



London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Overview & Scrutiny Board Minutes

Tuesday 26 July 2011

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Alex Karmel (Chairman), Rachel Ford, Lucy Ivimy, Donald Johnson, Andrew Jones and PJ Murphy

Other Councillors: Councillors Marcus Ginn (Chairman – Children’s Oral health Task Group), Mark Loveday (Cabinet Member for Strategy)

Officers: Lyn Anthony (Head of Executive Services), Carole Bell (Programme Director Children’s Commissioning), Michael Carr (Committee Co-ordinator), James Filus (Corporate Customer & Complaints Manager), Hitesh Jolapara (Deputy Director of Finance), Jane West (Director of Finance and Corporate Services)

1. MINUTES AND ACTIONS

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting 15th March be approved and signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler, George Cooney, Sally Powell and Stephen Greenhalgh.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee considered the membership and terms of reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Board agreed at Annual Council on 25th May 2011.

RESOLVED that:

the membership and terms of reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Board be noted.

5. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman requested nominations for the appointment of Vice Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

RESOLVED that:

Cllr Andrew Jones be elected Vice Chairman of the OSB for 2011-2012.

6. THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2011-2012 AND FORWARD PLAN

The Board received the draft Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2011 – 2012 and the work programmes of the Health, Housing and Adult Social Care Select Committee, Education Select Committee and Environment and Residents' Services Select Committee, along with the Forward Plan of Key Decisions August 2011 to November 2011.

The Chairman invited Members of the Board to propose any additional topics for the Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2011-2012, the terms of reference for each topic, any specific information that should be considered and any witnesses to be called to interview.

It was commented that the issue of how the council could work with the local community could be addressed within the work programme, in the same way that the topic proposal scheduled for 6th March 2012; "Hammersmith and Fulham Means Business" dealt with working with local business.

A Scrutiny Task Group proposal form was tabled and presented by Councillor Ford for a Public Utility Lane Rental Task Group. The purpose of the Task Group was to examine and report upon the potential for a lane rental scheme for public utility road works. Cllr Ford was the proposer of the Task Group, sponsored by the Environment & Residents Services Select Committee.

It was noted that the Environment and Residents' Services Select Committee topic "Regeneration Topics" under "Unallocated Items", specific projects, such as Westfields, could be considered and proposed if they arose.

RESOLVED that:

1. the proposal for a Public Utility Lane Rental Task Group be agreed,
 2. Councillors Ford, Iggulden and Harcourt be appointed as members of the Task Group,
 3. the terms of reference for the Task Group be to:
 - i. assess the merits of a lane rental scheme for public utility roadworks in the context of environmental, economic and quality of life considerations
 - ii. consider Department for Trade consultation proposals for such a scheme
 - iii. consider the desirability, feasibility and timing of a pilot scheme in Hammersmith and Fulham and
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- iv. subject to the findings in respect of i), ii) and iii), review any initial implementation plans for a local pilot.
4. that the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2011 – 2012 be agreed, to include the Public Utility Lane Rental Task Group and subject to update at subsequent meetings of the committee.

7. HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT

The Head of Executive Services presented a report on Hammersmith and Fulham Annual Complaints Report, to show the volume and types of complaints being made to the Council and how effectively the Council was managing the issue.

It was explained that this was the first annual report compiled corporately for complaints, which was intended to better inform on and manage the overall patterns of complaints, processes and performance.

It was asked what recourses were to be channelled towards this initiative. It was responded that the intention was not to allocate further resources but rather to improve the way of managing corporate complaints information.

It was noted that only 27½% of new complaints were acknowledged (page 287 of the agenda) and it was asked what steps were being taken to improve this. It was responded that the icasework software system provided for an automated acknowledgement but it was not known why some services were not sending these out. The annual complaints report now provides the opportunity to intervene and monitor these issues from the centre.

The target was 80% within 3 days for both acknowledgements and responses to customer complaints. It was enquired whether there needed to be a target for complaint resolution. It was responded that defining resolution to a customer complaint was sometimes problematical because there was not always agreement with the customer that the problem had been resolved and not all problems were resolvable.

