

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**24 November 2016**

Present: Councillor K Hastrick (Chair)  
Councillors J Fahmy, A Joynes, Asif Khan (for minute numbers 49 to 60), R Martins, A Rindl, N Shah (for minute numbers 45 to 52), D Walford and T Williams

Also present: Councillor Peter Taylor (Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services (present for minute numbers 48 to 60)),  
Councillor David Barks (Chair of the Leisure Management Contract Task Group (present for minute numbers 45 to 51))  
Councillor Stephen Cavinder (Chair of the Neighbourhood Forum Task Group (present for minute numbers 45 to 53))

Officers: Corporate, Leisure and Community Client Section Head  
Partnerships and Performance Section Head  
Contract Monitoring Officer  
Committee and Scrutiny Officer

### **45 Apologies for Absence/Committee Membership**

There was a change of membership for this meeting: Councillor Joynes replaced Councillor Dhindsa.

### **46 Disclosure of interests (if any)**

There were no disclosures of interests.

### **47 Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 28 September and 27 October 2016 were submitted and signed.

### **48 Call-in**

No Executive decisions were called in.

## **Commissioning Framework 2013-2016 Review**

The scrutiny committee received a report of the Corporate Leisure and Community Client Section Head, which provided an overview of the Community and Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework for the last three years and its performance.

The Corporate Leisure and Community Client Section Head said that this was the second report of several that he had agreed to present to the scrutiny committee. He advised that from the January meeting organisations would be invited to the scrutiny committee to explain how they delivered key frontline services to the public. The council worked with the organisations on the delivery of the various essential services.

Councillor Williams welcomed the inclusion of the community centres as this was an area he had hoped to include on the agenda for Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel; however he had been advised that as they were part of the Commissioning Framework the information would be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He asked that future reports include the financial information about the community centres and the number of visitors on the same page. This would provide members with sufficient information to make valid comparisons.

The Corporate Leisure and Community Client Section Head responded that next year's annual review would include information about the uses at the community centres, enabling value for money comparisons. Additional information would also be included about the make up of the workforce, e.g. ethnicity and disability.

The Corporate Leisure and Community Client Section Head informed the scrutiny committee that from 1 April 2017, the council would not be funding the Leavesden Green Community Centre. Watford Community Housing Trust had agreed to a final year of funding in 2016/17. The community centre would then become financially independent from the council. The service level agreement would end and a community use agreement introduced. The council would not be as involved in the management of the centre as in the past.

Following a question from Councillor Rindl, the Corporate Leisure and Community Client Section Head confirmed the report included only those organisations monitored within his section. Veolia was monitored by a different section and was scrutinised by the Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel. It was noted that the scrutiny panel's next meeting included an item on waste and recycling.

Councillor Rindl noted the council's current financial commitment to the organisations within the framework. She asked whether there were any plans to cut this budget or if it was ring-fenced. She felt this was an important area and would be concerned if there were to be any cuts to the framework's budget. In addition she asked for an explanation in the reduction of the budget for West Watford Community Association over the three years shown in the report.

The Corporate Leisure and Community Client Section Head advised that the commissioning framework budget was not ring-fenced. There had been no change to the budget for 2016/17; however the budget for 2017/18 was currently being assessed. He was aware there could be some saving on the overall budget as it would be possible to offer the funding for Leavesden Green Community Centre as a saving. With regard to West Watford Community Association, the Corporate Leisure and Community Client Section Head explained that the information had been taken from the financial system. He would check the information and circulate an update to the scrutiny committee.

Councillor Rindl noted that the information about the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) stated that there had been over 6,000 unanswered calls. If this was information about the council it would be unacceptable. She asked if officers sought an explanation from the organisation.

The Corporate Leisure and Community Client Section Head responded that the CAB was not open on Fridays. The majority of users usually visited the advice centre in person. It was proposed to invite the CAB's Chief Executive to the March meeting. Councillors would have an opportunity to question the Chief Executive on this matter.

The Chair noted it was also possible to get assistance from the CAB online.

The Partnerships and Performance Section Head suggested that the organisation used a 'hunt' system for its telephone service. It was possible that calls were coming from other areas. It should be possible to find out which region the Watford CAB worked through.

Councillor Shah added that previously she had worked at the CAB and thought the telephone lines were closed early on Tuesdays.

The Corporate Leisure and Community Client Section Head suggested that the organisations' operating hours could be added to future reports to enable councillors to understand the range of services each organisation and community centre provided.

It was agreed that the hours of operation would be circulated to the scrutiny committee as soon as the information was available. This would provide background information before the groups visited the scrutiny committee.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

**50 Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED –

that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business as it was likely, in the view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during consideration of the item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100(1) Schedule 12A of the Act and for the reasons stated in the agenda.

**51 Leisure Management Contract Task Group - Final report**

The scrutiny committee received a report of the Committee and Scrutiny Officer including the final report of the Leisure Management Contract Task Group.

Councillor Barks, the Chair of the task group, explained the task group's remit and how it had been carried out.

RESOLVED –

1. that the Leisure Management Contract Task Group's final report be noted.
2. that a date for the review of the task group's recommendations be agreed during the work programme discussion.

**52 Quarter 2 2016/17: Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Report**

The scrutiny committee received a report of the Partnerships and Performance Section Head setting out the results of the key performance indicators for in-house services for the second quarter of 2016/17. The Partnerships and Performance Section Head highlighted the results for some of the indicators.

Councillor Martins noted the housing statistics. He asked if it was possible to find out how many households the council or housing trust evicted from their properties, which resulted in the households becoming homeless.

