

# Health, Adult Social Care and Social Inclusion Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes

Tuesday 31 January 2017

## **PRESENT**

**Committee members:** Councillors Andrew Brown, Joe Carlebach, Rory Vaughan (Chair) and Natalia Perez

**Co-opted members:** Patrick McVeigh (Action on Disability) and Bryan Naylor (Age UK)

**Other Councillors:** Sue Fennimore, Vivienne Lukey, Max Schmidt

**Officers and Guests:** Hitesh Jolapara, Strategic Finance Director, Mike Boyle, Director of Strategic Commissioning and Enterprise, Prakash Daryanani, Shared Service Interim Director of Finance for Adult Social Care & Public Health, Richard Simpson, Public Health Finance Manager, Mike Robinson, Director of Public Health, Tom Conniffe, Principal Policy and Strategy Officer, Christina Smyth, Chair, Poverty and Worklessness Commission and Bathsheba Mall, Committee Co-Ordinator

## **112. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

## **113. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Co-optee, Debbie Domb, Councillor Hannah Barlow, and Councillor Sharon Holder. Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Joe Carlebach.

#### **114. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **115. 2017 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) - ADULT SOCIAL CARE**

Councillor Rory Vaughan, Chair, welcomed finance officers, led by Hitesh Jolapara, Strategic Finance Director, who was accompanied by Prakash Daryanani, Shared Service Interim Director of Finance for Adult Social Care & Public Health, Richard Simpson, Public Health Finance Manager. Councillor Vaughan explained that a Corporate overview would provide context, as an introduction, followed by the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS, Agenda Items 4 and 5) for Adult Social Care and Public Health, respectively.

Hitesh Jolapara provided a national context as a backdrop to the Hammersmith and Fulham budget setting process. In what was noted to be the final autumn statement going forward, given in November 2016, there were some changes to the spring budget. The budget had been closely scrutinised by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) and the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS). The OBR headline key messages forecast a weaker national economic outlook, weaker sterling, lower investment, with uncertainty created by Brexit, making it difficult for public finances to balance budgets nationally before the end of the current parliamentary session.

It was explained that the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) for March and November 2017 varied between 2.2 and 1.4, percentage change on 2016. Councillor Andrew Brown commented that, while he accepted current figures, previous OBR forecasted figures and economic modelling had been discredited. The Bank of England and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) more recent analyses had indicated a rise. Hitesh Jolapara, explained the difficulties inherent in forecasting, and responded that Councillor Brown's perception of the differences was accurate. Since the autumn statement, the US elections had taken place, which, combined with other global factors, led some commentators to forecast a rise in GDP.

The difficulty of forecasting was notable in the change in growth of national debt, predicted for 2017/18, at March as £1677 billion, later increased in November by £163 million to £1840 billion. Locally forecasted debt for Hammersmith & Fulham was £37.1 million. Using fuel duty as an example, this neatly illustrated the difficulty of predicting figures, covering the period 2008/09 to 2020/2021, as all policy assumptions had been proven wrong by the actual fuel duty rate recorded at the time.

Hitesh Jolapara presented data taken from the IFS, on real term % changes to public spending, 2010-11 to 2019-2020, drawing comparisons between the total public spend, the revenue spending of London boroughs and local government core funding for London. The steep decline in figures for the latter illustrated the severity in real term cuts to core funding in local government. It was confirmed that this did not take into account the

devolution of business rates to local authorities and that this was not planned until the end of the current Parliamentary session (2019/20). It was noted that if and when this occurred, it may be accompanied by the transfer of other responsibilities such as transport.

A baseline budget of £160 million took into account a number of factors ranging from the council tax freeze to rates of inflation. The budget was not limited to efficiency savings or austerity measures but also include growth. Additional factors also included assumptions that council tax will be frozen, the Adult Social Care (ASC) precept will not be applied by LBHF. The fees and charges for ASC will also be frozen.

