She invited the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to meet with officials so they could hear more about Hackney’s specific requirements.

SEND Strategy and Action Plan

SEND refers to the education of children who require additional education support either within the mainstream educational system or in more specialised settings.

The *SEND Strategy for Hackney* which oversees this area was agreed by Cabinet in October 2022. To support the delivery of key priorities within it a *SEND Partnership Action Plan 2022-25* has been developed by local education, health and social care services and we agreed to oversight of this important work.

We were pleased that the SEND Partnership Board has set an ambitious programme to transform this area and for each of the 10 Workstream Areas we examined the milestones set and the progress against the plan. We explored how the School Estates Strategy might dovetail with the ‘Additional Resource Provision’ and was asked what was being done to mitigate the impact of a then 13 month wait for ASD reviews.

We asked that a ‘performance dashboard’ be created to better support service monitoring in future and that we would review previous scrutiny of SEND services to identify priority areas for improvement and support preparations for the next Ofsted inspection.

CYP other areas of impact 2/2

School Exclusions

Again this year we retained oversight of the number of exclusions and other school moves in Hackney (e.g. Elective Home Education and Alternative Provision). Whilst overall numbers of exclusions have declined, local rates still remain among highest in London. We pressed for improved oversight of the safeguarding risks of permanent exclusion and pressed officers if the extended offer of the Re-engagement Unit was being taken up by secondary schools. Our discussions led us to renew our focus on school behaviour policies and the impact of these on school exclusions. This will be the focus of our in-depth review this coming year.

Plus annual oversight of these:

Each year we have standing items to consider the following reports:

- *Children and Families Service Annual Report*
- *City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCF) Annual Report*
- *Reports on GCSE and A Level Results*
- *Report on Pupil Attainment - Attainment Gap*
- *Budget Monitoring of Children and Families Service and of Hackney Education*
- *Cabinet Member Question Time Sessions.*

School Admissions

Each year we review the school admissions processes and the latest data on admissions to reception class, transfer from primary to secondary school, in-year admissions and admission of pupils with *Education Health and Care Plans*. We also look at the wider role the Council has as in planning for school places. We noted that applications for reception places continue to fall (2%), which is part of an ongoing trend (17% since 2017/18). A fall in applications for secondary school places (3.4%) was also recorded. We will continue to oversee the School Estates Strategy and work to reduce 'school admissions black spots'.

Childcare Sufficiency Strategy

Each Council has a 'childcare sufficiency duty' to ensure that there are sufficient childcare places to meet local needs. Councils are required to undertake a childcare sufficiency audit every two years not only in relation to the number of childcare places available, but also on the quality and cost of local provision. We held a **Focus Group** with local childcare providers to better understand the challenges being faced by providers and while the audit data showed that there was sufficient provision, we learned how the cost has increased, that there is a recruitment crisis in the sector and there are financial constraints which impact on viability, such as that paid for childcare is used to subsidise 'free' provision as the payments for latter does not cover its costs.

Health in Hackney

Chair: Cllr Ben Hayhurst

Health in Hackney-overview of the year

| Link to papers | Topics covered |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <u>29 June '22</u> | The science on the health impacts of poor air quality - expert briefing; City and Hackney ICP/Place Based Partnership update; Response to Homerton Healthcare and St Joseph's Hospice Quality Accounts; appointments to Inner North East London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. |
| <u>21 Sept '22</u> | C&H Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report; Healthwatch Hackney Annual Report; New 'Integrated Mental Health Network'; How Primary Care can optimise new NHS structures view from GP Confed; New DHSC guidance on health scrutiny. |
| <u>16 Nov '22</u> | Q&A with new leader of North East London NHS City and Hackney Place Based Partnership (Louise Ashley); NHS Dentistry in Hackney - panel discussion |
| <u>5 Dec '22</u> | Integrated Delivery Plan for C&H Place Based Partnership; Adult Social Care reforms - fair cost of care and sustainability; Implementation of Liberty Protection Safeguarding; Refresh of Mayor of London 6 Tests for service reconfiguration; AOB - Spike in waiting times for mental health patients at Homerton A&E. |
| <u>12 Jan '23</u> | Local GP services - access and quality; Cabinet Member Question Time - Cllr Kennedy. |
| <u>8 Feb '23</u> | Tackling inequalities in local mental health services (ELFT our acute mental health provider); Homerton Healthcare - future options for soft facilities services; Community Diagnostic Centres - impact on Hackney; Impact of new hospital discharge funding scheme. |
| <u>15 March '23</u> | 'Together Better' project on volunteering in primary care; Health & Wellbeing Strategy update; Cost of living and health equity. |
| <u>26 April '23</u> | Update on new Integrated Mental Health Network; Housing regeneration and options for future proofing adult social care needs - panel discussion. |

Health impacts of poor air quality

The issue

We wanted to hear from a senior academic expert on the latest research on the health impacts of poor air quality both indoor and outdoor and to discuss with council officers the progress being made in implementing Hackney's own *Air Quality Action Plan 2021-25 (AQAP)* and so explore areas for improvement or greater focus. The focus here was on levels of NO₂, PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ in the air which are predominantly produced by traffic, heating and burning solid fuels.

Our findings

Our invited expert, Dr Ian Mudway (Faculty of Medicine at Imperial College), described in detail the known and emerging risks of poor air quality to health, the impacts across the life course from poor infant lung growth to poor mental health. He took us through the key studies, local and national and the current WHO guidelines. We noted the significant improvement in air quality since ULEZ and during the lockdowns. We explored what good mitigation measures in schools might look like. With the council officers we explored the local data, the national guidance, Public Health England's recommendations, NICE guidance and progress thus far on the 10 priorities in the Action Plan. An ongoing concern is the impact on residents of high density housing on boundary roads, for example close to major junctions.

We revisited the issue after a year to examine the improvements since 2022. We welcomed the expansion of the air quality monitoring stations, the traffic schemes and school streets. We pressed officers on why London was still slow in adopting the amended and much tougher WHO guidelines. Officers pointed out that a staged progression based on feasibility and practicality was needed as the original guidelines stemmed from cities which are not comparators. We heard how the AQAP aims to deal with high NO₂ hotspots, their work with other boroughs on such aspects as reducing the amount of Non Road Working Machinery on building sites. We noted the steady improvement on the 47 actions in the AQAP which cover all departments of the Council.

Next steps

We asked that next year's update include average readings from all the new air quality monitors being installed with year by year comparisons and an indication of how these results measure against the 2005 and 2021 WHO guidelines. We also asked for further detail on what the Council is doing to better educate, inform and mitigate against the worst effects.