It was agreed that this information would be sought from Housing or the Housing Trust.

It was noted that the target for CS2 ('long waits' for calls received to CSC and Benefits) was 3% and not 13% as indicated by the line on the graph.

RESOLVED –

1. that the performance of the identified in-house service indicators at the end of quarter 2 2016/17 (July to September) be noted.
2. that the Partnerships and Performance Section Head seeks information about the number of households made homeless by the council or Housing Trust.
3. that the requested actions be undertaken.

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### **Neighbourhood Forum Task Group - Final report**

The scrutiny committee received a report of the Committee and Scrutiny Officer including the final report of the Neighbourhood Forum Task Group.

Councillor Cavinder, the Chair of the task group, explained the task group's remit and how it had undertaken its work. During the review officers had been tasked with providing information about historic spend since 2011, how other local authorities carried out similar schemes and to develop a survey which was circulated to all councillors. He outlined each of the recommendations agreed by the task group and the reasons for those suggestions.

Councillor Joynes said that she had also been on the task group. She asked whether councillors would be able to help people to complete an online application.

Councillor Cavinder said that it had not been the intention for councillors to divorce themselves from the neighbourhood forum process.

The Committee and Scrutiny Officer highlighted that the recommendation proposed that officers looked into the feasibility of this recommendation. There would still be a need for agreement from at least two ward councillors to any potential application.

Following a comment from Councillor Williams about expenditure on local projects, Councillor Cavinder replied that the task group had had long discussions about this recommendation and it was felt that expenditure on the planting of new trees in the local community should be able to continue.

The Chair said that she had also been on the task group. She had spoken to local residents about neighbourhood forums. She was of the opinion that the funds should be spent on local projects and not given to larger organisations. These larger charities, although worthy causes, were able to access funds from a number of other sources which were not open to smaller groups and therefore should not be given locality funding.

Councillor Cavinder stated that this had been part of the reason for the suggestion of pooling funding at a certain point during the year. This suggestion would ensure that the funds were spent and not lost.

Councillor Khan commented that he was unsure about this suggestion. A number of wards spent their funds later in the financial year, but they were spent.

Councillor Cavinder responded that if projects were known about in advance but were due to take place later, those funds could be set aside and not added to the central pot.

Councillor Khan responded that there were occasions that projects were known about late in the year and could not be anticipated.

Councillor Martins suggested that the proposed date of mid-December may be too early. This would need to be considered further.

Councillor Rindl said that she welcomed this recommendation. Her ward was reasonably affluent and often the funds were not completely spent. She would be happy for other wards to use the remaining available funds. She suggested that it might be made a voluntary arrangement.

Councillor Cavinder confirmed that if agreed officers would still need to look at the feasibility of the recommendation. He reminded the scrutiny committee that the task group had comprised councillors from both groups on the council.

The Committee and Scrutiny Officer informed the scrutiny committee that the report would be presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 5 December 2016. Cabinet's response to the recommendations would be reported to the scrutiny committee in January 2017.

RESOLVED –

1. that the final report and recommendations of the Neighbourhood Forum Task Group be forwarded to Cabinet.

**54 Executive Decision Progress Report**

The Scrutiny Committee received the latest edition of the Executive Decision Progress Report for 2016/17.

In response to a question from Councillor Williams, the Committee and Scrutiny Officer advised that any delegated key decision would be reported to all councillors. However, she would ensure that the ward councillors were kept updated about the scout hut decision due to be taken by the Mayor.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

**55 Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor Hastrick informed the Scrutiny Committee that the county's Health Scrutiny Committee had met on 8 November 2016. The scrutiny committee had received a report about the future of health services across west Hertfordshire.

The Chair agreed to circulate the minutes as soon as they were available.

**56 Budget Panel**

The Chair of Budget Panel, Councillor Khan confirmed that the panel had not met since the last meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**57 Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel**

The Chair of Outsourced Scrutiny Panel, Councillor Williams advised that the scrutiny panel had met on 8 November 2016. The meeting had been preceded by a tour of the Colosseum. At the scrutiny panel, representatives from HQ Theatres management attended and responded to councillors' questions.

**58 Community Safety Partnership Task Group**

The Chair of the Community Safety Partnership Task Group, Councillor Martins, informed the scrutiny committee that the task group had held its first meeting

on 20 October 2016. It had received a presentation on the structure of the Community Safety Partnership. Councillor Martins agreed to circulate the notes and presentation from the meeting.

Councillor Martins commented that the task group was not working and needed to be reviewed. It needed to carry out a strategic review of all agencies. He suggested that there were insufficient meetings and it possibly needed to meet quarterly.

## 59 **Work Programme**

The scrutiny committee received the latest version of its work programme. It was noted that the review of the Leisure Management Contract Task Group's recommendations would need to be added to the programme at the appropriate time. In addition the follow up from Cabinet's decision on the Neighbourhood Forum Task Group's recommendations would need to be included, possibly for the January meeting.

The Chair informed the scrutiny committee that following Cabinet's agreement to the joint housing venture she would be asking officers for a report to the January meeting. The report would explain about the new venture.

RESOLVED –

1. that the work programme be updated to include the following –
  - Review: Leisure Management Contract Task Group's recommendations
  - Cabinet response: Neighbourhood Forum Task Group's recommendations
  - Joint housing venture

## 60 **Dates of Next Meetings**

- Wednesday 21 December 2016 (for call-in only)
- Thursday 19 January 2017
- Thursday 2 February 2017 (for call-in only)

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm  
and finished at 8.55 pm