Councillor Brown asked if maintaining a low council tax policy and not applying social care precepts had impacted on ASC. Hitesh Jolapara explained that since 2010, they had received less income across the system in general but reminded Members that £4.4 million of growth had been included. He explained that the social care settlement had been good but that careful management would be required to alleviate pressure on the social care budget, additionally taking into consideration factors such as the impact of the living wage.

Referring to the projected £22.7 million budget risk, he anticipated a good, general balance within the total reserve of £86 million, with 20% of reserves earmarked. He confirmed that reserves of around £90 million was standard, with small variations over previous years, viewing the amount as stable.

Prakash Daryanani, Shared Service Interim Director of Finance for Adult Social Care & Public Health provided a review of the figures and implications for ASC. The MTFs and proposed net budget for 2017/18 was £60.2 million, compared to £57.9 million for 2016/17, representing a growth of £2.3 million resulting from underlying budget pressures and increased investment.

Budget challenges included the transition of the funding model for the Home Care contract, funded in Year 1 through reserves and the ASC budget, it was explained that from Year 2 onwards, this would be funded corporately. The ASC growth total amounted to £4.413 million, representing 61% of overall Council growth. The savings (£1.885 million) represented 12.6% of total savings overall. In terms of investment to fund, the National Living Wage, increased by 30p for over 25's from April 2017, which equated to a 4% increase, representing £400k, to be factored into payments to homecare providers.

Bryan Naylor commented that the STP (Sustainability and Transformation Plan) called for increase in ASC and hospital care and observed that the budget proposal made no reference to anticipated increases for funding care in the community. Councillor Vivienne Lukey, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, responded that no assumptions had been made about receiving funding from the implementation of the STP and additionally, the views emerging from other local authorities and CCG colleagues was that there was no information forthcoming as to the amount or allocation of funding on the table.

Continuing, Prakash Daryanani explained that while the number of customers in ASC increased in terms of acuity and need, the intention was to ensure greater independence for clients and reduce the overall requirement for long term care. Utilising technology to assist with independent living needs was not a new approach but it was explained that officers were exploring options with high value providers to identify improvements and savings. Savings of £1.9 million had been proposed, lower than in previous years, which was approximately 30% of the Council's budget, recognising some of the particular pressures that ASC are currently facing.

Referring to the Apprenticeship Levy and a small issue in terms of finding appropriate apprenticeships to fund the reduction allocated against the ASC budget, Councillor Brown enquired if this was being used to mitigate against a cut in salary. It was explained that this was a cost to providers of the Apprenticeship Levy that will apply to them, and that they will try to offset this cost through the contract with the Council, as they looked for higher levels of uplift.

The new, improved Better Care Fund grant of £831k would be introduced into the baseline budget for 17/18, and was another of the proposed growth items. There was also a one-off grant of £922K for next year, to mitigate future demographic pressures. In response to a query from Councillor Brown, it was confirmed that this related to the recently announced new homes bonus and that it would be funded by a grant that will be passported through to ASC.

It was reiterated that previously some parts of the budget had been funded through one-off payments (Home Care packages and Direct Payments), viewed as investment to fund. Also included in investment to fund was funding for transition services from child to adult provision (for learning disabilities), at an estimated cost of £360k.

Co-optee, Patrick McVeigh, observed that the Administration had been very generous in maintaining support for the Independent Living Fund and noted the support for transitioning children. This had been a long standing concern that could be avoided if appropriate transition funding was in place from the age of 14+. Prakash Daryanani confirmed that there was no special dispensation available from Central Government to either offset or accommodate transition funding. In response to Councillor Vaughan's question, it was noted that this was a three-year funding programme, modelled to support the children with learning disabilities cohort who would transition to ASC, aged 18-25 years and assessed to have care needs, with costs estimated by the provider market.