It was enquired whether the Children and Adults Social Care statutory complaints were included. It was responded that statutory complaints accounted for a very small proportion of complaints and were not included, but that this would be reviewed to find out if there were any aspects of the statutory process that could be included.

It was suggested that benchmarking of performance against other councils might provide context for how well the council was performing. It was also suggested that complaints performance be added to the basket of performance indicators that determine Director's bonuses.

It was confirmed that corporate complaints would be reported annually. It was requested that an update on corporate complaints be made to the Overview and Scrutiny Board in 6 months time.

RECOMMENDED that:

The customer complaints process include requesting and recording customer response at the end of the complaint process.

RESOLVED that:

the Overview and Scrutiny Board receive an update on corporate complaints after 6 months.

8. THE HEALTH INEQUALITIES TASK GROUP REPORT

The Committee considered a report of the Health Inequalities Task Group, which was established in July 2010 to review the effects of the location and density of new housing developments on health outcomes. It was noted that the Housing, Health and Adult Social care Select Committee had considered the report at a meeting in June 2011 and that the report had contributed to the *Peeling the Onion* Centre for Public Scrutiny Toolkit, designed to provide councils with the help, support and advice needed to tackle local health inequalities through scrutiny.

It was commented that, as a learning point, the scope for the Task Group inquiry had been too wide and that it was important to limit the terms of reference for task groups within what was feasible.

It was noted that the report could be used by the Housing, Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee to provide context for future scrutiny inquiries.

RESOLVED that:

the report and recommendations be noted.

9. THE CHILDREN'S ORAL HEALTH TASK GROUP REPORT

The committee considered a report and recommendations of the Children's Oral Health Task Group, which was commissioned on 21st September 2010 and commenced on 12th January 2011. The report was presented by Cllr Marcus Ginn – Chairman of the Task Group. Other members of the Task group were: Councillor Caroline Needham (Vice Chairman) and Councillor Peter Tobias.

The terms of reference of the Task Group were:

Aim

To investigate the high incidence of tooth decay amongst the child population of the borough (0-19 years old), to identify possible reasons for this and identify ways in which Council services, working with partners, can contribute to the promotion of oral health in young people.

Objectives

- ▶ To review the oral health services available for children including new health service initiatives and the reasons for a high level of tooth decay amongst the child population of the borough (0-19 years old).
- ▶ To identify and consider the mechanisms available to improve oral health in the Borough.
- ▶ To identify best practice in children's oral health services nationally, regionally and locally, with particular reference to collaborative working between local authorities, PCTs and other community partners.
- ▶ To consider how Council services, along with partner agencies, can most effectively contribute to the promotion of oral health in young people, in particular, through schools and children's centres.

The Task Group inquiry had included consideration of documentary evidence, statistical data and interviews with a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including parents and children, schools, NHS representatives and the Chief Dental Officer for England. The report contained 14 recommendations to the Council and NHS Primary Care Trust.

The report included an outline of the suggested implementation and evaluation of the recommendations, which included a request for a joint Action Plan from the Council and PCT for the Education Select Committee to monitor agreed recommendations and outcomes (such as the numbers of children with decayed, missing and filled teeth). It was proposed that the joint Action Plan set out the key indicators, budget and implementation time for each agreed recommendation.

The presentation was followed by questions to the Chairman of the Task Group and key stakeholders present were invited to make any initial responses. The Vice Chairman of the Task Group also gave a brief commentary on the inquiry and with specific reference to some of the recommendations.

It was suggested that the report could be referred for consideration at a meeting of the Council.

The Chairman thanked officers from the Council and the PCT for their support to the Task Group inquiry.

RESOLVED that:

the report and recommendations be agreed and to referred to Cabinet and the PCT, requesting an Executive Response (which includes Executive Decisions for each Scrutiny Recommendation) and referred for consideration at full Council.

10. SELECT COMMITTEE REPORTS

Updates were received from the Scrutiny Select Committees. It was reported that the Education Select Committee was considering proposing a task group inquiry on child poverty. It was also reported that the Environment and

Residents Services Select Committee was considering proposing a task group inquiry on sustainable urban drainage.

