

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 12 DECEMBER 2023

Councillors Present:	Cllr Penny Wrout in the Chair
	Cllr Sade Etti, Cllr Jon Narcross, Cllr Alastair Binnie-Lubbock, Cllr Fliss Premru, Cllr Sheila Suso-Runge, and Cllr Jessica Webb.
Apologies:	Cllr Michael Desmond, Cllr Clare Joseph, Cllr Clare Potter, Cllr Steve Race, Cllr Ifraax Samatar and Cllr Claudia Turbet-Delof.
Absent:	Cllr Eluzer Goldberg and Cllr Michael Levy
Officers in Attendance:	Sandra Farquharson, Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development (joined remotely) Nilesh Lad, Regulatory Service Manager Mario Kahrman, ICT support Sonia Khan, Assistant Director, Policy and Strategic Delivery Gerry McCarthy, Head of Community Safety, Enforcement & Business Regulation Tessa Mitchell, Team Leader, Governance Services Jospehine Sterakides, Legal Officer (joined remotely) Gareth Sykes, Governance Officer
Joined remotely:	Cllr Ali Sadek Cllr Carole Williams, Cabinet Member for Employment, Human Resources and Equalities. Cllr Sarah Young

1 Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Michael Desmond, Cllr Clare Joseph, Cllr Clare Potter, Cllr Steve Race, Cllr Ifraax Samatar and Cllr Clare Turbet-Delof.
- 1.2 Cllr Ali Sadek and Cllr Sarah Young attended the meeting virtually.
- 1.3 Cllr Eluzer Goldberg and Cllr Michael Levy were recorded as absent.
- 1.4 Cllr Carole Williams attended the meeting virtually in her capacity as the Cabinet Member for Employment, Human Resources and Equalities.

2 Declarations of Interest - Members to Declare As Appropriate

- 2.1 None.

3 Consideration of Minutes Of The Previous Meeting and matters arising

- 3.1 The Corporate Committee members considered and agreed the minutes of their previous meeting, held on 12 September 2023.

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 12 September 2023, be approved as an accurate record of those meeting's proceedings.

Matters Arising

Data on occupancy and usage levels for Council buildings

- 3.2 The Governance Officer stated that on the 7 November 2023 the Council's Strategic Director Customer and Workplace had contacted him confirming that there were in 1,273 workstations in the Hackney Service Centre (HSC) and normal occupancy levels were c 400-600 (and have been increasing noticeably). The Governance Officer confirmed that he was still seeking details on who the freeholder or leaseholder was for each Council building.

Action status – Ongoing

External Contractors – Domestic Abuse policy

- 3.3 Hackney Council's Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development stated that currently there was not a requirement in place for the Council's external contractors to have in place a domestic abuse policy. Contractors could be encouraged to have a policy in place but it was not a requirement. The current legal advice had stated that the Council should not insist that the Council's external contractors have in place a domestic abuse policy.
- 3.4 Councillor Binnie-Lubbock suggested contacting the Council's Procurement Services to include some wording to encourage external contractors to have in place a domestic abuse policy. The Council's Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development replied that the Council was seeking to include some wording in the Council's procurement policies that encourages external contractors to consider adopting a domestic abuse policy.
- 3.5 The Chair of the Committee highlighted that the Council's domestic abuse policy had recently garnered some good publicity as part of the United Nations' recent 'Unite to End Violence against Women Campaign'.

Action status – Resolved

Local authorities – domestic abuse policy

- 3.6 The Council's Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development reported that other local authorities had adopted similar domestic abuse policies. However, it was highlighted that those Councils potentially did not have as wider remit as Hackney Council in terms of being able to adapt to the

specific needs of individuals. Hackney Council had undertaken policies different to other local authorities in enabling a broader and more appropriate use of the time that had been agreed in helping individuals in ways that are suitable to individuals' own circumstances. The next stage for Hackney Council was to promote its policy and to promote different areas to encourage managers to be aware so that they can implement that policy much more broadly with a degree of flexibility.