In reference to the ASC savings classification (reconfiguration of services prevention, staffing, procurement and contract efficiencies), Patrick McVeigh referred to the new technology assistance and adaptations for those with long term care needs asked if investment to fund included skills and knowledge training for staff. Additionally, he asked if this was 'front loaded' and included in the budget. Bryan Naylor added that the concept of using new technology and adaptations had two facets, the first being a staff training issue, the

second that those for whom the adaptations would be most useful would also require support to select, understand and utilise them in order to maximise the potential benefits and any possible savings. Mike Boyle, Director of Commissioning, Adult Social Care, explained that under the Care Act guidance, the change in assessment from a deficit model now focussed on what the client could do, identified through an outcomes based assessment aimed at promoting independence and significantly improving what they were capable of doing. This was considered to significantly reduce the Council's need for intervention, with assisted technology and adaptations being a core part of this process. It was noted that this was also a component of the invest to save programme. Mike Boyle confirmed that he was confident that the potential savings anticipated were achievable with this approach.

Councillor Brown sought clarification regarding the distinction between "block" and "spot" purchasing of placements and how this impacted on the budget. Mike Boyle explained that "block" payments were contractually agreed in advance, with an agreement that payment would be made for a set number of placements, with a condition as to the minimum number to be paid for, regardless of whether that number was reached. By contrast, "spot" purchase placements were individual, usually located outside the Borough and could be more expensive, depending on the nature of the contract. Councillor Lukey acknowledged that while ASC budget pressures were challenging, this not simply a matter of block or spot placements or money. Councillor Lukey welcomed the level of flexibility this offered, ensuring greater choice and support be available for both clients and relatives (who often lived outside the Borough), as needed. Councillor Brown indicated his support for Councillor Lukey and endorsed the approach but went on to clarify that the CQC figures he had identified indicated a higher cost for spot placements, which appeared counter-intuitive. Mike Boyle responded that the CQC ratings would have been dependent on the previous year's inspection, then compared across the rest of London.

Councillor Natalia Perez referred to in-house service delivery savings to lower costs, examining community and other delivery models. It was confirmed that in-house service savings would be identified through smarter budgeting arrangements and Prakash Daryanani cautioned that it was too soon to know whether the outcomes of the new delivery models would be as hoped.

Councillor Vaughan referred to the review of Careline homes provision. Mike Boyle confirmed that the review was undertaken earlier in the year and that in terms of the condition of the sheltered housing stock, much of it required updating to include access to broadband or other assisted technology facilities that would then be freely accessible. A more detailed report on this would be provided towards the end of 17/18.

In response to an observation regarding greater pressure on the budget from Councillor Brown, Prakash Daryanani reiterated concerns regarding the homecare providers requesting wage 4% increases, whereas the budget had allowed for 3%. He took the view that this would have to be negotiated with individual providers on a case by case basis.

## RESOLVED

1. That the comments of the Policy and Accountability Committee on the Medium Term Financial Strategy for Adult Social Care, be noted; and
2. That the report be noted.

### **116. 2017 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) - PUBLIC HEALTH**

Richard Simpson, Public Health Finance Manager, provided the third portion of the budget presentation which addressed the budget for Public Health. He indicated that in addition to the requirement to meet mandatory public health duties and to improve the public health of the wider local population, there were also several service area priorities including smoking cessation, improved sexual health and improving preventative health care and mental well-being. The impact of the MTFS for 17/18 was that Public Health would begin to fund outcomes being delivered by other areas across the Council and amounted to £4 million.

Councillor Brown sought clarification on this point, noting that that Public Health funding was ring-fenced. Richard Simpson explained that the grant reduced by 2.5%, in cash terms representing £0.5 million, the £4 million from MTFS, represented an increase from current investment of £2 million. This was a movement of £2 million from public health isolated services, to fund public health outcomes identified across the Council and did not represent a cut to overall public health services.

It was noted that the Department of Health (DH) grant was ring-fenced and had been transferred to local authorities in 2013, with the condition that the ring-fence would remain in place for 2017/18. Referencing an earlier point about business rates funding services, the autumn statement from 2015/16, indicated that this would be the long term aim for Public Health funding too. Councillor Brown enquired about potential uplift, with the devolution of funding reflecting increased investment in public health. Richard Simpson responded that devolved funding did not necessarily mean extra investment. Hitesh Jolapara clarified that as yet, the devolution of business rates funding was unknown and while we could try to attract additional services, this could become complicated, for example, the resolution of business rate appeals, using Westfield as an example to illustrate.

