

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 March 2019

Present: Councillor K Hastrick (Chair)
Councillor J Dhindsa (Vice-Chair)
Councillors S Bashir (for minute numbers 60 to 67), S Cavinder,
K Crout, M Hofman, R Martins and I Stotesbury

Also present: Councillor Asif Khan (Chair of the Watford Community
Housing Task Group, for minute numbers 60 to 65) and
Councillor Mark Watkin (for minute numbers 60 to 66)

Officers: Head of Service Transformation
Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications
Customer Service Section Head
Watford 2020 Programme Manager
Committee and Scrutiny Officer

60 **Apologies for Absence/Committee Membership**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hamid.

61 **Disclosure of interests (if any)**

There were no disclosures of interest.

62 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2018 were submitted and signed.

63 **Call-in**

The scrutiny committee noted that no executive key decisions had been called in.

64 **Watford 2020 - Progress update report**

The Watford 2020 Programme Manager provided the scrutiny committee with an update on the progress of the Watford 2020 programme. He highlighted key headlines in the report. He reported that there would be a Watford 2020 Expo on 3 April and councillors were welcome to attend. He advised that Firmstep

was fundamental to the transformation. It would join up council services for residents and businesses.

The Watford 2020 Programme Manager informed the scrutiny committee that there was one project which had been flagged as 'red'. This had been due to delays in connecting the required systems together. These connections had now been completed and were being tested. Some projects were nearing completion and staff consultations were taking place. There were no significant risks or issues that needed to be highlighted other than those already mentioned.

In response to a question asking whether officers were being suitably critical of the process, the Watford 2020 Programme Manager assured councillors that the document before the scrutiny committee was reviewed by the Programme Board, who thoroughly scrutinised it and questioned officers on the progress of each project. The Programme Board was chaired by the Managing Director and included heads of service, a representative from section head level and him.

The Chair thanked the Watford 2020 Programme Manager for the update.

65

Watford Community Housing Task Group - Final report

The scrutiny committee received a report of the Committee and Scrutiny Officer which included the Watford Community Housing Task Group's final report. Councillor Khan attended the meeting to present the report to the scrutiny committee.

Councillor Khan thanked everyone who had taken part in the task group. The task group's membership had worked really well together. The task group had left the Town Hall and held meetings in the local communities. Watford Community Housing had attended two meetings and he wished to thank them for coming and responding to councillors' questions. He said that some of the recommendations may be challenging but the task group believed they would be achievable.

In response to questions from the scrutiny committee, Councillor Khan confirmed that the scrutiny review had covered Watford Community Housing's complaints procedure and service level agreements. Watford Community Housing had shown much improvement since the previous review. The void period between tenancies had been raised by residents. It had been recognised that tenants should only be allowed into the property once all the required works had been completed. He acknowledged councillors' concerns about the follow up rates, which was a reason the task group had included a recommendation on this subject. It was noted the scrutiny review had not

covered councillors' access to open meetings or the Gateway, as these were outside the scope.

The Committee and Scrutiny Officer informed the scrutiny committee that the Director of Operations from Watford Community Housing had provided a quick update on the final report and recommendations. There was an error on page 9 of the report in the last paragraph, as 'WBC' should have read 'WCH'. He had also advised that the group would provide a full response to the recommendations by Friday 5 April.

RESOLVED –

1. that the Watford Community Housing Task Group's final report and recommendations be forwarded to Watford Community Housing.
2. that Watford Community Housing's response be circulated as soon as possible.
3. that the response to recommendations be formally presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 20 June 2019.

66

Firmstep presentation

The Customer Services Section Head gave a demonstration of the 'MyWatford' test system, which was already available as live for residents. Some options were still being tested but once that had been completed they would be accessible on the live site. She showed the committee that as from Monday residents would be able to report that they had lost their poll card. It would prompt them that they would need to take alternative ID to the polling station. It was confirmed that there would be a back up process if the scanner failed.

Following questions about informing residents about the new service, the Head of Service Transformation said that there would be a soft launch. Currently there were 20 processes in the design phase, 20 in the build phase and approximately eight in test. Residents would be encouraged to use the processes as they went live. A big launch could possibly take place in the autumn as more services were available.

The Chair thanked the officers for the presentation.

67

Budget Panel

The Chair of Budget Panel, Councillor Bashir, informed the scrutiny committee of the panel's work at its meetings in January and March.

Quarter 3 2018/19: Key Performance Indicator report

The scrutiny committee received a report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications which provided the results of the key performance indicators at the end of Quarter 3 2018/19.

It was noted that the rough sleeper count was higher than last year. In response to a question about national trends, the Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications said that whilst the count did appear to be up across the country, it was a snapshot of one night, which might be the reason Broxbourne reported no rough sleepers. The council was aware of the local issue and was doing a lot of work to get messages out to the public.

Following a question about Freedom of Information requests, the Committee and Scrutiny Officer advised that half yearly figures were presented to Audit Committee. The report provided details of how many requests had been received and how many were not responded to in time. The appendix listed each request.

RESOLVED –

that the key performance indicator results for the end of Quarter 3 2018/19 be noted.

Executive Decision Progress Report

The scrutiny committee received the latest edition of the Executive Decision Progress Report for 2018/19.

RESOLVED –

that the updated report be noted.

Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Hastrick, the council's representative to the Health Scrutiny Committee, reported that the scrutiny committee had recently had a heavy workload, as it had been carrying out its quality scrutiny into patient services. It was agreed that the scrutiny committee's report would be circulated to the committee.

71 **Suggested task group topics for 2019/20**

The scrutiny committee received a report of the Committee and Scrutiny Officer which included two scrutiny suggestions submitted by Mayor Taylor.

The scrutiny committee discussed the two options and it was agreed that the one about mental health provision in the borough would be carried out first. It was noted that the Committee and Scrutiny Officer would contact all non-executive councillors after the local elections and ask for the names of those interested in taking part in the review. They would also be asked to advise if they were interested in chairing the task group. Further work would be undertaken on the detailed scope for the review.

RESOLVED –

1. that a task group be established in the new municipal year to review mental health provision in the borough.
2. that the task group membership be delegated to the Head of Democracy and Governance in consultation with the chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

72 **Review: Tackling Loneliness Task Group's recommendations**

The scrutiny committee received a report of the Committee and Scrutiny Officer with the latest update on the progress of implementing the Tackling Loneliness Task Group's recommendations. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer advised that she had started the work for the web page but needed some input from the task group; she would be re-circulating the information in order to progress the work further.

RESOLVED –

that the update be noted.

73 **Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel**

The Chair of Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel, Councillor Cavinder, gave an update on the panel's last meetings. He said that through the year the panel had asked service providers how they managed their social value. A range of services were provided and he felt the service providers and council should be proud of the work undertaken. There had been some concern at the last meeting about the performance data and it was hoped this would show improvement in quarter 4.

Community Safety Partnership Task Group

Councillor Martins had been appointed chair at the last meeting as Councillor Crout had been unable to attend. Councillor Martins advised that the task group had asked that the police should provide a briefing, which would be open to all councillors on the work currently being carried out on youth crime and child criminal exploitation.

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 8.40 pm