- 3.7 The Cabinet Member for Employment, Human Resources and Equalities reported on 7 November 2023 the following:

London Councils has written to London boroughs whether they pay domestic abuse leave. Data is still coming in but I understand that, of the 14 boroughs that have responded so far, five offer. Four have special leave (not specifically domestic abuse leave). The majority of councils have not yet responded.

More responses may be forthcoming.

Action status – Resolved

Regulatory Services Service Plan update 2022/23

- 3.8 The Governance Officer highlighted that an update on the Regulatory Services Service Plan update 2022/23 was included as part of the meeting papers (see minute 9 below). An update on the Public Realm and policies for tables and chairs on pavements was expected at the next Committee meeting on 13 March 2024.

Action status – Resolved.

Polling stations

- 3.9 The Chair of the Committee reported that she had spoken to the Council's Assistant Director, Business Intelligence, Elections and Member Service. The Committee noted that the Council was responsible for organising where polling would take place but matters relating to the electoral boundaries was not within the Council's remit and was a matter for the Boundary Commission.

Action Status – Resolved.

- 3.10 Councillor Binnie-Lubbock raised a query regarding the school provision, specifically if a school was shortly to close how that development would impact on polling.

Action:

The Chair would check with the Council's Assistant Director, Business Intelligence, and Elections & Member Services specifically in relation to the changes in the school provision, specifically in relation to those schools scheduled to close, and any impact that may have as a result on the availability of polling stations.

Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs)

- 3.11 On the 26 September 2023 the Council's Head of Community Safety, Enforcement & Business Regulation reported that work on Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) was in relation to alcohol only. They added that the Council was proposing to renew and amend the existing PSPO in relation to dog control which was currently out for consultation and it was hoped that this would go to Cabinet in February 2024.

Action status – Resolved.

Committee Work Programme

- 3.12 The Governance Officer reported that an additional column had now been added to the Committee's Work Programme briefly outlining the status of each work stream.

Action status – Resolved

Senior Management Team (SMT) pay arrangements

- 3.13 An update on Senior Management Team (SMT) pay arrangements was included as part of the item 7 Pay Policy Statement 2024/2025 paper at the meeting.

Action status – Resolved

Green Flag status of parks

- 3.14 As reported at the September Committee meeting, an update on the Green Flag status of parks had been provide by the Council's Head of Leisure, Parks and Green Spaces, Leisure, Parks and Green Spaces on 16 August 2023 and circulated to Committee members.

Action status – Resolved

Dockless hire bicycles

- 3.15 The Council's Head of Streetscene had provided an update (as included in the 12 December 2023 meeting papers pack) on dockless bikes. The Committee noted in the update that Council Officers noted that, in relation to providing usage figures for the bicycles these figures were commercially sensitive as they would - by simple proxy - disclose the commercial performance of the operator.

Action status – Resolved.

- 3.16 The Chair of the Committee noted in the update issue which affected parking compliance in spring and summer of 2023 was cases of users bypassing the Lime App by half locking the bike brakes (i.e. using the bikes without having hired them through a 'hack' method promoted online). In October this year Lime completed a retrofit of 100% of their London fleet so that this means of accessing the Lime bike is no longer possible. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this has led to an improvement in the number of bikes left on the footway.

- 3.17 Councillor Suso-Runge welcomed the update and highlighted that since the hack was no longer operable the pathways in Hackney Central and Shacklewell wards in particular had now been a lot clearer and safer for citizens with disability and mobility issues.
- 3.18 Councillor Premru suggested whether an audit could be undertaken by Streetscene to ascertain whether the 'hack' had resulted in a decline in reported complaints about the poor parking compliance of the dockless bicycles. The Councillor added whether an update could also be provided on the recyclable technology of those bicycles and what was the bicycles average lifecycle.
- 3.19 Councillor Binnie-Lubbock added that an update on what the Council was doing to provide more space on the carriageway for the parking of dockless bicycles would also be welcomed.

