

## Minutes

### RESIDENTS, EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

18 July 2019

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



	<p><b>Committee Members Present:</b> Councillors Wayne Bridges (Chairman), Michael Markham (Vice-Chairman), Allan Kauffman, Devi Radia, Stuart Mathers, Paula Rodrigues, Jan Sweeting, Steve Tuckwell, Farhad Choubedar (In place of Heena Makwana) and Tony Little</p> <p><b>LBH Officers Present:</b> Neil Fraser (Democratic Services Officer), Dan Kennedy (Director, Housing, Environment, Education, Performance, Health &amp; Wellbeing), Sarah Phillips (School Place Planning Project Manager), Stephanie Waterford (Licensing Service), Iain Watters (Financial Planning Manager) and Debbie Lewis (Emergency Management and Response Manager)</p>
11.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor Makwana. Councillor Choubedar was present as her substitute.</p>
12.	<p><b>DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
13.	<p><b>TO CONFIRM THAT ALL ITEMS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT ANY ITEMS MARKED PART 2 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items would be considered in public.</p>
14.	<p><b>TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>Regarding the suggested revision to the minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2019, Councillor Markham asserted that the referred to 85%-15% split in allocated funding for the repair of pavements in the north and south of the Borough was due to the north requiring more repair work than the south. Cllr Sweeting advised that the split in funding was a matter of public record and had been seen for the previous two years.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2019 be approved as a correct record.</b></p>
15.	<p><b>GAMBLING POLICY STATEMENT</b> (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>Stephanie Waterford, Licensing Services Manager, introduced a report detailing proposed revisions to the Statement of Gambling Policy in line with the Council's</p>

requirements to review its licensing policies every 3 years.

The Committee was advised that there had been little change to gambling legislation since 2016, and therefore there were very few changes proposed to the policy. All local authorities carried out reviews at a similar time, and London boroughs had identified similar issues to that of Hillingdon.

A draft policy was included in the meeting papers, which was now being consulted on. Following this consultation period, the policy would be brought before Cabinet with comments, ahead of its adoption at Council in November 2019. Consultees included HMRC, the Police, and other stakeholders.

It was noted that the draft policy referenced a completed consultation, which would be amended with the correct consultation dates.

Members sought clarity on a number of points, including:

**What were the local challenges that had been identified?**

Issues identified were predominantly within local betting shops, and particularly related to betting machines. Issues included antisocial behaviour and addiction. The Council continued to work with the Police, and agencies such as Bet Aware, to help protect residents. Conditions of gambling licences included the mandatory display of literature regarding the dangers of addiction and gambling. The Council worked with enforcement officers to ensure that these conditions were being met.

**What were the 'Local Area Profiles' referred to within the policy?**

There were currently no formal Local Area Profiles identified. The Council carried out its own risk assessments when granting licences to new betting sites. It had been noted that betting shops were now declining in numbers following a previous boom, and that high stakes betting machines had been regulated via legislation.

**How were children and vulnerable people protected?**

The Gambling Commission provided guidance, which had informed Hillingdon's robust policies. These included mandatory training for staff, which included identification of warning signs and questioning techniques. Officers checked sites regularly, including proprietor's complaints logs and self-exclusion registers etc.

**How was the sharing of information with the Gambling Commission working?**

The Gambling Commission dealt with the big national and online operators, while local authorities regulated local sites. The Commission carried out its own proactive enforcement and response and was in regular contact with officers. It was noted that gambling regulations for local authorities were permissive, and that authorities were required to grant licences to betting establishments unless there were serious concerns.

**Was the policy taking into account the Council's new duty of care to Looked After Children (LAC)?**

The policy did not make specific reference to LAC, who were covered under the general guidelines relating to vulnerable children and adults. This could be amended, should responses to the consultation show a requirement.

**Why had the Garden City Estate Residents Association not been consulted on the new policy?**

This would be checked and corrected.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

16. **EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCESSES** (*Agenda Item 6*)

Debbie Lewis, Emergency Management and Response Manager, provided the Committee with information relating to the Council's emergency response processes.

The command structure, which included the roles and responsibilities of officers and Members in the event of an incident, was outlined. The Council Gold Group (CGG) included Executive Directors and the Head of Communications. The Council Silver Group (CSG) included Directors and Heads of Services, as well as the Borough Emergency Control Centre (BECC) Manager. The BECC was activated and deployed under request from services such as the Police or Fire brigade.

Ward Councillors were responsible for advising and assessing the needs residents, particularly in instances of evacuation. Member training courses were currently being reviewed, and would be rolled out to Members once completed.

Developments in flood control systems were highlighted, including a new temporary flood barrier system that was designed to be more effective than sandbags. The barriers were likely to be more expensive than sandbags, but also more durable with a longer lifespan. However, this option was yet to be costed, and deployment training would likely be required. Members were enthused at the prospect of more effective flood control measures, but it was understood that the financial impact of any such measures would need to be fully considered.