We heard from:

- Imperial College - Faculty of Medicine
- Deputy Director of Public Health
- Land Water Air Team Manager from Environmental Services
- Cabinet Members

We considered:

- Hackney's Air Quality Action Plan 2021-25
- GLA's *Air Quality in LB Hackney - a guide for Public Health professionals*

Local GP services - access and quality

The issue

Members raised concerns both personal and raised with them by residents about registration and access to local GP Services. We invited the lead GP for City and Hackney and the commissioner from NHS NEL to address these in detail.

Our findings

The concerns covered: mishandling of registration when patients are moved following closure of a practice; poor customer service; inability to get face to face appointments; triage not working and people being kept waiting long times for call-backs; patients being told to go to A&E and frustrations with NHS 111 service.

We went through a very comprehensive performance report with the lead GP and commissioner. In response she outlined the challenges such: recruitment and retention of staff; the increased complexity of presentations; increased incidence of Longer Term Conditions; increased presentation of mental health issues along with physical ones; impacts of high levels of deprivation such that patients turn to GPs first for a range of problems. We noted how heart disease and diabetes used to be dealt with predominantly in hospitals are now in General Practice. There was also a spike in A&E with a knock on impact on primary care. A key part of the response is recruiting Additional Roles within multi disciplinary teams and we noted that Hackney does perform very highly on patient experience data compared with our close comparators. We learned how GP Practices are trying to improve telephone triage systems although no one system was the perfect solution. Our comparatively low level of calls to NHS 111 was testament to the the high performance and the Duty Doctor contract, again not universally available elsewhere, has been key to driving up performance they argued. We discussed particular challenges in the GP surgeries in Springfield Park PCN which is its own set of demographic and other challenges.

Next steps

We brought GP access issues back 6 months later for deep dive into Springfield Park Primary Care Network (PCN) in order to illustrate what work is being done and the progress they are making. We will also explore more how the alignment of the PCNs with the GP Confederation is progressing. This is an ongoing issue where we keep a watching brief.

We heard from:

- NHS NEL, Clinical Lead for Primary Care, City & Hackney
- NHS NEL, Primary Care Commissioner
- Healthwatch Hackney, Executive Director
- Cabinet Member

We considered:

- Data Primary Care Commissioning
- 'Care Opinion' patient feedback analysis
- Healthwatch Hackney 'GP Patient Experience' reports

Fair cost of care and market sustainability

The issue

The government had planned to introduce a new £86k cap on the amount anyone in England will have to spend on their personal care over their lifetime. Welcome as it will be for individuals, if it does come in, it will create a further funding gap in care and destabilise a market where currently 40% are 'self funders' whose fees help the care providers subsidise what they receive from council placements. We wanted to know what level of funding was expected and how the new system might operate

Our findings

We discussed with Adult Social Care Services how they are responding to these emerging and constantly evolving proposals, the necessary modelling work they're doing and the liaison with local providers in the context of government timelines and plans which keep altering. We were reminded that the Council has a legal duty to ensure a viable local market. The Autumn Statement changed the goal posts yet again and pushed implementation to 2025. Hackney was expecting £600m next year and the year after in the 'fair cost of care transition' but instead got just £948k seed funding to embed a new system. We learned that inflationary pressure on costs and increased demand means that the care market is at risk of failure nationally. We learned that there is a significant difference between what the local authorities say the market needs (evidenced in analysis) and the original funding proposed. We explored various aspects including: cost implications of in-sourcing (would increase costs) and work with other NEL boroughs, considering our high proportion of out of borough provision. We noted that getting the 8 NEL boroughs to agree to common inflationary increase in rates when we don't have certainty over the national funding picture was a huge task.

Next steps

We commented on the need to work at the same pace as other councils so as not to destabilise the market. There obviously needs to be a viable financial solution to the differential between the fees care homes receive from self funders vs from council placements. We agreed to keep a watching brief and asked the Group Director to report back once the funding position for the following year was known.

We heard from:

- Group Director, Adults Health and Integration
- Director of Adult Social Care and Operations
- Finance and Commissioning Heads

We considered:

Presentations and modelling reports from on Adult Services and Finance

HoC Library Proposed reforms to adult social care including cap on care costs

Housing regeneration and options for future-proofing adult social care needs

The issue

We wanted to examine possible approaches to future proofing housing in the borough to better accommodate the growing demand for adult social care or housing-with-care type support. There's been a 25% increase in ASC demand since 2020, making it the largest budget in the Council's general fund and so any further housing based solutions to support social care need would help to reduce demand for example for expensive residential care, most of which has to be provided out of borough.

Our findings

We examined the demand profile 2020-40; the implications of the ASC reform white paper; the local vision; current provision; other options; placement numbers; and how officers identify future need. We noted that a thorough needs analysis of the current cohort and which might be in a position to come back into their community was needed. Officers cautioned that the aim here was not to build a two tiered system but to keep many more residents within their local community. With housing officers we looked at: their building programmes; their objectives driven by manifesto targets; current offer of adaptable homes; their work on completing the *Housing Needs Survey* and the *Strategic Market Assessment* to feed into the new iteration of the *Housing Strategy* which will oversee this work. Strategic Property described how they will work with Adult Services to better understand both demand and the different requirement such as the types of facilities. We noted that the next step will be help build the business case for suitable models and suitable products to fulfill this demand including the crucial issue of how these solutions can be funded over time.

We pushed for greater urgency and impetus here and noted that there were many comparators to look at and we pressed the Cabinet Member on what needed to be done to push this at a political level but also to raise the profile of this both with Cabinet and the wider Member cohort as it will be a key 'invest to save' project needing long term support.

Next steps

We asked to receive a further briefing as soon as the surveys and business case were complete, explaining what the different options could be and what the associated models might look like.

We heard from:

- Group Director Adults, Health and Integration
- Director of Adult Social Care and Operations
- Strategic Director, Economy, Regeneration and New Homes
- Strategic Head - Strategy, Assurance and Private Sector Housing
- Director of Strategic Property
- Cabinet Member

We considered:

- Briefings from Adult Services and Housing
- 'A place we can call home'
- Commission on the Role of Housing in the Future of Care and Support, Nov '21
- White Paper 'People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform', Dec '21

HiH other areas of impact 1/2

Creation of NHS North East London

We continued to provide challenge to the NHS as it replaced the 7 east London CCGs with the new *Integrated Care Board* and *Integrated Care System* known as NHS NEL. We kept the pressure on to ensure meaningful delegation to our local *City & Hackney Place Based Partnership* which is led by the CE of Homerton Healthcare and we looked at their Integrated Delivery Plan. In all our discussions we held NHS NEL to its promises on ‘subsidiarity’, where both governance and budgets should flow down to the ‘place level’ to the fullest extent possible.