The Public Health Strategy had identified £0.907 million in savings to commissioned services and a further review would be conducted in 2017/18. It was explained that this would allow money to be moved across the Council to fund public health outcomes being delivered by other departments. Referring to GUM (Genito Urinary Medicine) to illustrate, one method by which savings would be achieved was through contract re-procurement. Councillor Lukey confirmed that this involved LBHF, WCC and RBKC in a joint arrangement. All three were keen to take this forward, and were dealing

with different generations who were open to self-assessment using digital platforms, making it much more manageable.

In response to a query from Councillor Brown about the proportion of public health spending on cardio vascular disease, smoking and lung disease or diabetes, Mike Robinson, Director for Public Health, explained that while they had not undertaken this type of analysis, they would first examine the expenditure made through the public health prioritisation framework and regard it as an investment generating future returns. He explained that they were undertaking some programme budgeting work which will look at what proportion of the NHS budget is spent on each disease or illness category so that this could be understood in due course, however the first stage was to understand the relationship between expenditure now and health outcomes later.

Councillor Vaughan thanked officers for their presentations and for the clear and detailed nature of the reports, with correspondingly detailed explanations, noting the growth items in the MTFs for ASC and Public Health. Councillor Vaughan also made reference to Careline, and the need to address obsolete or outdated equipment. He also welcomed the inclusion of provision for funding transition services, which had not previously been included.

## **RESOLVED**

1. That the comments of the Policy and Accountability Committee on the Medium Term Financial Strategy for Public Health, be noted; and
2. That the report be noted.

## **117. H&F POVERTY AND WORKLESSNESS COMMISSION FINAL REPORT**

Councillor Vaughan welcomed Tom Conniffe, Principal Policy Strategy Officer and Programme Manager, supporting the work of the Poverty and Worklessness Commission. He was accompanied by Christina Smyth, Chair of the Commission. The resident-led Commission had been established in November 2015, and comprised of a total of 15 local representatives drawn from a wide variety of backgrounds which included voluntary, third sector public organisations as well as local individuals. The Commission had met eight times, with their final meeting taking place on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2017, and followed a broad work plan that aimed to formulate recommendations for interventions and/or services redesign, to deliver better outcomes for local people living in, or on the edge of, poverty and/or worklessness.

Formal constitution of the Commission was followed by a design phase, analysing data sources. Bespoke work was commissioned regarding work and social interventions in the Borough, and undertaken by the New Policy Institute, who were also part of the Commission's lifespan. The qualitative research included working directly with residents of the Borough and the draft report was signed off at the final meeting of the Commission in January, following consultation with officers and Commission members. This was the

first public debate on the draft report, and will eventually be considered at Cabinet on 27<sup>th</sup> March.

Christina Smyth, Chair of the Commission, explained that the executive summary of the report provided an overview, with the detail of the work contained in the body of the report, which still required finessing. Referring to the Root Causes section (page 15 of the report), the correlation between worklessness and poverty in six root causes included high levels of poor mental health and well-being, and, few affordable housing choices. This included those individuals accommodated in poor quality housing or employed in low paid work, challenging common assumptions about the profile of individuals experiencing poverty or worklessness. These were increasingly, groups of people who had been left behind and who found it difficult to engage.

Christina Smyth observed that in the past few decades, little had changed in the Borough. Historically, the Borough had always had areas of extreme wealth, alongside areas of deprivation, with the relative positions remaining unchanged. Despite the level of income in the area, the value had decreased. The Commission was intended to empower residents, with a strong lead from the Council acting as an enabler, to develop something which was sustainable and cohesive.

Co-optee Patrick McVeigh welcomed the report and observed that services should have to go to people, rather than the other way around, given the challenges of social housing. He supported the development of community hubs and greater resident involvement, with volunteering opportunities, training advice and the chance to develop skills and experience.