Members asked a number of questions, including:

**A large fire incident at a coal yard in April 2019 was missing from the report's list of incidents. Why was this?**

The report listed incidents that had required full activation from the Council's emergency response teams. In such instances, the Council would normally only become involved should there be a requirement to evacuate residents. The incident on 28 April 2019 was not an incident that fell under the Council's remit, though as the fire had not been extinguished after approximately three hours, the Local Authority Liaison Officer (LALO) had been activated. However, by the time the LALO arrived at the scene the fire had been put out. In addition, the Council's Social Care team had been on standby to help vulnerable residents, if so required.

**Was there a requirement for officers to contact Ward Councillors in the event of an incident?**

Yes, Members are provided with information and this is facilitated through the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council, through Council Gold.

The Council is reliant on information provided by the Metropolitan Police Service and London Fire Brigade, which initially is imprecise. As soon as the Council is in receipt of information, briefing notes are provided to the Leader so that the information can be

shared accordingly.

In addition, the Fire Brigade will often not share an incident report with the Council until the cause of the incident has been identified. Moving forward, such reports could be disseminated to Councillors, when and if they become available.

**What had the Council learned as a result of the four incidents listed within the report?**

It was recognised that no two incidents were the same, and each provided an opportunity to learn and improve. Since March last year, there had been a number of relatively small incidents that had provided the Council with an opportunity to review existing plans. The Council's Corporate Emergency Response Plan was reviewed accordingly, with the aim of making the Council's response more robust. This remained a continuous process, as plans are constantly reviewed.

The recent incidents raised learning points in relation to how the Council would activate its emergency centres, and the plans have subsequently been re-written. The emergency centres plans are to be ratified by the Corporate Management Team in September 2019.

It was agreed that the revised plan be forwarded to Members, once ratified. In addition, incident debrief reports could be shared with Members.

**Under the terms of the new Local Plan Part 2, the Council was approving more high density and high rise accommodation. How was the Council planning for potential incidents in these new dwellings?**

The Council maintains a Borough-wide Risk Register, which is regularly reviewed in conjunction with multi-agency partner organisations on the Hillingdon Resilience Forum, in order to mitigate against potential future risks.

**How did the Council work with the Communications team to keep residents informed during an incident?**

The Emergency Management and Response Service works very closely with Corporate Communications in order to provide information and reassurance to residents, particularly in relation to advice on areas to avoid, routes to take, locations of rest centres and timescales for evacuations.

The information is provided via social media, the website and through briefing notes to the Leader which can be cascaded to Councillors and residents. This forms part of the statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, which advises that authorities are to warn, inform and advise the public, as to how their neighbourhoods and homes have been affected by a disaster.

It was agreed that details of the major incident exercises planned for October and November 2019 be fed back to Members upon their completion.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

17. **BUDGET PLANNING REPORT FOR RESIDENTS SERVICES** (*Agenda Item 7*)

Iain Watters, Financial Planning Manager, introduced the 2020/21 Budget Planning Report for services within the remit of the Residents, Education and Environmental

Services Policy Overview Committee.

Key points from the report were highlighted. The budget gap and savings requirement for the three years to 2022/23 was £28,467k, or 12% of the Council's current £229,985k budget requirement after allowing for an assumed 2.99% per annum increase in Council Tax. In general, £11,837k of the budget gap reflected normal inflation and demand-led pressures off-set by increased funding. £8,854k was driven by capital financing costs and other investment decisions, while the final £7,776k savings were deferred from earlier periods through the use of reserves.

Members sought clarity on a number of points, including:

**Could the officer provide further detail on the potential reduced budgets for services within the remit of the Committee?**

Table 2 of the report set out 6 saving 'themes' which were: Service Transformation, Zero Based Reviews, Effective Procurements, Preventing Demand, Commercialisation & Maximising Income, and Responsibility & Funding Streams. Service Transformation ensured that the Council was doing things more efficiently, and as part of this, all services were being reviewed. Zero Based Reviews offered flexibility to redirect funding to areas of demand, while procurement ensured value for money. Commercialisation & maximising Income could be seen through investment in new housing.

**Paragraph 9 of the report stated that there was no specific financing strategy within the current capital programme. Could this be elaborated upon?**

This referred to capital schemes which did not directly pay for themselves, e.g. the update to LED lighting within the Civic Centre, wherein the borrowing to pay for the update was offset by the energy savings made, or school places which did not result in a direct revenue stream but were a vital Council service.

**Was demand still growing for funding for High Need pupils?**

It was anticipated that there would be a requirement for further increased spending on High Need in line with the rise on population. This was a national issue, which would likely require additional support from the Government. School contributions toward this need would be discussed through the Schools Forum and would feed into budget setting later in the year.

**Could the officer provide further detail on the deficit recovery plan for the redistribution of school balances?**

The Deficit Recovery Plan was formulated between the Schools Forum and the Council, and set out a number of actions, including the proposed redistribution of balances from the small number of schools that had disproportionately high balances. However, this was a complicated topic, which required further exploration. Timescales for actions depended on the response received from the Department of Education.

**Had Hillingdon achieved success in lobbying Government for funding in other areas?**

Additional funding had been secured within Social Care, as a result of lobbying from the local authorities and the LGA.

