

Minutes

RESIDENTS, EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

21 January 2020

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



	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Wayne Bridges (Chairman), Michael Markham (Vice-Chairman), Allan Kauffman, Devi Radia, Stuart Mathers, Paula Rodrigues, Jan Sweeting, Steve Tuckwell and John Morgan</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Neil Fraser (Democratic Services Officer), Paul Richards (Head of Green Spaces, Sport and Culture), Marcus Briginshaw (Finance Manager), Dan Kennedy (Director, Housing, Environment, Education, Performance, Health & Wellbeing), Debbie Scarborough (Adult & Community Learning - Service Manager), Graham Young (Lead Finance Business Partner) and Cathy Knubley (Head of Waste Services)</p>
50.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
51.	<p>DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
52.	<p>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 (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items would be considered in public.</p>
53.	<p>TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>Members highlighted that the SEN Strategy, circulated following the previous meeting, was now out of date. It was requested that the new strategy be considered at a future meeting of the Committee, once available.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2019 be approved as a correct record.</p>
54.	<p>NEW SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>The item was deferred to a future meeting of the Committee.</p>
55.	<p>CABINET'S BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>Marcus Briginshaw (Finance Manager), and Graham Young (Lead Finance Business</p>

Partner), introduced the report detailing Cabinet's budget proposals for the next financial year.

Officers confirmed that the report was the second of two regular annual appearances from the Council's finance team on the budget setting process. The first report, considered in summer 2019, confirmed the size of the challenge ahead, with an update on the current budget gap, and advised that work was underway to address the budget gap through savings, contingency and growth proposals.

The report set out the context of the budget recommendations, updates on funding and spend to recalculate the budget gap, and details of specific proposals within the remit of the Committee.

Current projections remained in line with those presented in the summer, with funding updates from the Chancellor's Spending Review adding a marginal £0.7m net funding to the Council. This had resulted in a forecasted budget gap of £27.7m for the three years to 2023, made up of the £20m savings to be identified in Table 1 of the report, plus the £7.7m of current savings proposals. This budget gap remained consistent with previous years and with other Local Authorities.

The budget gap assumed an inflationary uplift to Council Tax of 1.8% per annum, based on 90% of the assumed uplift across London. In addition, for the first time, the Council was proposing to utilise the Social Care Precept and add a further 2% rise in Council Tax, as it was apparent that this was a key element of Government's funding strategy for Social Care in 2020/21. The total 3.8% increase in Council Tax added £43.31 per year to the average Band D Council Tax liability, or £0.83p per week.

The 2020/21 budget gap was the result of 3 areas:

- £13m demand-led and inflation (population growth) for continuing the same services;
- £6m financing for Councils capital investment, increasing to £12.4m by 2024/25; and
- £8m savings deferred from previous year in line with Council's saving strategy agreed in February 2019.

The Committee asked a number of questions, including:

How was the near £14m designated schools deficit going to be managed? In the past, this had predominantly related to High Needs Places funding, and the Council had previously requested that the School Forum contribute to this funding. Was this likely to happen again?

It was accepted that the schools deficit was an area of concern. To help manage this, a request had been made to the Department for Education (DfE) to transfer money from the schools block in an effort to close the gap in-year.

With regard to High Needs Places funding, there was additional funding available from the Government and through the Council, and further detail could be shared once the new strategy was finalised.

Some members commented that, with the Fair Funding formula and the reduction in numbers that some primary schools were experiencing, there was difficulty in balancing the books in respect of schools. It was suggested that Council should recognise the pressures schools were facing and not ask too much of schools, in relation to High

Needs funding.

The report set out an approximate £17m reduction in funding for expansion of secondary schools. Was this due to a large forecasted drop in the projected numbers of pupils moving forward?

Primary and secondary school place forecasts were based on population projections from the GLA which were showing a reduction in the need for places due to a variety of factors including parental preference, residential development etc. This was resulting in a projected move to an extra 3 forms of entry in the north of the Borough, and 1.5 forms of entry in the south of the Borough. Planned investment was therefore being reduced in line with these projections. However, modelling and forecasting continued to be carried out annually, and the need for continued investment to meet the overall high need remained. The peak forecasted was for entry in September 2022, when it is forecast that an extra 8 forms of entry will be required to meet demand across the Borough.