Action:

The Governance Officer would contact the Head of Streetscene to provide the following:

- 1. Following the identification of the 'hack' method promoted online for accessing dockless bicycles had, through the monitoring of figures, there been seen a decline in reported complaints about the poor parking compliance of the dockless bicycles:**
 - 2. Further information on the recyclable technology of dockless bicycles and what was the bicycles average lifecycle;**
 - 3. What was the Council doing to provide more space on the carriageway for the parking of dockless bicycles.**
- 3.20 The Committee noted the updates on the actions from the Council's Head of Community Safety, Enforcement and Business Regulation as included in the published meeting papers.

Fixed Penalty Notice enforcement figures 2019 to 2020

- 3.21 The Governance Officer would contact the Council's Enforcement Team to seek figures on the Council's spend on Fixed Penalty Notice enforcement for the 2019 to 2020 period.

Action status – Ongoing.

Food poisoning and infectious disease notifications

- 3.22 The Head of Community Safety, Enforcement and Business Regulation confirmed that, in relation to the food poisoning and infectious disease notifications and the difference in increase in the 2022-2023 figures compared to the 2021-2022 figures was because of lockdowns and people's travel was limited.

Actions statuses – Resolved.

Committee members tour of Council's buildings off campus

- 3.23 An update on arrangements for a tour for the Committee members of the Council's buildings off campus would be provided under agenda item 10.

Action status – Ongoing.

4 Questions from the public

- 4.1 None.

5 Questions from Councillors

- 5.1 None.

6 HR Policy Review

This was a standing agenda item. No update was provided at the meeting.

7 Pay Policy Statement for 2024/2025

- 7.1 The Committee noted that under the Localism Act 2011 Hackney Council was required to publish an annual pay policy statement. The draft statement updates the 2023/24 statement and was approved by Hackney Council. The 2024/25 statement had to be approved by a resolution of the Council before 31 March 2024. Committee members noted in the published report that there had been no substantive changes to the policy. The statement details current pay practice, and no new policy principles were being introduced.

- 7.2 There was a brief discussion about the report wherein the following points were noted:

- At paragraph 5.2 of the published report it was noted that Hackney Council was facing considerable challenges in implementing the nationally negotiated pay deal for 2023/24 which has averaged around 6%, surpassing the initially budgeted 4% for 2023/24;
- National pay agreements are negotiated at the Central Government level which Hackney Council, like other local authorities, is able to provide a view on. The national negotiation took a considerable amount of time and Hackney Council in response can only try to forecast as much as possible ahead of those negotiations;
- Chief Executive's pay in comparison to the median total pay the ratio had gone down. The Chief Executive's salary was a 'spot salary', which was a single hourly/weekly pay rate, or a single annual salary, attached to each job. At the time there was recruitment campaign for a Chief Executive there would a salary review of what the spot salary should be and benchmarking would be included as part of that process. The Chief Executive's pay would rise in line with the nationally negotiated pay agreements. What then could occur was that the gap was then narrowed based on other negotiations for different levels of colleagues in pay and salary. This too was very much impacted by negotiations made at central government level. To some extent the percentage of awards to the Chief Executive groups had been less than those in the much more junior and less paid workforce;