A new ‘Wellbeing Network’

We questioned the CEO of City Hackney Waltham Forest Mind (the provider) and Public Health (the commissioner) on the implementation of a reconfigured *Integrated Mental Health Network*. Since 1 July ‘23 the service has been delivered by a number of specialist providers managed by ‘City Hackney Waltham Forest Mind’ which secured the contract as the lead provider. It will primarily support people with complex mental health needs, who do not meet the threshold for secondary care but who are also too complex for NHS Talking Therapies services such as IAPT. This is a change to their original brief which was more focused on lower level support and signposting. We pressed them on the need for culturally appropriate services, mitigating the impact on the cost of living crisis and the challenges of supporting a cohort with higher acuity.

New ‘Liberty Protection Safeguards’

These are a set of safeguards designed to protect cared-for people who are deprived of their liberty because they lack the mental capacity to consent to their arrangements. They replace that old *Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards* (DoLS) and councils are no longer the only body that can authorise them. We discussed with Adult Services how the new system will expand the range of settings, the ‘Responsible Bodies’ involved and that it will also cover 16-17 yr olds. We went through the challenges and opportunities presented by each change.

‘Soft Facilities’ at Homerton Hospital

The Chief Executive and the Chief Finance Officer of the Homerton Healthcare returned for a follow up to two major items we had around the pandemic period on the future of ‘soft facilities’ services at the Trust. *Soft facilities refer to catering, portering, cleaning, security etc.* In July 2020 we had an item on the decision to grant a 5 year extension to the company ISS for these contracts. When it first came up there had been major concerns about payment of sick pay, especially during the pandemic, and about the terms and conditions of this cohort of staff and trade union reps joined in our discussions. In light of Barts Health Trust’s in-sourcing of its services last year we asked the Homerton to outline their current thinking. After our discussions we asked that before any final decisions are made that HH updates us on their rationale and let us see an outline of their proposals.

HiH other areas of impact 2/2

Changes to NHS Dentistry commissioning

We heard from the Dentistry Commissioner, 3 local dentists, the East London & City LDC, local Primary Care commissioners, Public Health and Healthwatch about current provision of dentistry and oral health services in Hackney. There are major ongoing concerns about access and cost. We debated the contract and pricing system and its 'cap' which is now considered very outdated as it doesn't serve to cover dentists costs and so is driving many to focus solely on private work, thus exacerbating the shortage. As commissioning is being devolved from national (NHSEL) to local (NHS NEL) level we challenged the commissioner about what he would be doing to make the services more locally accountable and responsive. We aim to revisit the issue.

'Community Diagnostic Centres' (CDCs)

Located in communities CDCs will be able to carry out such procedures as x-rays, MRI scans, blood tests, heart rate measurements etc as part of a hub and spoke model. We heard from CE of Homerton Healthcare on the progress of Hackney's business case to bid for a CDC to be located in Lower Clapton.

We also heard about the next steps for the St Leonard's site which will not now be transferred to HH's ownership. Instead, plans are being developed to re-configure the clinical services there. We continue to keep a watching brief on this.

Regular updates on:

There are also a number of major **Adult Social Care reforms** such as 'fair cost of care', Liberty Protection Orders, a new CQC* inspection regime coming onstream and we have to keep a watching brief on these as they will have major implications for the council.

We also responded to concerns about **spikes in demand for local mental health services** including increased number of presentations at Homerton A&E and we also had the Chief Nurse of ELFT** and also Healthwatch in to discuss the progress on **tackling local mental health inequalities**, focusing on tackling poorer outcomes that persist for Black African and Black Caribbean residents.

Plus annual oversight of these:

- ▶ City & Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report
- ▶ Healthwatch Hackney Annual Report
- ▶ Homerton Healthcare Quality Account
- ▶ St Joseph's Hospice Quality Account

**Care Quality Commission, a regulator*

***East London NHS Foundation Trust - our key mental health trust*

Inner NE London Joint Health O&S Cttee

The INEL JHOSC scrutinises health and care services across 5 of the 8 NEL local authorities. It comprises 3 members each from Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets, and Waltham Forest and 1 from City of London. It meets 4 times a year and from 2021-23 was chaired and hosted by Hackney. It examines cross borough issues and service changes mainly dealing with the NHS NEL (our ICS) and holds to account the large acute providers such as Barts Health/BHRUT, ELFT/NELFT and Homerton Healthcare as well as primary care commissioning across the 8 NHS NEL boroughs.

| Link to papers | Topics covered during 2022/23 |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <u>25 July '22</u> | Implementation of the North East London Integrated Care System (NHS NEL) which replaces the 7 CCGs Proposed changes to access to fertility treatment in NEL; NHS NEL health updates (key issues currently at Barts Health/BHRUT; Homerton; ELFT/NELFT) <i>Redevelopment of Whipps Cross report from Whipps Cross JHOSC chair at each meeting.</i> |
| <u>19 Oct '22</u> | Developing an ICS Strategy - a requirement of the new organisation; Acute Provider Collaborative - how the large acute providers are now formally collaborating; NHS NEL health updates (key issues currently at Barts Health/BHRUT; Homerton; ELFT/NELFT) |
| <u>15 Dec '22</u> | What we're doing to improve access, outcomes, experience and equity children and young people and young adults in mental health ; ICS Strategy - the final draft; Financial Strategy for ICS; NHS NEL health updates (key issues currently at Barts Health/BHRUT; Homerton; ELFT/NELFT) |
| <u>28 Feb '23</u> | Additional hospital discharge funding in NEL - how will it operate; How the new NEL Research and Engagement Network funds will be used; NHS NEL health updates (key issues currently at Barts Health/BHRUT; Homerton; ELFT/NELFT) |

Living in Hackney

Chair: Cllr Soraya Adejare

Living in Hackney overview of the year

Note: June meeting was joint with CYP SC on Child Q; September meeting cancelled due to death of HM The Queen

| Link to papers | Topics covered |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 13 July '22 | Implementation of the Charter for Social Housing Residents: (i) resident experiences (ii) housing associations. |
| 7 Nov '22 | Changes to the Housing Register and Lettings Policy & the impact of the cyber attack on the Housing Register. |
| 12 Dec '22 | Housing repairs; Housing support for care leavers & Child Q safeguarding practice review. |
| 23 Jan '23 | Policing of drug use. |
| 16 Feb '23 | Equality, diversity and inclusion in the arts and culture sector. |
| 22 Mar '23 | Temporary accommodation. |
| 20 Apr '23 | Resident engagement for estate regeneration schemes. |

Policing of drug use

The issue

The drivers here were public concern about the policing of drug use partly in the aftermath of the Child Q case but also concerns about the government's 2022 white paper '*Swift, Certain, Tough - new consequences for drugs possession*' which called for tougher criminalisation of drug use. Our aim was to better understand the local context and to explore the more innovative approaches now being taken locally which sees drug misuse as a Public Health issue and not merely one of criminal enforcement. We also wanted to understand how the arrangements currently in place ensure effective partnership working and local accountability.

