

Minutes

Corporate Services, Commerce and Communities
Policy Overview Committee
Thursday, 4 March 2021
Meeting held at VIRTUAL - Live on the Council's
YouTube channel: Hillingdon London



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Members Present:

Councillors Richard Mills (Chairman)
Vanessa Hurhangee (Vice-Chairman)
Lindsay Bliss
Nicola Brightman
Farhad Choubedar
Alan Deville
Jazz Dhillon (Opposition Lead)
Scott Farley
Wayne Bridges

Officers Present:

Kevin Byrne, Head of Health Integration and Voluntary Sector Partnerships
Naveed Mohammed, Head of Business Performance & Insight
Liz Penny, Democratic Services Officer

49. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

51. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 FEBRUARY 2021

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting dated 3 February 2021 be agreed as an accurate record.

52. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was agreed that all items were in Part I and would be considered in public.

53. REVIEW: VOLUNTARY SECTOR RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The below proposed draft recommendations had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting for their consideration:

1. Acknowledge, thank and recognise the response that all organisations across the voluntary sector have provided to the needs of residents throughout the pandemic/lockdown periods.
2. Recognise the pro-active steps taken by the Hillingdon Community Hub/Council Officers to bring together resources across a number of voluntary sector partners including Hillingdon4All to achieve a strong operating model.
3. Support the consolidated model lead through the Hillingdon Community Hub to work with a number of leading voluntary groups to manage and co-ordinate resources.
4. Continue to review and provide voluntary sector grants to enable key voluntary sector partners to continue to deliver services required by Hillingdon residents. In addition, look to provide practical, operational and logistical support and guidance to enable VS partners to increase resilience going forward.
5. Deliver outbound communications (including through Hillingdon People) that provide information residents can access about key voluntary sector services, such as mental health/Hillingdon MIND, cognisant of witness comment about the possibility of becoming overwhelmed with new enquiries. Dual purpose of communication to assist in recruitment of volunteers across Voluntary Sector.

Members were broadly happy with the proposed review recommendations. It was suggested that the final recommendation be broadened to include children under the age of 16 many of whom had been struggling with their mental health during the pandemic.

It was agreed that Liz Penny, Democratic Services would draft the final report for consideration at the next meeting of the Corporate Services, Commerce and Communities Policy Overview Committee on 6 April.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Committee noted the review into the Voluntary Sector's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and agreed the draft recommendations proposed by the Chairman and Labour Lead.**

54. PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND DATA

Naveed Mohammad, Head of Business Performance and Insight, presented the report which set out how the tracking of performance and provision of insight data was arranged in the Council, examples of the data provided and how data were used to shape operational delivery and the strategic development of services.

Members heard that there were 100,214 households in Hillingdon. The Council routinely gathered a range of data across all directorates. The purpose of this data

collection was to ensure services were being delivered efficiently to meet residents' needs. There was also a requirement to plan for the future development of services. The Council had at its disposal a variety of mechanisms to gather, process and analyse the data using spreadsheets, bespoke databases and data mining software.

What is Tracked and Reported?

The Committee was informed that the Council provided over 700 services to local residents. A robust data set was essential in order to establish who was accessing which services and what their needs were. A table was set out in the agenda pack giving examples of the range of data gathered across directorates:

Corporate Services and Resources

Members heard that the next census would soon be completed - this would provide a fresh data set and would demonstrate how things had changed since 2011. Greater London Authority data also provided a useful and more up-to-date insight into the demographic profile of the Borough.

Finance

Information was gathered regarding Council tax collection, business rates, benefits and debtors.

Planning, Environment, Education and Community Services

Data were gathered regarding school places, crime types, school attainment, library footfall etc. Planning for school places was an important area – the Local Authority reviewed the data on an annual basis to predict likely future need over the next 10 years. The Strategic Needs Assessment was an important indicator of public health providing information regarding the prevalence of smokers, the number of residents with COPD, drug users in the Borough etc. Said data was sent to the public health team for their consideration. The Strategic Needs Assessment also provided useful information regarding crime types and how these had changed over the last year. Such information would be communicated to the Community Safety Team. In terms of school attainment, no information had been received in the last 12 months due to the pandemic; however, prior to this, information had been regularly received regarding the achievements of the children in the Borough.

Adults', Children's and Young People's Services

This was a high-profile area, especially in respect of safeguarding, with a large volume of work. Statistics were gathered and passed to local services. Information was drawn from a wide range of data portals. In some cases data streams relied on contributions from partner agencies or external systems e.g. the Council did not collect data directly on local NEET numbers – a commissioned provider (Ealing Council) gathered and supplied the data including analysis.

Infrastructure, Building Services and Transport

This covered Household Waste Collection, ASBET and Household Recycling.