- The report included benchmarking information with a selection of Boroughs that neighbour Hackney or were considered comparable. Hackney Council needed to understand the roles that it had and the opportunities that it was seeking to advertise in the future with the Council being mindful of the comparative salaries. Most of the local authorities would use the same job evaluation schemes so that they would be broadly similar and it would allow Hackney Council to retain those staff that they need;
 - Hackney Council had in place a mechanism to take into account instances when there are high salary demands. Benchmarking is used when taking into account Market Supplements. This involves extensive research by the Council around salaries that are paid and is aligned with workforce shortages and where the Council had tried and found it had been unable to recruit to a role. Market supplements are not common practice within the borough as the Council is able to attract candidates in the main. Where there was challenges the Council would address the issue on a case by case basis;
 - Any discussions around budgets would not just involve salaries it would also include the cost of the salaries e.g. pensions. Discussions may also take some time particularly if the Trade Unions may wish to consult the salary offer with their members. With last year's salary offer two of the three trade unions accepted the offer meaning that green book staff received the offer but red book staff's pay offer was delayed because of their trade union's continued negotiations.
 - The cabinet member responsible noted that during a cost living of crisis trade unions needed to think carefully when consulting with their members to ensure staff received their salary increase in a timely manner should they wish to hold out and continue negotiations;
 - With delays in processing salary offers, due to continued trade unions negotiations, there had been a knock on effect on red book staff directly affected as well payroll staff who would be processing the offer;
 - Salary negotiations with the trade unions in some instances had gone into the next financial year. As soon as the agreement was reached the Council then had put in place measures in the Payroll team to ensure staff are paid as soon as possible it can prove challenging with the transactional changes that needed to be made.
- 7.3 The Councillors present at the meeting thanked the Council's Payroll Team for all their hard work in 2023 for processing staff salaries following the agreement of the salary offered by the trade unions.
- 7.4 The Council's Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development stated that because the Council was dealing with a national agreement their negotiating team was aware of the implications around the offer. There was an expectation that there would be different representations over the negotiation period but there would be a point where there was a final offer made to the trade unions and then a matter of waiting for them to respond.
- 7.5 The Committee welcomed in appendix 1, the Pay Policy Statement, with the inclusion of market supplements which are assessed at least every two years. Committee members felt that really good job role analysis could mitigate against the use of market supplements.

- 7.6 On the issue of severance pay, the Council's Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development clarified that why its inclusion was statutory the Council had to provide evidence on how it acted. All local authorities had to undertake this. Hackney Council had to ensure that it was included in its pay policy statement.

RESOLVED:

To agree the Pay Policy 2024/2025 and recommend Council to approve it.

8 Strategic Plan update

- 8.1 The Council's Assistant Director, Policy and Strategic Delivery gave a brief overview of the Strategic Plan. The plan would provide the means in which the Council could bring together all of the statutory and political commitments, and actions responding to community needs and pressing issues in a way that was agile and adaptable enough to be a framework that sets a direction that could be reviewed and amended over time.
- 8.2 The Strategic Plan would also allow the Council to be an enabler working in partnership with community and statutory partners and local residents. This way the plan was not just about delivery but also about the relationship with those aforementioned groups. The plan was about the borough's priorities and the Council's role as an enabler and convenor as well as having the accountability for delivery.
- 8.3 Under the Strategic Plan implementation would be multi-level, breaking it down into parts whose delivery could be tracked, however this would not be the only aspect of the plan. The Strategic Plan would set out outcomes and deliveries but also how the Council was tracking those deliverables and whether there was an impact on the long term outcomes. It was important for the plan to identify all the cross cutting actions that also need to be tracked, this was the focus of the Strategic Plan and how the Council would get to the outcomes when no one service was responsible for them long term.
- 8.4 The recent Strategic Plan briefing with Committee members in October included details about partnership working and the implementation plan which would be supported by strong internal communications and engagement. The Strategic Plan would also assist the Council in shaping its narrative so that it was then guided by the communication strategy that was being developed. The Council's Assistant Director, Policy and Strategic Delivery suggested to the Committee that they should consider how partnership working fits in with their remit and the focus on regulatory services. Clear links had been identified between several pieces of work and the impact on local communities which in turn could become an issue for the Strategic Plan.
- 8.5 The Committee noted that the Chairs of both the Council's Audit Committee and Scrutiny Panel would look at the Strategic Plan challenge to see how it was coming across in the delivery and whether any issues need to be escalated particularly by the Scrutiny Panel.