Our findings

We learned that much good work was already taking place between the community safety partners (Met Police, Public Health, substance misuse treatment organisations), and that Hackney is a pilot borough for Project ADDER - a new approach which has sought to improve the care pathways between the criminal justice system and local substance misuse work on the ground. It focused for example on 'Out of Court Disposal Orders' a method of resolving an investigation for offenders of low-level crime and anti-social behaviour (such as graffiti and low-level criminal damage) when the offender is known and admits the offence.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Our findings strongly supported an approach to the policing of drug use which seeks to prioritise diversion and timely access to drug treatment and support rather than criminalisation. Co-ordinated support needs to be provided alongside enforcement action to ensure that individuals are directed into treatment rather than left to further (and often disproportionate) criminalisation.

We welcomed the advent of the *Hackney Local Policing Scrutiny Panel* which was being piloted by the Mayor's Office for Police and Crime (MOPAC) and we asked for reassurance that it is fully representative of Hackney's diverse communities, particularly those who are disproportionately affected by the use of police powers. We also asked the Community Safety Partnership to demonstrate how KPIs from the current plan are being met and we pushed for a much more more robust governance structure which clearly demonstrates joint working with the new Local Policing Scrutiny Panel and Combating Drugs Partnership. We asked MOPAC to make clear how the new panel will be funded, and monitored, and how it will differ from previous structures.

We heard from:

- Met Police - Central East BCU
- City & Hackney Public Health
- Support When It Matters
- Turning Point
- Cabinet Members with community safety and health remits
- Chairs of CYP SC and HiH Scrutiny Commissions

We considered:

- *Hackney Community Safety Partnership Plan 2019-22* (being updated)
- Govt. white paper '*Swift, Certain, Tough - new consequences for drug possession*', 2022
- *Govt's 10 Year Drug Strategy - From Harm to Hope, 2021*

Arts and culture sector - widening access and diversity

The issue

We wanted to look at the barriers faced by under-represented groups in accessing arts and culture opportunities in Hackney, and the work of the Council and its partners to improve access and increase participation. Many of these barriers have been brought into focus by the pandemic and cost of living crisis, and we therefore wanted to examine how underrepresented communities are supported in a practical way to take advantage of what's available.

Our findings

We learned that there are financial, physical, digital and perceptual barriers to accessing the arts. We examined work being done specifically to engage the Black African community, we heard about the costs of working to widen engagement e.g by increasing accessibility requirements. We heard about the challenges of short term funding and how this might be improved. We explored how the Hackney Carnival might be developed. We heard about the impact of the cost of living crisis on decreasing the demand for hired venues and the huge increase in energy costs. We heard about work in schools by Play Space and Jun Mo Generation and the crucial role the Council can play here acting as a broker. We looked in detail at the Hackney Carnival, the Windrush Programme 2022, Hackney Circle (aimed at older people) and Hello Again Hackney (the reopening fund for cultural venues post pandemic) and Hackney Pride and Discover Young Hackney (aimed at introducing young people to arts and culture) as well as the work to support Orthodox-Jewish led cultural activity.

We noted that there is a need for the Council to use community halls and spaces more strategically which in turn would help arts organisations and we discussed how residents can shape the programme of events devised by the Council.

Next steps

We are revisiting this in 2023/24 when we will look more closely at how local arts and culture provision is funded, after which we will make our recommendations. We hope these will positively contribute to the refresh of the new Arts & Cultural Strategy.

We heard from:

- Hackney Empire
- Jun Mo Generation
- Play Space
- Hackney Shed
- LBH's Strategic Director Engagement, Culture & Organisational Development
- LBH's Cultural Development Manager
- Cabinet Member

We considered:

- Hackney Council's *Arts and Cultural Strategy* (being updated)
- Consultants report on the social and economic impact of the Hackney Carnival (2019)
- Create London's report '*PANIC, Social Class, Taste and Inequalities in the Creative Industries*'

Social Housing - Accountability and Performance

Drawing together recent work on the accountability and performance of local housing associations and Hackney Housing Services

A key theme this year was how to drive up accountability and improve performance of the social housing providers in Hackney, comprising the 'Registered Social Landlords' and the Council itself.

Our work on this was halted by the pandemic so we revisited the *Housing Associations Review* from 19/20 and 20/21 which had explored the practices and approaches of Housing Associations operating in Hackney, and their relationships and partnership arrangements with the Council. We had heard from *Clarion, IDS, Islington & Shoreditch, One Housing, L&Q, Guinness Partnership, Peabody, Shian, Agudas Israel* and *Sanctuary* as well as the *National Housing Federation* and from the Council we heard from: *Benefits & Housing Needs, Housing Services, Housing Strategy* and *Community Safety*.

We built on that work this year by examining the accountability of our local social housing providers (both housing associations and the Council itself) and we drew these pieces of work (across 6 meetings) together to produce some themed recommendations. We reviewed progress against the implementation of the *Charter for Social Housing Residents*, and we explored such key details as: nominations and lettings, tenancy sustainment, repairs, complaints, safety and resident engagement. We examined changes to the the Council's Housing Register and Lettings Policy, and looked at what had to happen to mitigate the impact of the cyber attack. We also kept our usual watching brief on the ongoing issues with housing repairs.

We made **24 detailed recommendations** across 5 areas: *Developing partnership arrangements; Maximising nominations and lettings; Supporting tenancy sustainment; Safeguarding adults, children and young people* and *Maintaining properties in good repair*.

While the Council has been working positively with Housing Associations over a number of years, the housing crisis continues to worsen and housing related needs are acute as ever. Although there are significant differences between the Council and Housing Associations both in terms of their approach to stock management and their underlying economic model, we agreed that there is much common ground and need for even closer collaboration from now on.

Housing support for Care Leavers-joint with CYP

The issue

We wanted to examine the nature and level of housing support provided to our Care Leavers. This joint review ran across 21/22 and 22/23. Our report was published in Oct '22 and the Cabinet Response was issued in June '23 so we can report on outcomes here.

