

Minutes

**SOCIAL CARE, HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH
POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
13 June 2018**



Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Jane Palmer (Chairman), Duncan Flynn (Vice-Chairman), Alan Deville, Ian Edwards, Tony Eginton, Janet Gardner, Becky Haggan, Paula Rodrigues and Mark Markham</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Dan Kennedy - Deputy Director, Housing, Environment, Education, Health & Wellbeing, Mark Billings – Housing Manager, Debby Weller – Policy and Strategy Manager (Housing), Tony Zaman - Corporate Director – Adults, Children and Young People, Sandra Taylor - Assistant Director, Provider and Commissioned Care Kate Kelly-Talbot - Assistant Director, Adult Social Care, Nina Durnford - Assistant Director, Older People and Physical Disabilities, Janice Altenor – Head of Service – Safeguarding and Quality Assurance and Anisha Teji – Democratic Services Officer</p>
3.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO REPORT THE PRESENCE OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies received from Cllr Judith Cooper, with Cllr Michael Markham substituting.</p>
4.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
5.	<p>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes from 10 May 2018 were approved as an accurate record.</p>
6.	<p>TO AGREE THE MINUTES FROM POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEES IN 2017/18 (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes from policy overview committees in 2017/18 be approved subject to the minor typo correction.</p>
7.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED AS PART I WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED AS PART II WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that there were no Part II items, and that all business would therefore be conducted in public.</p>
8.	<p>THE ROLE OF POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEES (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>Members had regard to the report entitled 'The Role of Policy Overview Committees' which provided information about the general purpose and role of the Council's policy</p>

overview and scrutiny arrangements, the Committee's updated terms of reference and information about how reviews were undertaken.

The report also gave details about the changes to the work programme, which would now span over multiple municipal years, giving the Committee with an opportunity to undertake more in-depth and thorough reviews.

Members discussed possible review topics for the coming year. Some of the ideas suggested included:

- A review on corporate parenting. Although it was noted that this was ongoing work as part of the work programme and changes ought to be embedded before considering any reviews.
- A review looking into the transport provided for children with special education needs and disabilities.
- A review into the Council's action to tackle health and inequalities. Although this was a good idea, it was noted that this was a broad area and needed to be narrowed down.
- A review into homelessness and housing needs, particularly in light of the changes to universal credit and housing benefits. It was acknowledged that this led to other consequential impacts such as not being able to pay rent, mental and physical health issues.

It was noted that this area had been reviewed previously. However Members commented that a review in this area would be welcomed in terms of understanding how changes in the benefits system were organised. It was also suggested that the review could explore how well the Council worked with partners and corporately.

- A review into life expectancy, particularly given the clear divide between the North and South of the Borough where there was a difference of at least 10 years in the life expectancy.
- A review into domestic abuse and what mechanisms were in place to support victims.
- A review into dementia. Although it was noted that a loneliness review had recently been undertaken by the previous POC and was due to go to Cabinet in June 2018.
- A review looking into community mental health teams and whether there was an adequate focus on local care and clinical approaches.

The Chairman acknowledged that the Committee had a massive remit. It was discussed that it would be beneficial to have a more focused review. It was confirmed that considering welfare reforms would look into other aspects such as mental health, life skills and vulnerable adults. The review into universal credit and housing benefits could also explore partnership working and it would come at a good timing with further changes due to be implemented in July 2018.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the information in the report be noted; and
- 2) That officers prepare a scoping report and agree terms of reference for the selected topic for review.

9. **UPDATE REPORT ON CURRENT HOUSING POLICY ENVIRONMENT** (*Agenda Item 7*)

Officers introduced the report on the current housing policy environment and highlighted the key points raised. The report provided a general overview of key housing policy and legislative changes.

The key pointed highlighted included:

- The main provisions of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 came into force on 3 April 2018.
- Rough sleeping was a key issue and there were 36 rough sleepers identified in Hillingdon; 29 at the airport and seven in the Borough.
- Between 8 March 2018 to 31 May 2018, the government had consulted on measures to be included in the draft domestic abuse bill. Officers were waiting to see the reaction and outcome to this.
- New measures had been introduced to crack down on rogue landlords including civil penalties for up to £30k, extension of rent repayments to cover illegal evictions, breach of a banning order and certain other specified offences. Further action would be undertaken in relation to the mandatory licensing of HMOs, which would have an impact on workload.
- The rating and council tax empty dwellings bill would permit a charge of up to 200% of normal council tax on properties that have been empty for two years or more.
- A new system for supported housing was announced on 31 October 2017 alongside proposals to improve local planning and commissioning for supported housing in a National Statement of Expectations.
- The London Housing Strategy was published in May 2018 and would be considered by the London Assembly and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. The main priority was to build many more homes for Londoners, particularly affordable homes.

Members commended officers for the wide-ranging and useful report and also the comprehensive summary.

In response to Member questions, officers confirmed that the London Housing Strategy and the Draft London Plan were both in line together and if a threshold of 35% affordable housing was met, then developers could go ahead with planning developments without having to undergo a viability assessment. Officers confirmed that no civil penalties had yet been imposed in respect of the private rented sector. A national fund of £30 million would be used for rough sleeping.

Members were keen to see quantitative data to support the challenges that officers faced.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the contents of the report be noted;

- 2) That the officers be thanked for the report; and
- 3) That the request for quantitative data showing the challenges officers faced be presented to Committee.

10.	<p>INFORMATION REPORT ON COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PARENTING ROLE (Agenda Item 8)</p> <p>Officers introduced the report entitled 'The Council's Corporate Parenting Responsibilities' and provided an overview. The report provided a briefing to Members regarding the Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities.</p> <p>In summary, it was highlighted that there had been a number of years of improvement and close scrutiny within childrens services. A number of partnerships had developed with different forums. Ofsted had recently inspected children's social care and the results were considerably better than previous inspections. Officers noted the new governance arrangements which provided an opportunity to report directly to Cabinet, in respect of the Council's Corporate Parenting Responsibilities.</p> <p>Members commended officers for the 'good' Ofsted inspections and their hard work. However, some Members were concerned that the new governance arrangements, in no longer having a corporate parenting board, downgraded responsibilities. There was a concern that from having six corporate parenting board meetings a year to only having two items as part of the POC's work programme would not allow proper enquiries to be undertaken. Some Members questioned whether the degree of investigation could be provided, given the POC's wide remit.</p> <p>Officers confirmed that there were still mechanisms supporting children in care and nothing had changed in this respect. It was for the discretion of the Committee as to the lines of enquiries it saw fit to make and the governance arrangements strengthened the ways of working as there was an opportunity now to report directly to Cabinet.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that every Councillor was accountable towards the 687 children in care and this was a huge responsibility. It was noted that this was a very experienced Committee, with Members having a diverse background ranging in expertise. The Chairman urged Members to give the new arrangements a chance and was confident in the ability to make a difference. Members also commented that there was plenty of opportunity to scope relevant topics, and if there were areas of concern this could be brought to the Committee's attention for investigation.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the contents of the report and the role the Committee and all Members have in championing the corporate parenting ethos across the Council.</p>
11.	<p>FORWARD PLAN (Agenda Item 9)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.</p>
12.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 10)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Work Programme 2017-18 be noted.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.05 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Anisha Teji on 01895 277655. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.

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