- 8.6 The presentation slides, Developing and Embedding the Strategic Plan, from the October briefing, would be shared with the Committee after the meeting by the Governance Officer.
- 8.7 There was a brief discussion wherein the following points were noted:
- There had been a delay in the timetable for the various phases of the Strategic Plan. A detailed timetable would be circulated to Committee by the Council's Assistant Director, Policy and Strategic Delivery;
 - The various phases of the Strategic Plan were working in tandem with one another;
 - There was no delay in implementation. Work was under way to ensure that the Council took on board the work to deliver the Strategic Plan, that the new Mayor and her fellow Cabinet members were fully briefed. This had caused a delay in the approval process and the Mayor was yet to confirm what her priorities were in relation to the Strategic Plan but it was noted by the Committee that there was no break in delivery;
 - The Council would look afresh at partnership working. Analysis had already been undertaken but the solution might not necessarily be having a structure. Partnerships were about convening around cross cutting issues and those intractable issues that could not be addressed by only one single party. It needed to start with identifying the issue that needed to be addressed and working backwards and how the Council would convene to tackle that issue;
 - As more details on the Strategic Plan were developed they would be shared with the committee;
 - A resource had been identified under the Assistant Director, Policy and Strategic Delivery's remit so that the focus could be more on outcomes rather than set piece themes.

Action:

The Governance Officer would publish, as a supplementary paper to the 12 December 2023 Corporate Committee meeting papers, the Strategic Plan update presentation entitled 'Developing & Embedding the Strategic Plan'.

Action:

The Council's Assistant Director, Policy and Strategic Delivery would provide the Corporate Committee with an update on Strategic Partnerships.

Action:

The Council's Assistant Director, Policy and Strategic Delivery would provide the Corporate Committee with an update on the timelines for the Strategic Plan.

9 Draft work Corporate Committee work programme 2023/24

Business Regulation – Service Plan Update

- 9.1 The Council's Regulatory Service Manager, of the Community Safety, Enforcement and Business Regulations Team, introduced the update report as

published. The report provided an update on the performance of the Environmental Health Service against the Service Plan for the 2023/24 to the end of quarter 2, and the work undertaken to improve the quality of food premises in Hackney to protect the health of the public, to assist businesses to comply with their legal requirements.

9.2 The report also highlighted the work of Hackney Trading Standards for 2023/24 to the end of quarter 2. The plan outlines the Service's achievements and identifies areas of interest for the future.

9.3 There was brief discussion about the report wherein the following points were noted:

- The Committee noted that across the service there remained staff shortage issues;
- Regarding Hackney's Hospitality industry, progress was being made to return the sector to pre-pandemic levels. There had been a large explosion of businesses with 3600 businesses currently. This remained a challenge for the Council;
- For bars and clubs in the borough it appeared to be back to normal in the post-pandemic period and the Council would have to adapt as different strains of Covid19 emerge in the future and to adhere to any guidance as it follows;
- On Food Safety Performance against Service Key Performance Indicators 2023/24 and the number of unrated food premises, on average the Service receives 75 new registrations a month. 303 inspections had already been undertaken. 452 businesses had ceased trading, moved out of the borough or had been duplicated on the system. There remained 226 businesses and two officers were working full time to reduce that number. The service was confident that the figure could be reduced and funds had been allocated to employ agency staff to assist in reducing the 226 figure;
- In terms of prioritising those 226 businesses, in order to reduce the backlog, the Service would firstly contact the businesses in question to determine if they are actually trading. It was a process of working through the registrations systematically;
- The Management Information System was currently being implemented and it was expected to be in operation at the start of the next quarter;
- In relation to guidance given to businesses in relation to ventilation post-pandemic there was no formal guidance beyond those building regulations required by law that a new business has to adhere to before it opens. Central government regulations had not changed. Those regulations in place during the height of the Covid19 were only temporarily in place.