Our Report

We made **10 detailed recommendations** and we're pleased to say they have led to the following:

- The housing needs of care leavers are now explicitly stated in the new Housing Strategy (2023).
- Although the quota for care leavers has not been increased, the Housing Register will be amended so that all care leavers age 18 (not 21) can now register for social housing. This is vital for parity and to reduce the 'cliff edges' of care and support
- There are now 2 x Benefits and Housing Needs Officers dedicated to supporting local care leavers.

Most care leavers will be required to find housing in the private rented sector and they will be able to access additional support via *Settle* (a dedicated VCS org). Also, rent deposit support is now available to all care leavers who wish to move on to their own tenancies before the age of 21. We noted some interesting anomalies which need rectifying such as that Care Leavers had to be eligible for support from the Green Room (i.e. effectively homeless) in order to access a deposit for private rented sector property.

The Council has a special duty of care to care leavers and we argue this must be reflected in the language which officers and the council use i.e. they are not just 'residents'. Greater work needs to be done to target support at their key transitions points for them and the Council as a corporate parent should undertake further work to establish a truly corporate offer of support for care leavers. Cabinet also agreed to improve communication with care leavers through and improved online offer and the establishment of a care leavers hub.

Next steps

We will press Cabinet to ensure care leavers are named as a priority in the next *Housing Strategy*, that further work is done to increase both housing options and capacity for them and that the Mayor work with other London boroughs to help develop a universal London-wide offer for care leavers which could include a council tax exemption. We also encouraged the local Housing Associations to engage better with the support needs of our care leavers.

We heard from:

- 5 x Care Leavers at commission meetings
- 10 x Care Leavers in a Special Focus Group

We visited:

- 2 supported housing schemes for care leavers in Hackney Downs Ward and speaking to staff and young people.

- Leaving Care Team
- Housing Needs Teams
- Housing Strategy
- Corporate Parenting

Benchmarked our services by hearing from:

- LB Lambeth
- LB Islington

LiH - other areas of impact 1/2

Resident engagement on estate regeneration

Following concerns raised by residents involved in estate regeneration plans we decided to hold **Focus Groups** with RA and TRA members from Colville, Kings Crescent, Woodberry Down and Regents Court Estates to discuss their experiences and to examine the impact of the new *Housing Services Resident Engagement Strategy*. Our work here fed into the development of the new *Housing Strategy*.

We heard from Paul Watt (Professor of Urban Studies, Birkbeck University) on the latest research on the impact of estate regeneration schemes across London and the lived experience research he had collated. We debated his research with the Cabinet Member and with senior housing officers and we challenged them on the following: *were residents given sufficient opportunity to be involved in shaping proposals; what was the approach to temporary rehousing (following demolition of homes) and how displaced social tenants were supported to understand their options and rights; and in general the approach to providing guidance to all leaseholders, freeholders and private tenants to understand their options*. We also explored the approach being taken by Regeneration Programmes to strengthening community cohesion and benchmarked best practice elsewhere.

We were pleased with the quality of much of the engagement taking place and its level of responsiveness. We made **5 recommendations** to both Housing Regeneration & Delivery and Housing Services: emphasising the importance of these services working more closely together; and on the importance of socially integrating new residents into estates. We asked officers to be as realistic as possible with residents about the potential problems as well as the potential benefits of schemes and asked for further detail on how they propose to measure impact.

LiH - other areas of impact 2/2

Temporary accommodation

The steady increase in homelessness has had an undoubted impact on the demand for temporary accommodation. In February Cabinet Members joined us **visiting a number of the temporary accommodation sites in Hackney**. The aim was to gain a better understanding of the standard of temporary accommodation, as well as to hear from residents, staff and temporary accommodation providers.

It raised a number of concerns about the location of the settings, their affordability, the impact on employment, education and caring responsibilities of the residents and the health and safety standards in the buildings.

A key issue relates to how habitable some of the sites are and we looked at issues of disrepair, lack of adequate space especially for children (currently 3500 in temporary accommodation), as well as mobility and disability access and the important question of the policies on visitors and personal callers to residents in temporary accommodation.

We debated the broader issues of the need for more joined up working between the agencies and the providers of hostels. We were encouraged by the practical and wraparound support provided by hostel staff and the relationships they develop with households. There was concern though around just how many of the issues they were picking up and the challenges of supporting families with increasingly complex needs.

Next steps

We will be following up this piece of work in 2023/24 where we will look at the new Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy before it is adopted by Cabinet, challenging how it will be delivered, how key risks have been considered and its measures of success. We will also look closely at the future commissioning and management of supported accommodation for single homeless people with multiple and complex needs, which has recently been brought into the Benefits & Housing Needs service.

Skills, Economy and Growth

Chair: Cllr Polly Billington

Skills Economy & Growth-overview of the year

Note: September meeting cancelled due to death of HM The Queen

| Link to papers | Topics covered |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <u>20 June '22</u> | How to consult better with communities on Regeneration programmes (focus on a Hackney Town Centre site); Cabinet Members' priorities for the new administration - a Q&A with Deputy Mayor Nicholson, Cllr Williams and Cllr Coban. |
| <u>18 July '22</u> | Adult Learning/Education and Skills Retraining in Hackney - full meeting. |
| <u>21 Nov '22</u> | Impact on Hackney of TfL's proposed changes to the Bus Network - full meeting |
| <u>14 Dec '22</u> | Local Economy update - understanding the local economy - full meeting |
| <u>9 Jan '23</u> | Future of Libraries and Hackney's new Library Strategy - full meeting |
| <u>6 Feb '23</u> | Cabinet Question Time - Deputy Mayor Nicholson |
| <u>8 Mar '23</u> | Economic Development - update on metrics; Cabinet Member Question Time - Cllr Coban |
| <u>25 April '23</u> | Cabinet Member Question Time - Cllr Williams |

Changes to local bus network

The issue

We wanted to discuss with Transport for London (TfL) and key stakeholders London Travel Watch and Bus Users UK the *Central London Bus Review 2022*. 78 routes across 23 boroughs would be affected by the review with 22 London routes withdrawn completely including 5 in Hackney. This was on top of the withdrawal of the 48 and cuts to 4 other routes in the past three years alone. We wanted to ensure that TfL had explored all avenues to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of both reduced connectivity and reduced frequency of services.

Our findings

TfL's review highlighted how passenger demand had fallen considerably post pandemic due to greater home working, changes to technology etc. but operating costs had not changed. We therefore learned that the subsidy for TfL required in 21/22 (operating costs minus fares income) was £774m while they were still required to achieve financial sustainability by end of 23/24. We explored the modelling they had used to underpin their proposals.