Members raised concerns that the increase in the charges for the processing of DIY and trade waste at amenity sites could potentially incentivise fly-tipping.

Labour Group Members expressed concerns over the budget, with specific reference to the Council's use of capital receipts to fund some aspects of transformation, which was felt to disguise cuts to services or headcount around the BID team. It was stressed that the Council should aim to ensure that it was maximizing fundraising and income, such as external grants, to make best use of Arts and Leisure provision.

Labour Members also reminded the Committee of its remit to monitor Council services to ensure the Council was continuing to fulfil its obligations in light of cuts to services. An example of issues with the SEND service was highlighted, including reports that the Council was not achieving the 20 week statutory requirement for Education and Healthcare Plans, with statistics available showing that in 2018, Hillingdon was the seventh worst in London for achieving that target. In addition, an elderly resident at Christmas was informed that she owed money to the Council when in fact it was the Council that owed money to her. This had been a great source of stress to this resident, who was still awaiting a resolution to the issue.

Other Members responded by stating that they felt that the Committee's role was to monitor the overall policy rather than its direct implementation, a function that they felt the Committee was fulfilling. Members highlighted the regular reports received by the Committee, and the regular opportunities given to the Committee to challenge officers.

Members noted the contents of the report, and Councillor Tuckwell suggested:

'That it was gratifying to see that, despite the financial pressures faced by the Council, the Capital Programme was able to provide adequate funds for projects to maintain and improve services for residents, such as the resurfacing of roads and footpaths, an increase in youth provision, and new leisure and sports facilities. In addition, the Committee was pleased to recognise the Council's recruitment of additional ASBET enforcement officers, its support for additional duties from the Environment Bill, and the allocation of resource aligned to animal welfare, and supported and endorsed the Council's approach when reviewing fees and charges with a view to keeping within 90% of that of neighbouring boroughs.'

Following a proposal by the Chairman, the above comments were approved by the Committee as comments to be submitted on the budget. It was noted that Labour Group Members did not endorse these comments.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the report be noted;**
- 2. That the Committee's agreed comments on the budget be included in the forthcoming report to the Corporate Services, Commerce and Communities Policy Overview Committee.**

56. INFORMATION ITEM ON ADULT LEARNING (*Agenda Item 7*)

Debbie Scarborough (Adult and Community Learning Service Manager) introduced a report detailing the Council's Adult Learning programme.

Members asked a number of questions, including:

What was the overall budget for adult learning, and how many used the service? Was the service providing value for money?

In total, funding was circa £1.9m, with the Council contribution at approximately £70K (of which 40k was being utilised), and all other funding coming from external sources such as the Greater London Authority (GLA), the City of London Corporation and the Education Funding Agency (EFA). This included £50k for adult learning loans and £20k for early years training (such as child minding). A new project called 'Talk English', aimed at working with women with very poor English skills was budgeted at just over £42k. 2,236 Hillingdon residents were engaging with the service over the last academic year. This increased to circa 3,000 when including non-residents. It was felt that the services gave excellent value for money per head.

Local authority contribution was £70k, of which only about £40k was being utilised. Why?

The service aimed to break even, and so tried to use as little funds as possible while still delivering the required services. However, the actual utilisation of funds changed year on year, based on demand.

Were venues being reviewed for suitability, for instance, parking provision? Were new venues being sought?

Current venues were regularly checked for suitability. The vast majority of venues were felt to offer excellent facilities, transport links and parking provision. It was accepted that the Brookfield venue had issues with parking provision, and everything possible was being done to allow attendees to park at the venue, it was accepted that parking was at a premium in that part of London. The service was not looking at new venues.

How did the service assess need across the Borough? It was noted that arts workshops were uncommon in the south of the Borough.

Firstly, the previous year's data was reviewed, including a review of which courses were filled, and which were not. National, regional and local priorities and drivers were also key drivers for curriculum planning. This, together with feedback from learners and partners, helped to inform the services for the future year. In addition, approximately 30% of the work being carried out was 'off brochure' which allowed bespoke partnership agreements with schools and partners, etc., to meet specific needs identified. With regard to the south of the Borough, it was a reality that different areas had different needs or demand. The service attempted to tailor provision to the needs

of different community groups or partners.