Co-optee Bryan Naylor also welcomed the concept of local hubs and the report itself, but noted that that the report did not recognise the poverty experienced by older, isolated people. Referencing the work of Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and AGE UK volunteer advisors, who were under considerable pressure to provide assistance with form filling, the concept of community hubs would meet a particular need for advice and information provision. Christina Smyth agreed, confirming that the Commission had identified older people as a priority group and concurred that the top 10% of deprived groups comprised of older people. More trained advisors were needed, in particular to help with navigating social welfare bureaucracy.

Councillor Sue Fennimore, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion added that data analysis had indicated that the percentage of older people in poverty was increasing. This was recognised in the loneliness and isolation strategy, which will be taken forward by Cabinet, with the intention of ensuring full engagement across the Council.

Councillor Vaughan suggested that it would be helpful if Members were guided through the 10 recommendations set out in Chapter 6 of the Commission's report (Agenda page 257):

### Recommendation 1: Develop community hubs to deliver resident-led change and holistic support

Councillor Natalia Perez enquired if community hubs could be a focus for social housing, expressing concern about those caught in private sector housing, being forced to move out of the Borough because of increasing rents. Christina Smyth responded that there were those who were able to afford the rents, but these were the exception. The aim had been to prioritise those identified at particular risk. Bryan Naylor reported that in a survey of the Older People's Consultative Forum, consisting of 400 respondents, 40% described themselves as in poverty. 60% of respondents also indicated that they were in private housing, with the rest in social housing. Christina Smyth indicated that while she could not dismiss the survey's conclusions, she took the view that the robust data analysis provided by the New Policy Institute may be qualitatively better.

### Recommendation 2: Transforms the borough's volunteer offer

Reiterating earlier comments, Christina Smith explained that local residents who were skilled, experienced and motivated to assist others within their local community were a highly valuable resource. It was suggested that the Council should fund the co-ordination of volunteering with development funding and provide strategic oversight.

### Recommendation 3: Work with borough experts to reduce the cost of living and improve personal money management

This was based on the premise that astute budgeting, being economical and avoiding exploitative companies, would help reduce poverty and the cost of living, thereby improving quality of life. Christina Smyth indicated that this was complicated. It was feasible that volunteers could be trained to check benefit forms and help apply for funds. Patrick McVeigh highlighted concerns regarding the prevalence and influence of high street loan and betting shops. While Councillor Brown concurred with this perspective, compliance with planning usage might make this difficult and challenging. He added that there was pressure to change the national framework and that this would have a big impact.

A rent a room scheme could potentially have a huge impact by generating a significant tax free income. Christina Smyth expressed the view that this should be further incentivised as it would not only be a source of entrepreneurial income but also utilise assets. Councillor Fennimore observed that while there were planning regulations that prevented the Council's ability to curtail the activities of loan and betting shops, it may be possible to negotiate an agreement that might protect vulnerable people. It was recognised that the rent a room scheme was open to those in social housing and for those in private accommodation, this would depend on the terms of their leasing agreement. It was confirmed that such a scheme would be open to social tenants and would not create an additional tenancy as a lodger would be restricted to a license to use and was not a tenant. Councillor Brown observed that this would have positive impact on social

isolation and loneliness. Councillor Fennimore concurred, adding that that the Poverty and Worklessness report covered a vast area but linked into other strands such as the recent work undertaken on social isolation and loneliness.

Christina Smyth commented that the ability to work to help support oneself was important but appropriate ideas to implement this were required. Imperial and other large employers needed to be included to develop proposals that would help ensure training and work placements, that would be appropriate, for example, for those with learning disabilities.

Councillor Perez referred to the example of Westfield and the intention to recruit from the local population, enquiring if this had been successful and if it was possible to encourage planners and developers to target local residents for recruitment. She asked if planning conditions to encourage this could form part of development permissions, encouraging the global market to support a local market. It was noted that while there had been some success in Westfield, current market conditions meant that the appointment of non-borough residents to positions had a related impact on opportunities to relocate into the area, given the lack of affordable housing options.