London TravelWatch highlighted to us how buses are the most accessible and affordable form of transport and are used disproportionately by those on lower incomes, people of colour, women and young people and we explored with TfL how they are taking these points into consideration. The focus group provided insight about the impact on residents, their views about the bus route changes (proposed and previous) and the operation of the network when travelling inside and out of the borough. We pointed out to TfL that London has an integrated public transports system for a reason - the system underpins our economic strengths but it also showcases some of our greatest inequalities and that, while London is better served with buses than the rest of the country, a race to the bottom is not a solution.

Our Recommendations

We urged TFL to do all they can to ensure that London's bus network remains a jewel of this city. We pointed out that Hackney's residents rely on buses so much because they are a really good way to get around and not just an alternative mode of transport. We asked for greater transparency on when decisions are made so we can better understand what TfL is prioritising at any time. We also asked them to explore developing proposals to ensure better co-design of early proposals with the boroughs affected so that when route changes are being contemplated they do more in depth work on, for example, affordability and connectivity.

We Held:
Focus group with 11 residents from low income households.

We heard from:

- Transport for London
- London Travel/Watch
- Bus Users UK
- Mayoral Adviser for Older People and Carers
- Head of Streetscene
- Public Transport Team
- Policy and Strategic Delivery.

We considered:

- TfL's *Central London Bus Review*
- Hackney's *Ageing Well Strategy*
- Testimonies from Hackney's Older Citizens Committee.

We consulted:
(115 survey responses):

- Hackney Works (employers and employees)
- Orthodox Jewish community
- Wider community and stakeholder organisations.

Future of Library services

The issue

Hackney has 8 public libraries, situated within a one-mile walking distance for all residents and a community library service. The Mayor and Cabinet are fully committed to them and launched a review in April 2021 which included a significant engagement exercise and which generated a new *Libraries Strategy* which was agreed in Oct '22. The purpose of our meeting (Jan '23) was to review the implementation of the Strategy and consider future plans for library spaces and workforce changes.

Our findings

We learned how 8500 residents had contributed to the public engagement report. We also heard at our meeting from 4 members of Hackney Young Futures group who gave us a useful insight from our teenage residents. It was also good to hear from the national Libraries Connected group, who represent and support public libraries. Our questions encompassed: changing needs of libraries including co-working spaces; the diversity of the workforce and the changing needs of staff and service users; making the libraries more inclusive; health and safety; and digital inclusion.

As a Scrutiny Committee we have no role in labour relations but UNISON made a submission to us about the concerns they had about both the depth of consultation and the opportunities afforded to them to participate in it. They had concerns about job losses and changes to working practices arising from the staffing restructure, about working below minimum staffing levels, health & safety impacts, the lack of direct assimilation and inability to continue providing current service levels. Senior Officers replied that the new less hierarchical structure should give staff more professional autonomy which should contribute to a culture change across the service. We considered the union input in the context of the wider reports about the vision for the new service.

Conclusions and next steps

The discussions highlighted the range of challenges facing the Executive in terms of managing reduced budgets, increasing demand and the changing needs of the service. It was also helpful to hear from trade union colleagues about the concerns they have for the staffing of the service and what it means for their members. We were pleased that there will be continued dialogue between the trade unions and the Council about how to resolve some of the ongoing concerns on terms and conditions and health and safety and we welcome the Council's commitment to a review the Library Strategy after a year. We, in turn, intend to review the progress made one year after implementation.

We heard from:

- Strategic Director of Engagement, Culture and OD
- Strategic Service Head for Libraries
- 4 young people - Members of Hackney Young Futures
- Policy and Strategy Officers
- Libraries Connected (CE)
- Unison (Branch Secretary)

We considered:

- *Libraries Strategy for Hackney 2022-26*
- Public Engagement Report
- 2 x reports from Libraries Connected
- Submission from Unison

Adult learning and skills retraining

The issue

Lifelong learning is key to retraining, accessing better job opportunities and transitioning to new employment sectors and the government is spending £3bn on it between 2021-26, forming a National Skills Fund to retrain and upskill the adult workforce to meet identified skills gaps. We wanted to explore how local adult learning and skills provision in Hackney is supporting residents and adults of working age to retrain and transition. We wanted to know how the programmes are funded and how they invest and how this can be aligned with the requirement to fill the 'green skills gap'. Previously we'd asked the Council align its adult community learning provision with its employment support service in order to provide a more seamless service we wanted to check on progress on this.

Our Findings

We heard from our local New City College, from the local skills charity ELATT and the Council's own provision. We explored the latest data on skills gaps and asked how the programmes were funded and how and what they invested. We noted for example how NCC has a new partnership with Bath Spa University fill some of their qualifications and expertise gaps. We learned how ESOL remains in high demand along with the need for digital skills. We noted how currently 72% of total learners on adult learning courses are women and examined how this gender imbalance is being addressed. Although the Government is advocating for retraining to fill skills gaps and green jobs, we learnt about the practical procedural and eligibility barriers facing our key providers. The loss of crucial EU funding and the absence of any sufficient replacement is also posing a serious risk to the infrastructure for local provision.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Councils can be a catalyst for change here and we will continue to lobby the Sec of State on changes to funding rules. A national qualification framework, in some of these new employment sectors for example, would draw down from the National Skills Fund and provide quality assurance across the green skills sector. Local employers and industries will need to work closely with the education institutions to provide courses which meet needs of employers and we will continue to monitor this. Partnership working across the local adult learning system is also crucial and we will return to review how the Council is using its 'convener' role here in ensuring for example that the curriculum is complementary across the adult learning system. We asked NCC and ELATT to provide further input on what the Council should do to ensure that its own offer complements theirs.

We heard from:

- Hackney and Tower Hamlets Colleges (New City College Group) (Principal)
- ELATT (Chief Executive)
- Head of Employment, Skills and Adult Learning
- Head of Quality & Curriculum
- Cabinet Member

SEG - other areas of impact 1/2

How to consult better on area regeneration programmes

As part of our ongoing focus on engagement, we looked at how the contract award for the Lead Architect for the Hackney Town Centre Regeneration Programme was run and how it reflected the insights drawn from the previous year's consultation with the community. The town centre sites programme comprises 9 sites (4 in Hackney Central and 5 in Dalston). We examined with the Head of Area Regeneration and the Strategic Director how that work builds on a whole raft of key Council Plans and Strategies and fundamental to all of those is engaging and listening to residents. We asked for the resident feedback in written form so that we can better judge how the Council will deliver in relation to the ambitions of the programme.