Was the service seeking to expand the number of residents it engaged with? Did the service work with groups such as the Workers Educational Association (WEA)?

The service did not work directly with the WEA or other groups, though did have small partnership agreements based on their own offerings, e.g. horticultural courses. With regard to expansion, against a background of declining numbers nationally, the service was struggling to meet demand for courses such as digital skills, English and mathematics. The services therefore aimed to reach people and guide them through the various stages of building skills to empower them to enter into employment, etc.

How was feedback obtained?

Feedback was obtained through surveys, Ofsted reports, open days, etc. In addition, there was a Learning Council (elected from learners themselves) who provided direct feedback and acted as 'secret shoppers'. All feedback was reviewed and acted upon to improve services, where relevant.

What strategy was in place try and increase the percentage of learners that were coming from deprived backgrounds?

Primarily this was done as outreach work through partnerships with community groups. Additionally, A bid had been entered for an 'Innovation Fund' from the GLA which, if successful, would give another £150k for use via the outreach centres to reach more potential learners. The aim was to engage with more people who, in turn, would promote the service to their own community or groups.

What were the biggest obstacles remaining to the service?

It was accepted that funding was always the biggest obstacle remaining to the service, as this dictated the amount of staff available, and therefore the work that could be carried out. In addition, promotion and awareness of the service was an issue, and work was being undertaken with the Council's corporate communications team to address this.

It was agreed that the most recent annual service self-assessment report be shared with the Committee following the meeting.

The Committee also requested that a further report on the updated strategic plan for the adult learning service be brought to the Committee, once available.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the report be noted;**
- 2. That the most recent annual service self-assessment report be shared with the Committee; and**
- 3. That a report on the updated strategic plan for the service be considered for inclusion on the Committee's work programme.**

Paul Richards (Head of Green Spaces, Sport and Culture) introduced a report detailing the Council's provision of services for young people within the Borough.

Members asked a number of questions, including:

The report did not list any groups within Northwood/Northwood Hills ward. Was this correct?

The groups within the wards could be checked, and Members updated, following the meeting.

One youth centre in Northwood was not available due to building works being undertaken to address a severe case of damp. Surveyors and specialist's had now been engaged to create an actions plan that would properly address the issues on site.

What was the total budget for youth provision, and how many users aged 8-19 were engaging with the Council?

Universal services mostly comprised the various youth centres, for which the budget was £546k. There had been 32,000 attendances to Universal Youth Services sessions over the last year.

What had been the impact of separating the targeted and universal services for young people? Did the two areas work together at all?

The two services had been separated but there remained some crossover, for example, the Fiesta programme was a universal service provided places for young people identified by the targeted services. The two areas would continue to work closely together when there were synergies between their respective areas.

What strategy or plan was there to make sure that there was a youth offer directly delivered by the youth service across the whole of the Borough?

Lack of direct provision in certain areas, such as Harefield, had been noted. However, data received showed that young people from the Harefield area were attending sessions at Fountains Mill Young People's Centre, so it was clear that services were being offered and engaged with. Travel was easy and incentivised for young people, through the Borough's transport system.

With regard to strategy, the service faced challenges such as understanding and accommodating young people's changing desires. For example it had been found that many young people were not interested in attending Youth Centres, and so the service was attempting to understand why this was. In addition, the difficulty in recruiting and retaining skilled youth workers remained a challenge. To meet this challenge, recruitment was currently underway. Currently, there were no plans to expand the number of youth centres, but instead maximise on the existing resources.

The promotion of sport across the Borough had been a big success, and the Council was continuing to fund facilities such as new football pitches, club houses and the like. This was in direct response to feedback from the young people and the uptake of these sports services, while aligning with the interests of the young people, also promoted good health and wellbeing.

Youth Centres also included kitchen areas where cookery courses for young people were being held.

How did the Council engage with uniformed youth groups to promote youth services across the Borough?

While the groups operated independently of the Council, the Council valued and supported the work they were doing. This included helping through financial grants, e.g. for the provision of a new minibus, or renovations to their premises, etc. Financial support ensured that the groups could continue to operate and grow. Promotion of recruitment for group leaders/adults could also be undertaken via advertisements in Hillingdon People, libraries, etc.

