

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27 February 2020

Present: Councillor A Grimston (Chair)
Councillor
Councillors D Allen-Williamson, K Crout, R Martins, B Mauthoor,
M Mills, M Parker, G Saffery and M Turmaine

Also present: Councillor Mark Watkin (Portfolio Holder for Resources and
Customer Services)
Councillor Hall, Chair of Scrutiny Broxbourne Borough Council
(minute items 81-92)

Officers: Group Head of Transformation
Senior Democratic Services Officer

81 **Apologies for Absence/Committee Membership**

There was a change of membership for this meeting: Councillor Mills replaced Councillor Dhindsa, Councillor Crout replaced Councillor Stiff.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Hall, Chair of Scrutiny at Broxbourne Borough Council, who had come to observe scrutiny at Watford Borough Council.

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

There were no disclosures of interest.

83 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2020 were submitted and signed

84 **Other scrutiny meetings - minutes**

The scrutiny committee noted that the Health Services for the Deaf Task Group had met on 25 February 2020. The final report of the task group would be considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its next meeting on 19 March 2020.

85 **Call-in**

It was noted that no executive decisions had been called in.

86 **Watford 2020 Update**

The scrutiny committee received the report of the Watford 2020 Programme Manager updating members on developments since a report was last brought to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 24 October 2019.

Introducing the report, the Group Head of Transformation explained that Watford 2020 was entering its final period with completion due at the end of March 2020. A small number of projects would be completed in early 2020/21. However, this would not impact on the delivery of the expected £1m savings during 2020/21. Where additional costs were incurred, due to the extension of the programme timescales, the Group Head of Transformation advised that these would be limited and could be managed within budgets.

There followed a short discussion about the new Firmstep 'Contact My Councillor' form, which was due to go live on 2 March 2020. In response to a query, it was confirmed that the form included the facility for photographs and documentation to be uploaded in support of any enquires. Member guidance was being provided and this would be available on the council's intranet.

In response to a question about business continuity should officers be required to work from home, for example as a consequence of the current coronavirus, the Group Head of Transformation advised that all staff, subject to specific job requirements, could work remotely following the successful roll out of personal IT kit and unified communications.

Scrutiny members welcomed the transformation programme which had brought significant changes to the workings and processes of the council. Responding to a query about the impact on officers, the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Customer Services, advised that staff resilience had been notable and sickness absence levels remained low. These levels continued to be monitored carefully.

The scrutiny committee agreed that it would be useful to review the final closure reports for the Watford 2020 Programme. It was noted that the Watford 2020 Programme Manager and Group Head of Transformation would be returning to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18 June 2020.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

Action: Group Head of Transformation

87 Executive Decision Progress Report

The scrutiny committee received the 2019/20 Executive Decision Progress Report. It was noted that since publication, consideration of two reports by Cabinet, regarding Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding, would now take place in June 2020.

RESOLVED –

that the 2019/20 Executive Decision Progress report be noted.

88 Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Grimston advised that the next meeting of Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee would take place on Wednesday 4 March. An update on developments would be provided to Overview and Scrutiny Committee members at the next meeting.

89 Mental Health Task Group - Executive response

It was noted that an update to the Executive response had been circulated with the committee papers. This outlined progress since the Health and Wellbeing Forum (H&WBF) had reviewed the task group's recommendations on 22 January 2020.

Councillor Saffery, who had chaired the Mental Health Task Group, reiterated the commitment of the H&WBF, officers and the Mayor to progress the mental health agenda. The issue was due to be considered again by the H&WBF at its next meeting on 9 July 2020. This would include agreeing a new role profile for the council's Mental Health Champion to maintain focus and direction.

The Chair advised that, whilst mental health would remain on the H&WBF's agenda, there was scope for any strategic issues to be returned to Overview and Scrutiny in the future.

Scrutiny members noted that Watford's MP Dean Russell was also seeking to promote mental health awareness. Councillor Martins, the council's Mental Health Champion, advised that he had arranged to meet with Mr Russell to discuss the MP's plans to launch a mental health first aid programme in Watford.

90 **Work Programme**

The scrutiny committee received the updated draft of its work programme incorporating the suggestions from the previous meeting. With a view to the 2020/21 work programme, members were asked to refer any proposals for future scrutiny review to the Senior Democratic Services Officer.

91 **Dates of Next Meetings**

- 19 March 2020

92 **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 view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of 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 for the reasons stated in the report.

93 **Colosseum Ceiling update**

The scrutiny committee received the report of the Group Head of Transformation updating the committee on events surrounding the closure of Watford Colosseum in November and December 2019. The Group Head of Transformation introduced the report and responded to members' questions.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

Action: Group Head of Transformation

Chair

The meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 8.20 pm