Improving the metrics used to analyse economic development

We questioned the Economic Development Manager on how the Council proposes to measure the impact of the activities undertaken to shape an inclusive economy, so as to ensure that the objectives in the *Economic Development Plan* can be achieved. We explored the Council's approach to developing metrics and looked at some key activity streams with their respective metrics. We examined the Theory of Change/Logic Model which offers a more nuanced way of thinking about long term outcomes and impact.

Next we will ask officers about developing an evaluation framework for area regeneration activity and about the best practice in this sphere and what learning the Council might draw on.

SEG - other areas of impact 2/2

Local economy update

As part of our regular focus on the health of the local economy in December we questioned the Economic Development Manager on comparing Hackney's economy pre and post pandemic; the key considerations for the Council's *Economic Development Plan* and what these mean for the local economy; and the current cost of living support to local businesses.

Hackney's businesses have been facing challenges with higher commercial rents. In addition there is more demand for property and residents/employees face housing challenges of their own. This has compounded the systemic issues of exclusion that some residents have experienced and it is likely to increase the wealth gap in Hackney. As usual we examined how sub regional and national trends are impacting on us locally.

Cabinet Member Question Time x 3

We questioned our Cabinet Members across three sessions on:

Encouraging community wealth building business models and creating a Green and Circular Economy and how local businesses are supported in those (Cllr Nicholson);

The Green New Deal; Understanding its economic impacts; and carrying out an impact analysis of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods on local businesses (Cllr Coban)

Employment and Skills for the green and circular economy; the redevelopment of adult learning courses; and support offered locally to refugees and migrants entering the UK (Cllr Williams).

The Scrutiny Process

What is the role of overview & scrutiny?

Statutory function
established by Local
Government Act 2000

Statutory requirement
within in all Mayor and
Cabinet /Leader models of
local government

Develop stakeholder
engagement and
involvement

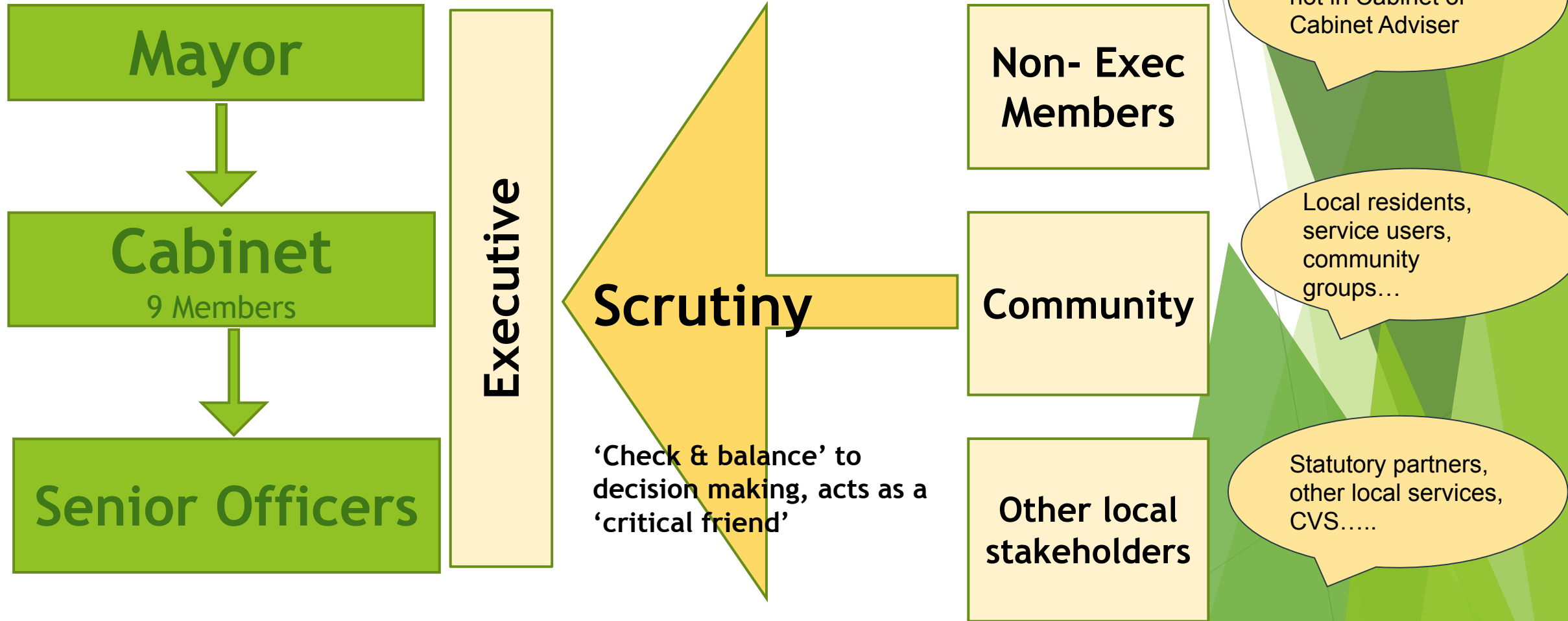


Improve Decision Making



Enhance democratic
accountability

Scrutiny role in decision making....



Functions of Scrutiny

Characteristics of Scrutiny

- **Member led process** - members decide what, how and when issues are scrutinised
- **Holding to account** - public questioning and challenge to decision makers in the Council (Mayor, Cabinet Members & Senior Officers) and partners (NHS, Police, Housing)
- **Service Review (performance)**- ensuring services are effective, meet agreed standards and the needs of local people, offer value for money
- **Policy development (review)** - assist the Council in reviewing existing policies or developing new policies (via depth reviews)
- **Budget Monitoring** (in year budget review) and **Budget Scrutiny** (contributing to budget setting process, reviewing proposals for service reductions)
- **Public engagement and involvement** - facilitate community 'voice' and representation and help maintain public confidence in decision making.

What is a Call-In?

Five or more councillors can 'Call in' a 'Key Decision' when they can make a case to the Council's senior legal officer (monitoring officer) that a decision which has just been made is:

- contrary to the Council's policy framework
- not taken in accordance with the budget
- failed to consider relevant evidence
- not in the interests of local residents

If a Call-In is approved by the 'Monitoring Officer':

- A 'stay' is put on the decision until the Scrutiny Panel meets to consider it
- The Panel must meet within 10 days to consider the Call-In where it then hears from both sides
- Scrutiny Panel then either **endorses** the original decision, in which case it is implemented immediately, OR **refers** it back to the decision maker (Cabinet or Full Council) for reconsideration.