#### Recommendation 4: Employment support

In terms of supporting residents seeking employment, Christina Smyth highlighted concerns around supporting those for whom English was a second language and how the Council could address this gap. It was noted that 43% of residents were born outside the UK. While there was good provision, people required encouragement to learn. Volunteers, family and friends could help navigate obstacles to work like language barriers. Intergenerational work was invaluable in helping develop literacy and numeracy skills and Christina Smyth strongly supported the nurturing facet of community based, social support. Patrick McVeigh agreed, supporting partnership working with local people, particularly helping those with severe learning disabilities. He highlighted the need to access college based work placement schemes that would provide support in the form of internships. Councillor Brown added that a targeted training scheme would be helpful but to scale it up and make it more widely accessible was difficult. Councillor Fennimore confirmed that this was being further developed and that two new providers had been brought on board.

Briefly, rejecting the suggestion that the Borough should actively discriminate in favour of local residents, Members explored ways in which the Council could actively help residents seeking employment opportunities by hosting recruitment fairs and open days.

#### Recommendation 5: Increased housing tenure options

Christina Smyth expressed the view that this was one of the more difficult aspects to address. It was very difficult for residents who wished to progress from social housing or move into private ownership. Recommendation 5 was a general recommendation, that when a housing policy is reviewed, the

Council should adopt the Supplementary Planning Guidance from the Mayor of London. Increased provision for shared ownership tenure should be promoted. This acknowledged the lack of housing options for poorer residents and students, who did not have the same chances. This was an important concern in terms of developing social cohesion, given the absence of a middle option between private ownership and social renting.

#### Recommendation 6: Community-led estate improvement

Christina Smyth explained that people in social housing, living on estates, did not have sufficient resources to repair, maintain or improve their physical environment, which caused frustration. This was about empowering residents to shape and influence their physical environments, a chance to have greater self-determination about the way in which they were accommodated.

#### Recommendation 7: Supported tenancies

Christina Smyth explained that this referred to providing greater support to vulnerable people in social housing in the form of a key worker. Councillor Joe Carlebach welcomed the report and expressed support for the concept of a designated key worker for vulnerable people in social housing. He made particular reference to the limitations placed on the transfer of tenancy ownership between immediate family members, and the hardships this caused. Councillor Fennimore acknowledged the difficulties but noted the corresponding issue of addressing the lack of affordable housing and the needs of others who also require social housing. It was suggested that this could be a matter that could be further explored by the Economic Regeneration, Housing and the Arts Policy and Accountability Committee. Members also noted that further clarification as to the legal implications would need to be sought and that improved guidance or advice might also be offered to individuals at risk of losing their tenancies due to issues around the transfer of ownership.

**Action:** Refer to ERHAPAC

#### Recommendation 8: Developing more preventative services

Noting that the Council's Smarter Budgeting financial planning initiative had identified a proposal for a floating support service led by the Housing and Regeneration Department, Christina Smyth commended its holistic approach, underpinned by predictive data. This suggested that, instead of treating a missed payment as just that, it would be more helpful to identify the factors leading to the missed payment. An initiative in the London Borough of Camden was to save money by not evicting, but by using predictive data to find ways of supporting tenants, identifying underlying issues, for example, looked after children, identifying possible triggers or risk factors, that might have led to a missed payment.

#### Recommendation 9: Council to take strategic lead in implementing this Poverty and Worklessness Strategy across all local sectors

Christina Smyth commented that this was an opportunity for the Council to take a strategic lead and was important, given how difficult it was to prioritise from amongst the number of JSNA's informing the Council's decision making to shape a programme of work.