**How were decisions made in relation to Preventing Demand? For example, the introduction of the Supported Living Programme had avoided later costly intervention.**

All proposals were looked at. Where initial investment could result in reduced spending later, action would be taken. For example, enabling residents to stay in their existing homes had the benefit of reducing later demand on residential care placements.

**Could the officer elaborate on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) investment into expansion?**

The HRA had approximately 10,000 homes for social affordable housing need. £56,186k of rental income from the Council's social housing provision was to be reinvested into maintenance, improvement and the expansion of housing stock. The approved capital programme included funding to acquire 428 new dwellings over the period to 2023/24, and the current operation was seen as sustainable in the long term.

**Many schools were reporting difficulties with having to accommodate SEN children without the requisite budget to meet their needs. Could further information on these schools be made available to the Committee?**

Further information could be provided following the meeting.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

18. **QUARTERLY SCHOOL PLACES PLANNING UPDATE** (*Agenda Item 8*)

Dan Kennedy - Director, Housing, Environment, Education, Performance, Health & Wellbeing, and Sarah Phillips – School Place Planning Project Manager, updated the Committee on the Council's School Places Planning.

It was highlighted that all primary and secondary school children had been offered a school place for September 2019 entry. Demand for primary places was slightly reducing overall, but with surplus places concentrated in a few schools. Officers were speaking with schools to establish plans to address this, which included the option to reduce Planned Admission numbers (PANs) or introduce temporary caps.

Demand for secondary school places was increasing, as predicted. Places across the Borough were tight, with only a handful of schools retaining capacity. Officers were confident that late applications would be offered school places for September 2019. Forecasting was underway, and potential measures to address the increased demand included temporary or permanent expansions of existing schools, and the proposed new Free School north of the A40.

Members sought further information on a number of points, including:

**Could the officers provide more detail on the reasons for the decline in demand for primary places?**

The reduction in demand appeared linked to housing, as well as changes to the welfare system and benefits caps. Families were either staying in existing homes for longer due to increasing house prices, or moving out of high rent areas due to rises in rent costs.

**How did the Council work to address the issue of places at schools close to**

### **Borough boundaries?**

Local authorities across London were in regular dialogue regarding timetabling and admissions, and so forecasting and school place planning took into account information from neighbouring boroughs. However, as parents retained the choice of school for their children, many border schools could have a high proportion of non-Hillingdon attendees.

### **Were the demand trends seen in Hillingdon in line with trends seen elsewhere in London?**

Primary trends were broadly the same across London. Demand for secondary places in parts of inner London was falling, while still increasing in outer London.

### **What was the strategy when deciding which schools were to receive a reduced PAN?**

School places at primary schools was a complicated issue. The Council's strategy was based on available data and aimed to keep a sufficient number of places available to facilitate parental choice. A subset of eight schools was now being reviewed to determine whether reduced PANs were necessary, and such action would be subject to evidence and a legal process. Two of the eight schools were to be reviewed further in September, once pupils were in place.

### **Was there a danger that the current shortage of secondary school places could turn into a surplus?**

Currently, all options were being considered to address secondary school places. This included bulge years, the new Free School, etc. Dialogue was continuing with schools, several of whom had expressed an interest in accommodating additional pupils. Currently, the concern was that every one of the existing seven year groups already in the Borough's primary schools was larger than the secondary capacity, so the high numbers would last for some time yet. Further information would be reported to Members, once available.

### **Did the Council have the ability to influence schools to ensure they made the right decisions for their pupils?**

The Council maintained regular dialogue with schools to discuss attainment of pupils, challenges, etc. Collaborative working was promoted, including peer reviews, and measures such as lesson observation, mentoring and buddying were seen to be effective.

It was agreed that the revised projections for school places, as referred to within the report, be forwarded to Members, once available.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

Consideration was given to the draft scoping report for the next review of the Residents, Education and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee.

The previous request to expand the scope of the review to include waste management services and civic amenity sites was discussed, and the majority of the Committee felt that the review would be best served by maintaining a focus on the antisocial behaviour of littering and fly tipping, inclusive of enforcement.

Members highlighted the need to ensure that the review included information from Hillingdon residents, as well as a focus on how other authorities were educating their residents to avoid such antisocial behaviour. It was requested that, if possible, witnesses include volunteer groups such as litter picking groups and street champions, or residents be contacted through the use of surveys.

It was recommended that, if possible, witnesses should have a broad knowledge of the wider subject, including prevention measures, technology, and innovations.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

20. **CABINET FORWARD PLAN** (*Agenda Item 10*)

Consideration was given to the Cabinet Forward Plan. It was confirmed that the Plan did not currently include an item on Youth Services.

**RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.**

21. **WORK PROGRAMME** (*Agenda Item 11*)

Members considered the Work Programme. It was confirmed that the information suggested to be included in the forthcoming SEN Provision item had been forwarded to the relevant officers.

It was confirmed that, as requested at the previous meeting, the future item on Youth Services would now be considered at the January meeting.

**RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.**

The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.55 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Neil Fraser on 01895 250692. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.