Gender and Equalities Pay Gap report

9.4 The Committee noted that the report was not ready, however, the report had been seen by the Committee previously and it was currently unclear what decisions were previously made leading to the report being on the Committee's Work Programme. Further inquiries were needed as to the history of the report being included.

- 9.5 Councillor Webb highlighted that part of the Committee's responsibilities was oversight of the Council's Human Resources. The Chair noted that was the case but the report had been a recent addition to the Committee's Work Plan.
- 9.6 The Governance Officer highlighted that between December 2022 and March 2023 the report was added to the Committee's Work Programme. The Governance Officer would also examine the December 2022 Corporate Committee meeting minutes and recording. The previous Committee Chair would also be contacted.
- 9.7 Councillor Binnie-Lubbock highlighted that the agenda for the next meeting in March 2024 was looking quite full. The Chair of the Committee noted the Councillors comments and suggested that the next meeting may have to be extended as a result.

Action:

The Governance Officer would examine the December 2022 Corporate Committee meeting minutes and recording to establish the history of why the Gender and Equalities Pay Gap report was added to the draft Committee Work Programme for 2023/2024.

RESOLVED:

To note the Business Regulation - Service Plan Update report and appendices.

RESOLVED:

To note the latest version of the Corporate Committee Work Programme 2023/2024.

10 Any Other Business the Chair Considers to be Urgent

Edmonton Incinerator

- 10.1 Councillor Binnie-Lubbock suggested adding the Edmonton Incinerator to the Committee's Work Programme and whether there was an opportunity to reduce the amount of waste going to the incinerator and reduce its impact on the environment. The Legal Officer replied that it was not immediately clear where that issue would come under in the Committee's terms of reference. The Chair suggested that in terms of the Terms of Reference it may fall under those non-executive functions not allocated to the Committee. The Chair suggested that further work was required to determine which Council Committees' remit covered the Edmonton Incinerator specifically in relation to waste services and climate change. Following further discussion it was agreed that the matter would fall under the remit of one of the Council's Scrutiny Commissions and that the Governance Officer would take an action to investigate the matter further.

Committee members visit of the Councils' buildings off campus

- 10.2 The Chair stated that various steps had been taken by the Governance Officer to look into a visit by Committee members of various Council buildings off campus. The Governance Officer added that they had contacted various

Council libraries and a date early next year had been secured for Committee members to visit two libraries.

- 10.3 Committee members briefly discussed the need to obtain further data regarding occupancy and usage levels for Council buildings. The Governance Officer and Chair would contact the Council's Strategic Director Customer and Workplace, Customer and Workplace to clarify; a) what the terms of reference were for the original Committee Members' May 2023 visit to the Hackney Service Centre (HSC) and; b) Post-pandemic period had there been any concern raised about some of the Council buildings having lower than expected occupancy levels. Pending further information received relating to those two matters the Governance Officer would put on hold any arrangements for Committee members' visit to the Council's off campus buildings.

Action:

The Governance Officer would check with his equivalents for the Council's Scrutiny Commissions to determine which Scrutiny Commissions' remit would cover any work relating to the Edmonton Incinerator.

Action:

The Governance Officer and Chair would:

- 1. Contact the Council's Strategic Director Customer and Workplace, Customer and Workplace requesting further data regarding occupancy and usage levels for Council buildings;**
- 2. Contact the Council's Strategic Director Customer and Workplace, Customer and Workplace to clarify:**
 - a) what the terms of reference were for the original Committee Members' May 2023 visit to the Hackney Service Centre (HSC) and;**
 - b) Post-pandemic period had there been any concern raised about some of the Council buildings having lower than expected occupancy levels;**
- 3. Pending further information received from for 2) and 3), put on hold any arrangements for Committee members' visit to the Council's off campus buildings.**

The Committee members noted that their next meeting was on 13 March 2024.

CLOSE OF MEETING.

Duration of the meeting: 6.30pm - 8.10pm

Chair of the Corporate Committee meeting - Cllr Penny Wrout

Contact:

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Governance Officer

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