Recommendation 10: Council to lead on discussion of a package of policy enablers

Briefly, it was noted that this referred to the eventual devolution of powers to local residents, empowering them to make autonomous and informed decisions to support and enhance the development of independent and flourishing communities. The image of Townsends 1960's depiction of social poverty was replicated in the Borough, which in 2010 showed that a third of the Borough's residents experienced poverty. Christina Smyth observed that the increasing polarisation between the wealthy and the poor left a thinned out middle ground, with more individuals less likely or able to participate in society. It was acknowledged that while the definition of "poor" was relative, the poorest cohort had become poorer. Councillor Perez expressed concern about future trends and the impact of current social policy in respect of poverty, social welfare and housing, leaving vulnerable people at increasing risk of eviction. Councillor Fennimore commented that the Administration was helping to develop or provide support to a number of initiatives such as having CAB advisors located in foodbanks, and while there remained work to be done, there was evidence of positive progress.

Christina Smyth suggested that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) should be looking at delivering such initiatives, encouraging practical participation. She reiterated the value of training skilled residents, who could advocate for those at risk or vulnerable. Councillor Perez concurred, emphasising the importance of working inclusively with the voluntary sector, developing contingency measures to help vulnerable people. Councillor Brown agreed and welcomed the refreshing honesty of the Commission's report. He added that the approach extended beyond simply volunteering to help vulnerable people but could include practical support to develop life skills such as improving a person's curriculum vitae (CV). Christina Smyth reported that one of the key data findings was that vacant jobs in the borough outnumbered unemployed residents. Ensuring support for those seeking employment was essential but not limited to practical support. It was also important to encourage and build up confidence, acknowledging individual strengths and weaknesses.

Continuing the discussion, Councillor Carlebach added that support for individuals dealing with different departments was essential. He suggested that it would be helpful to ensure greater communication between different departments to avoid silo mentalities and encourage a more holistic approach. Christina Smyth referred to her earlier comment regarding the idea of "floating support" although she acknowledged the inherent difficulties of achieving this well, given the nature of siloed, government thinking. She reported that a third of people in the Borough were owner occupiers and that it would be helpful to establish a process by which people could receive

advocacy support and guidance on how to navigate form filling, referencing her earlier point.

Councillor Brown commented that the Commission's report provided an apolitical, local perspective set against a national context and welcomed the concept of relative poverty, concurring with the view of poverty levels experienced by older people. He observed that the issues were complex, recognising the uncertainty around demographics and the value of assets in relation to income. Christina Smyth commented that it was about what was acceptable, observing that there were some social housing estates where you would not voluntarily choose to live and asked what was being done to help alleviate these conditions.

In response to a question from Bryan Naylor, regarding measurable outcomes, Christina Smyth indicated that it was difficult to formulate a measure of success but that if she had to select a specific outcome then it would be to see the 50k figure of those indicated as in poverty, residing in the Borough reduced by 50%, which she acknowledged was a broad ambition. She continued that while this was an independent and neutral report, it was fully supported by the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion. It was now a matter for the Council to examine the report and consider how to take it forward.

Councillor Fennimore commended and thanked Christina Smyth and Tom Conniffe for the work undertaken in producing the Commission's report, in addition to the invaluable contributions made by the Commission members, support officers and the New Policy Institute.

Councillor Vaughan thanked Christina Smyth and Tom Conniffe for their joint presentation, and for guiding Members through the recommendations of the Commission's report. He commended the depth of detail in the report and the data analysis, which had been extremely helpful in understanding the conclusions and recommendations. He commended the enthusiasm and passion for the subject in the presentation and anticipated the report being taking forward and endorsed by Cabinet.

## **RESOLVED**

1. That PAC's comments and findings on the Commissions Poverty and Worklessness Report are noted and provided to the Commission;
2. That the PAC endorses the Commission's Report; and
3. That the report be noted

## **118. WORK PROGRAMME**

Members considered the items provisionally arranged for March and April meetings and agreed the Work Programme attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

**RESOLVED**

That the report be noted.

**119. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Committee noted the dates of meetings for the remainder of the municipal year:

Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Meeting started: 7:04pm

Meeting ended: 9:48pm

Chair .....

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