11. TRI-BOROUGH IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

A report was presented by the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and the Strategic Director Adult and Community on Tri-Borough Implementation Plans. This provided a brief introduction to the proposals for joint service provision between Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham Councils. The report provided the detailed business case for the integration of Children's Services, Environmental Services and Adult Social Care and elements of corporate services and library services. It also outlined proposals for the appointment of a joint Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the London Borough of Hammersmith.

It was reported that joint service provision will start with an emphasis on back office operations and where the councils are currently working with the same contractors and avoid disruption to front line services.

It was asked if it was possible to extract how many of the financial savings in the report were as a result of the tri-borough joint working arrangements and how many were already anticipated. It was responded that in some cases savings requirements had already been identified but that the details of how these savings were to be made had not been; now that the tri-borough joint working arrangements had been set in train, savings would be made through this strategy.

It was asked what accountability mechanisms were in place to ensure that joint resources are not directed disproportionately around the three boroughs, where there are unforeseen pressures. It was responded that service mandates were being drawn up to provide service specifications and guarantees. It was important that cost allocations were built in correctly.

The Chairman requested that the committee be provided with copies of the service mandates as evidence at the next stages of the Tri-Borough inquiry at a future meeting.

It was highlighted that there was some confusion of terminology resulting from the different ways in which the three councils designated job titles, for example, a "Director" at one council may have been the same grade as an "Assistant Director" at another; which made it appear as if one council had more high grade posts than another, although this was deceptive.

It was advised that the scrutiny arrangements in Hammersmith and Fulham provided the Select Committees with the role of reviewing the relevant services within their remits and the Overview and Scrutiny Board with the role of overview of the whole process. Further consideration of the Tri-Borough arrangements was scheduled for the next meeting.

Members of the committee were requested to provide any questions on this issue, along with any requests for information and key witnesses, to the scrutiny officer.

RESOLVED: that the committee be provided with copies of the service mandates as evidence in the consideration of the tri-borough arrangements at a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

12. BRIEFING LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESOURCE REVIEW

A report was presented by the Deputy Director of Finance to provide a briefing on the Government's local government resource review, which was announced by the Secretary of State on 17th March 2011.

The Government review was intended to:

- ▶ consider the way local government was funded with a view to giving local authorities greater financial autonomy whilst insuring that all authorities had adequate resources to meet the needs of their communities
- ▶ look at ways to reduce the reliance of local government on central government funding and
- ▶ include consideration of changes to the business rates system including a focus on the optimum model for incentivising local government to promote growth by retention business rates
- ▶ examine the scope for further financial freedoms for local authorities, while standing up for and protecting the interests of local taxpayers.

The briefing was followed by questions to Deputy Director of Finance.

13. HIGH LEVEL REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2010-2011

The Committee considered a report presented by the Deputy Director of Finance which set out the financial outturn position for 2010-2011 revenue and capital budgets as at the fourth quarter and explained the significant variances. The capital forecast reported on the debt reduction programme and the funding of the capital programme.

In 2010-2011 there was a net operating expenditure under spend of £3.3m, which contributed to reserves.

The report was followed by questions to Deputy Director of Finance. There was a £10.9m payback in the capital financial requirement (page 318 of the agenda). It was asked what the effect of this was on the long term borrowing position. The long term debt was expected to fall slightly as a result.

RESOLVED that:

the outturn position for the 2010-2011 revenue and capital budgets be noted.

14. MONITORING PERFORMANCE 2010-2011, FOURTH QUARTER

The committee considered a report presented by the Director of Finance and Corporate Services. The report included the 4th quarter status on financial, human resources, electoral registration, and contact centre performance indicators and the progress on reporting key performance indicators contained in the Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement. The Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting 21st September 2010 agreed an updated set of performance indicators comprising of key national and local indicators and requested that these be reported quarterly for monitoring.

The report was followed by questions to Director of Finance and Corporate Services. It was asked what the difference in terminology was between “Static” (page 356, PI code FCS082) and “Not Improving” (used elsewhere) in the performance tables listed at the back of the report.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services undertook to provide definitions to members of the committee in writing.

15. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Wednesday 21st September 2011

Meeting started: 7.00pm
Meeting ended: 9.23pm

Chairman

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