

Extract from Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22 October 2020

Present: Councillor Parker (Chair)
Councillor Dhindsa (Vice Chair)
Councillors Allen-Williamson, Crout, Jeffree, Martins, Mauthoor,
Saffery, and Turmaine

Officers: Executive Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications
Group Head of Transformation
Head of Enterprise Programme Management Office
Senior Democratic Services Officer

42. Watford and Three Rivers Trust Task Group final report

The Chair of the Watford and Three Rivers Trust Task Group, Councillor Glen Saffery, was invited to introduce the task group's final report and recommendations.

Councillor Saffery explained that the task group had been set up to review how well the community and voluntary sector had been supported during the council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and to establish whether there were areas for improvement. Work had focussed on two areas: volunteering and the future of the Community Fund. Councillor Saffery thanked the task group members, witnesses and officers for their constructive engagement.

Councillor Dhindsa commented that, although he had been a member of the task group, he did not agree with the report. He remained concerned about the lack of funds allocated to Watford's BAME communities from the Community Fund and the monitoring undertaken by W3RT. Councillor Dhindsa considered that W3RT needed to undertake more outreach work with BAME groups to raise awareness about the support and assistance available to them. He also suggested that the proposed dedicated fundraiser should be a council, rather than W3RT, employee.

Councillor Saffery regretted Councillor Dhindsa's comments. He disputed the suggestion that members of Watford's BAME communities had not received proportionate funding from the Community Fund. There had been a considerable response to the task group's survey of those who had applied to the Community Fund, and other local voluntary groups, but Councillor Dhindsa's concerns had not been echoed.

Other committee members welcomed the task group's work, which demonstrated the value of scrutiny in its capacity to take an even-handed arm's

length view in order to evaluate and make recommendations for improvement. It was also commented that the Community Fund had been the subject of significant publicity during the pandemic, not least on social media.

In response to comments from scrutiny members, the Chair agreed in accordance with Standing Committee Procedure Rules, paragraph 4.2, that it be recorded in the minutes how members cast their votes.

Those members voting for the officer's recommendation

Councillors Parker, Allen-Williamson, Crout, Jeffree, Martins and Saffery

Those members voting against the officer's recommendation

Councillors Dhindsa, Mauthoor and Turmaine

RESOLVED –

that the final report and recommendations of the Watford and Three Rivers Trust Task Group be agreed and forwarded to Cabinet.