How did the Council engage with the Youth Council?

The Council valued and listened to feedback from the Youth Council, but it was important to recognise that this was just one voice. The Council aimed to regularly engage with youth, and to this end visited schools to promote Council led services such as the youth centres of the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

How were the services helping young people who faced significant challenges such as a lack of engagement, confidence, education etc?

The targeted youth services area would focus on meeting the needs of those young people identified as having significant particular needs. Universal services could help with matters such as social isolation within the school holidays, and officers were exploring how to bolster the provision during these holiday times. In addition, the Police ran the Cadet programme, and the Fire Brigade ran a similar program, which aimed to engage with young people and develop skills, social inclusion and self esteem.

It was agreed that further work on how to promote the available services to young people was required.

Councillor Mathers confirmed that he would engage with officers following the meeting to request further information on this topic, to be shared with the Committee.

What did the further £2.5m for youth services, as set in the Council's budget, comprise?

This figure comprised funding for the new leisure centre within West Drayton, which in turn would provide opportunities for young people activities and groups to operate out of that site. The funding was also set aside for the relocation of a vehicle hub, the Looked After Family Acorn Centre, and a new site for the Young People's Centre.

Members suggested that Youth Services be considered as the potential next major review of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the report be noted;**
- 2. That officers feed back on the provision of uniformed groups in Northwood/Northwood Hills;**
- 3. That Councillor Mathers engage with officers to request further information to be shared with the Committee, and**

4. That Youth Services be considered as the potential next major review of the Committee.

58. REVIEW: TACKLING LITTERING AND FLY TIPPING WITHIN HILLINGDON - FINDINGS (Agenda Item 9)

Members discussed the draft recommendations resulting from the review, which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Members were supportive of the draft recommendations, but made the following suggestions for additions:

- That the Council consider a corporate poster campaign across the Borough, including:
 - That posters regarding fly-tipping as an expensive menace be put up in every public space controlled by the Council, including libraries, community facilities, etc. Mr Brough's suggestion of posters including details of fines could also be considered;
 - That the Council liaises with Housing Associations so that notice boards in blocks of flats etc, can also include these posters;
 - That there is a rolling programme of design for the posters which include work from children and schools ensuring that posters are continually refreshed and are eye-catching. Schools could also be encouraged to run poster design competitions, with prizes;
 - That the Council instigate the use of glow-in-the-dark signs and posters;
 - That the cost of fly-tipping be highlighted on any posters and notices, as well as within Hillingdon People, and in the annual Council Tax letter;
 - That the posters are larger and are made of durable materials;
 - That posters are places on walls and fences at strategic locations;
- That the Council consider the use of banners, such as in the high Street, to advertise fines;
- That areas with high instances of fly-tipping be provided with more visible enforcement and support;
- That additional CCTV cameras be places in fly-tipping hotspots and that new columns be erected to accommodate these new cameras if nearby lampposts are not of sufficient height;
- That the Council signs up to the Keep Britain Tidy network;
- That the cost of fly-tipping, by ward, be advertised in Council documents, posters, and on the website;
- That officers report on other authorities with effective practices;
- That shopkeepers and small business be educated on their responsibilities;
- That the Council carefully consider their use of paper when implementing any recommendations;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Council take a strategic approach to flats and small dwellings where residents were unable to store waste or large items prior to disposal. <p>The need to engage with residents, and particularly young people, to set the ‘tone’ was highlighted.</p> <p>Officers advised that they were due to attend a fly-tipping seminar on 4 February where best practice could be shared.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the suggested additional recommendations be reviewed for feasibility by the clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Labour Lead.</p>
59.	<p>CABINET FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 10</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.</p>
60.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 11</i>)</p> <p>Consideration was given to the Work Programme.</p> <p>Regarding the forthcoming item on educational standards, Members requested that any data on how Hillingdon was comparing to its statistical neighbours and other nearby local authorities be included in a table, for ease of reference.</p> <p>Members reiterated the earlier request that Youth Services be considered as the Committee’s next major review.</p> <p>It was requested that the clerk confirm whether the remit of the Committee would be changing, following the recent changes to Cabinet portfolios.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.55 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Neil Fraser on 01895 250692.