Members heard that the data collated were used both to provide insight analysis to commission services and to monitor performance (develop KPI reports). KPIs were developed along three categories – counts, processing and tracking outcomes. Counts assisted in understanding efficacy of service delivery e.g. more households on the Council's Housing Register would have a knock-on effect as more temporary accommodation would be required. In terms of Processing, these metrics provided an insight into the health of the organisation. Many of these indicators were linked to statutory timeframes and measured how quickly certain tasks were performed e.g. the number of Initial Child Protection Conferences completed within 15 working days, the days taken to process Housing Benefit changes of circumstances requests etc. Finally, outcomes metrics facilitated the assessment of how services delivered by the Council made a difference to residents e.g. the percentage of children achieving five good passes at GCSE.

The Committee was informed that the selection of KPIs had previously been nationally mandated. This was no longer the case. There were vestiges of the national indicator set in some departments e.g. Planning, Waste and Recycling, Housing and Social Care but, where appropriate, these national indicators were now supplemented with local indicators reflecting local priorities. Examples of the latter included tracking the number of arson incidents, incidents of flytipping and the percentage of Youth Offending intake from a BAME background – all of which were disproportionately higher in Hillingdon.

Members requested further clarification as to what extent data were used to inform decisions and service planning. It was confirmed that this was a mixed bag – some information was operationally driven e.g. Adults', Children's and Young People's Services requested weekly data re. the number of assessments not completed on time. Members heard that operationally the Council was doing very well; however, strategically there were potentially some gaps related to the commissioning of services.

The Committee enquired whether the 80/20 rule applied whereby approximately 80% of time was spent preparing the data and approximately 20% on analysis. It was confirmed that this was largely accurate. The challenge was around data quality – the Council relied on the information being accurate at the point of entry. Each year the data were cleansed and reconciled. The Council was trying to obtain more effective tools e.g. Tableau to enable more time to be spent on analytics going forward.

In terms of data mining, Members enquired whether models were used. The Committee heard that data mining was used for predictive analytics e.g. around school places. A model was in use for school places planning which was usually accurate to within 2-4%. The Council also worked in partnership with other organisations to assist with data mining e.g. a partnership had been formed with Brunel University to consider how the re-opening schools would affect the spread of Covid-19.

Members enquired why the surrounding boroughs had lower incidents of arson and flytipping and a lower percentage of Youth Offending intake from BAME backgrounds. It was confirmed that officers would discuss this with neighbouring boroughs to establish what they were doing differently. The information would then be collated and cascaded to the services.

In response to further questions from the Committee it was confirmed that Ward Councillors did not automatically receive the data set and it was not routinely published. Ward profiles were published on the website and specific pieces of work could be requested directly. It was further confirmed that, for major building projects, the local authority was responsible for ensuring that there were sufficient community pharmacies – if a gap was discovered, the CCG and health colleagues would be informed. The CCG was responsible for GP provision.

Members requested further clarification regarding the census. It was confirmed that the next census was due to be completed on 21 March 2021. A census was completed every ten years to provide a snapshot in time. The GLA was able to provide more up-to-date information as things could change very quickly. In terms of transient traveller communities, 3 school censuses were completed each year in January, in the summer and in October; these helped the local authority understand more about the communities living in the Borough.

In response to their enquiries, the Committee heard that, once a year, housing officers and volunteers went out and conducted a count to establish the prevalence of rough sleeping in the Borough. There was a legal definition of 'homelessness' which was used to assess those who approached the Council's Housing Needs service. Members expressed concern that a yearly count was insufficient and enquired how more accurate information could be gathered. It was confirmed that counting was the standard methodology used by all local authorities; the Head of Business Performance and Insight would conduct further research into possible alternatives and would report back to the Committee.

Members enquired how the local authority could improve its performance monitoring and data. It was suggested that, in some cases, triangulation could be used to provide a clearer picture e.g. to further explore the academic attainment of white British boys or to better understand why vaccine take up in some wards appeared to be lower among Eastern European communities.

In response to further questions from the Committee, it was confirmed that the information obtained via Members' enquiries and complaints received by the Council was fed back to the front-line teams to inform service action. Analysis of Members' enquiries was not textual – the contact centre logged the information provided and it could be summarised by category e.g. to establish the number of complaints received by the ASBET team in relation to flytipping.

Members heard that Naveed's team had access to the case management systems used by front line teams to input data. This enabled them to analyse the data; however, version control was essential. The move from Google to Microsoft Office 365 had made document sharing easier and it was now possible for multiple people to work on the same document and manage version control effectively. It was

confirmed that data from one area could be used to enrich the analysis of another area.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee noted the breadth and depth of metrics collected across the organisation to aid operational delivery and service planning;
2. That the Committee advised officers on any particular areas of the Council's business where additional performance data / analysis would aid the work of the Committee; and
3. That the Head of Business Performance and Insight conduct further research into methods by which the number of rough sleepers / homelessness in the Borough could be assessed more accurately.

55. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the Forward Plan.

56. WORK PROGRAMME 2020/2021

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the Work Programme 2020/2021 and agreed that a discussion on possible future review topics be added to the April 2021 meeting.