Historically very few Call-Ins in Hackney - 1 in the past year

Developing the work programme

- New work programme developed each year to ensure topicality

The work programme is built up from:

- **Standing items**

- Items Commissions are obliged to scrutinise and maintain oversight for e.g.
- *Health in Hackney* - Adult Safeguarding Annual Report, NHS Quality Accounts
- *Children & Young People* - School Places, CYP Safeguarding Annual Report
- *Living in Hackney* - Crime & Disorder Partnership

- **Formal consultation**


- Backbench councillors (non-executive members)
- Public consultation via the local Annual Scrutiny Survey
- Cabinet members, senior officers, statutory partners
- Voluntary and community sector organisations

- **Horizon scanning - issues which have implications for scrutiny**


- *National*: new legislation, policies or strategies impacting on local provision;
- *Local*: new policies, strategies or services; performance data, complaints data, upcoming inspections
- Local issues attracting major resident concern or media attention

- **Review monitoring/carry-over items**

- Going back to review progress on implementation of previous reviews/recommendations
- Items that Commissions wish to keep a watching brief on



All topic suggestions are collated and published for openness and transparency.



Prioritisation:
1. Resonates with the community
2. Where scrutiny can have impact.
3. Aligned to corporate goals

Types of items on a work programme

In-depth reviews

Each year a Commission may undertake an in-depth review of a specific policy area.

This generally involves work both inside formal meetings and external (e.g. focus groups, site visits).

A formal report is published with recommendations for the executive.

Standing items

These are items a Commission monitors annually and relate to a key part of their remit.

Themed discussions

These meetings are focused on a specific topic area or theme. This takes up the bulk of that specific meeting. Reports are requested on current key issues of concern to Cllrs or in response to requests from officers, residents, or stakeholders or in response to local media coverage. They might also focus on preparation for new legislation or guidance which may be coming downstream and which will have a local impact.

Monitoring past reviews

The Commission maintains oversight of past in-depth reviews or major single meeting items by receiving updates to ensure that recommendations were implemented.

Pre-decision scrutiny

Scrutiny engaging with new or emerging policies and strategies being developed by the Council before a decision is made by Cabinet. Key plans and strategies will also include a period of public consultation.

Membership of the Commissions for 2022/23

Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Margaret Gordon (Chair)
Cllr Soraya Adejare
Cllr Polly Billington
Cllr Sophie Conway
Cll Ben Hayhurst
Cllr Clare Joseph
Cllr Sharon Patrick
Cllr Clare Potter

1 Conservative vacancy as Vice Chair

Children & Young People

Cllr Sophie Conway (Chair)
Cllr Margaret Gordon (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Alastair Binnie-Lubbock
Cllr Lee Laudat-Scott
Cllr Midnight Ross
Cllr Caroline Selman
Cllr Anya Sizer
Cllr Sheila Suso-Runge
Cllr Lynne Troughton Cllr Claudia Turbet-Delof

1 Conservative vacancy

Co-optees:
Richard Brown
Andy English
Salmah Kansara
Jo Macleod
Steven Olalere
Monique Pink

Health in Hackney

Cllr Ben Hayhurst (Chair)
Cllr Sharon Patrick (Vice Chair)
Cllr Kam Adams
Cllr Grace Adebayo
Cllr Frank Baffour
Cllr Eluzer Goldberg
Cllr Deniz Oguzkanli
Cllr Ifraax Samatar

1 Labour vacancy
1 Conservative vacancy

Living in Hackney

Cllr Soraya Adejare (Chair)
Cllr Clare Joseph (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Zoe Garbett
Cllr Joseph Ogundemuren
Cllr M Can Ozsen
Cllr Sam Pallis
Cllr Ian Rathbone
Cllr Ali Sadek
Cllr Penny Wrout
Cllr Sarah Young

Skills, Economy & Growth

Cllr Polly Billington (Chair)
Cllr Clare Potter (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Anna Lynch
Cllr Jon Narcross
Cllr Fliss Premru
Cllr Gilbert Smyth
Cllr Claudia Turbet-Delof
Cllr Joe Walker
Cllr Jessica Webb

1 Conservative vacancy

Media coverage of Scrutiny 2022/23 1/2

The media covers our meetings. Here is a small sample of coverage over the past year:

Child Q - 2022-23

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-61796798>

<https://www.hackneycitizen.co.uk/2022/06/07/child-q-police-strip-search-black-teenager-school-council-meeting/>

<https://www.hackneycitizen.co.uk/2023/04/18/child-q-special-scrutiny-meeting-next-week-residents-invited/>

Safeguarding and Child Protection Organisation news item-Jan 23

<https://www.sacpa.org.uk/2023/01/19/simply-not-good-enough-child-safeguarding-expert-urges-police-and-other-bodies-to-back-up-anti-racism-pledges-with-evidence/>

Temporary Accommodation-Mar 23

<https://www.hackneycitizen.co.uk/2023/03/24/council-bidding-war-housing-gazumped-home-office/>

Housing Repairs-Dec 22

<https://www.hackneycitizen.co.uk/2022/12/14/council-repairs-service-damp-mould-death-toddler-rochdale/>

Contacts

Scrutiny Panel and Skills Economy and Growth Scrutiny Commission
Tracey Anderson - Head of Scrutiny and Ward Forums
tracey.anderson@hackney.gov.uk

Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission
Martin Bradford - Overview & Scrutiny Officer
martin.bradford@hackney.gov.uk

Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission
Jarlath O'Connell - Overview & Scrutiny Officer
jarlath.oconnell@hackney.gov.uk

Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission
Craig Player - Overview & Scrutiny Officer
craig.player@hackney.gov.uk

Media coverage of Scrutiny 2022/23 2/2

The media covers our meetings. Here is a small sample of coverage over the past year:

Young Parents-Feb 23

<https://www.hackneycitizen.co.uk/2023/03/22/councillor-young-parents-support-service-decomissioned/>

Childhood food poverty-Nov 22

<https://www.hackneycitizen.co.uk/2022/11/03/hackney-headteachers-cost-of-living-crisis-schools-families/>

School closures-June 23

<https://www.hackneycitizen.co.uk/2023/07/04/parents-concerned-children-with-special-needs-primary-school-mergers/>

Interview with CYP SC Chair-Mar 23

<https://www.eastlondonlines.co.uk/2023/03/too-many-young-falling-through-the-cracks-says-council-scrutiny-chair/>

Regeneration of Hackney Central-Feb 23

<https://www.hackneycitizen.co.uk/2023/02/07/hackney-central-visitors-19m-cash-injection/>

Air quality-June 22

<https://www.hackneycitizen.co.uk/2022/06/28/health-experts-stop-people-dying-pollution-scrutiny-meeting-hackney/>