Minutes

CORPORATE, FINANCE AND PROPERTY SELECT COMMITTEE

7 September 2021

Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge

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Committee Members Present:
Councillors Richard Mills (Chairman), Vanessa Hurhangee (Vice-Chairman), Lindsay Bliss, Farhad Choubedar, Tony Eginton (Opposition Lead) and Raymond Graham

LBH Officers Present:
Raj Alagh (Borough Solicitor)
Ian Anderson (Business Manager, Complaints and Enquiries)
David Baker (ICT Security Architect)
Michael Clarke (Solution Design & Cloud Operations Manager)
Naveed Mohammed (Head of Business Performance & Insight)
Liz Penny (Democratic Services Officer)
Sajad Rashid (ICT Project Manager)
Perry Scott (Corporate Director - Infrastructure, Transport & Building Services) Procurement)

Also Present:
James Wigley, Managing Director – Key Intelligence UK

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE *(Agenda Item 1)*

Apologies were received from Cllr Richard Lewis.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING *(Agenda Item 2)*

There were no declarations of interest.

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TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING DATED 20 JULY 2021 *(Agenda Item 3)*

Councillor Eginton requested an update regarding disability access to the Hillingdon Trail as discussed at the meeting of the Select Committee dated 20 July 2021. Democratic Services confirmed that the matter had been raised with the Head of Green Spaces, Sport and Culture who had confirmed that the option of kissing gates to replace stiles would be explored further.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting dated 20 July 2021 be agreed as an accurate record.

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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

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	CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE *(Agenda Item 4)*
	It was confirmed that items 1-10 were in Part I and would be considered in public and item 11 was in Part II and would be considered in private.
26.	**REVIEW: PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND REPORTING IN HILLINGDON COUNCIL** *(Agenda Item 5)* Naveed Mohammed, Head of Business Performance and Insight, introduced the report which provided an overview of how the tracking of performance and provision of insight data were arranged in the Council and how data was used to shape operational delivery and the strategic development of services. Members heard that the Council routinely gathered a wide spectrum of data across all directorates for a number of purposes – to ensure services were being delivered efficiently to meet the needs of residents, to plan for the future development of services and to satisfy statutory returns. It was confirmed that the Council provided over 700 services to local residents. To ensure that directorate and service colleagues had the support needed, the Council had brought together the performance resource into a central team comprising 12 FTE. This approach was beneficial as it facilitated a better use of resources with members of the corporate team having expertise across multiple areas of the Council's business. It also ensured improved transparency and provided an opportunity to challenge services if necessary. The Select Committee heard that the process for developing the data was straightforward. Services were responsible for inputting data into case management systems while Business Performance were responsible for extracting the data and developing the reports necessary for the services to carry out their business. The level of support individual directorates received was dependent on 3 factors – risk, status and volume of activity. Children's Care, Housing and Adult Social Care were high risk departments which required weekly reports therefore had a dedicated resource. In respect of other departments, analysts were each given responsibility for 2+ areas. This arrangement ensured sufficient coverage of analytical support whilst giving analysts an opportunity to develop understanding and expertise across multiple functions. Members were informed that operational outputs varied depending on the needs of the service areas. For statutory, high risk services there was a requirement for regular weekly / monthly data. Examples included weekly analysis of Locata applications for housing and the monthly team's dashboard for Adults. Data that was more strategic or where there was benchmarking was produced quarterly (ChAT, LIIA). In addition to reporting at service level, Members heard that there was corporate reporting to CMT in the form of a balanced scorecard. Key metrics at service level were selected and reported to CMT on a quarterly basis. This report tracked performance and included targets and a 'traffic-light system' with indicators off target flagged as Red. It was confirmed that, in addition to performance data, the Business Performance Team was responsible for the analysis of data to establish patterns and trends. Such information was crucial when planning for strategic changes or service redesign. Finally, the service supported individual projects with ad hoc analyses; examples included a study of the educational performance of white boys and work on Covid-19 to help the Council better target local interventions to support residents. In terms of data sources and tools, Select Committee Members were advised that the

main tools used by the Business Performance Team were SAP Business Objects (BOXI) and Microsoft Excel. BOXI was used to interrogate the data captured by the service areas while Excel enabled officers to analyse and present the data in a clear format for end users. Other bespoke systems were also used across specific areas; notably Experian which had recently been used for work around the contact centre and to 'profile' school cohorts.

In response to their requests for clarification, Members heard that individual service areas were responsible for the input and management of their own data but decisions regarding the organisation of said data / report designs were made collaboratively by the Business Performance Team and IT. In terms of CMT reporting, it was confirmed that CMT worked closely with Naveed to set out their requirements and were in receipt of quarterly reports in the form of a balanced scorecard.

Members enquired how the accuracy of the data input by the service areas was monitored. It was confirmed that the Business Performance Team relied on the departments to input their own data accurately; it was in everyone's best interest to ensure the data was recorded accurately as data reports were regularly circulated to Heads of Service and Directors for checking.

In response to further enquiries from the Committee, it was confirmed that LBH was good at using the data at its disposal to 'paint a picture' / 'tell the story' but conveying information to the service areas was an area for improvement.

James Wigley, Managing Director – Key Intelligence UK, addressed the Committee confirming that he had been working in the field of local authority data for 15 years specialising in Housing and Social Care data. Key Intelligence UK had worked with approximately 50 different local authorities to date and were currently working with 10. Members were advised that Key Intelligence UK were usually called in as an additional resource to provide technical assistance when performance teams had found that the toolkit they were using to take data from their client management systems (CMS) to present as a story was limiting them in some way. Members heard that the providers of CMS often also supplied a data warehouse to translate the heavily technical data into a slightly more digestible format. The tool Business Objects was then used by performance teams to interrogate the database and produce data set reports which could be refreshed on a regular basis. Finally, the data would be presented using Excel charts, narrative reports, tables etc. Members were informed that there was a limitation in the way warehouses had been designed which meant they were good at extracting the data but not so adept at finessing it. Key Intelligence UK were often called in to provide technical help using database skills to find a solution to this issue. They could also assist with data migration and provide additional technical support in times of statutory returns / preparation for Ofsted. In the case of Hillingdon, there had been a short-term capacity issue around reporting due to the implementation of the Stronger Families Programme. Key Intelligence had been called in to assist with the urgent development of new reports and to provide an overview of social care reporting to get a broader picture of medium to long term reporting requirements and shorter term specific specifications for the next set of data requirements. The piece of work had now been completed.

Mr Wigley informed Members that, compared to other London boroughs, Hillingdon had a similar sized performance team with a strong knowledge of databases and business processes. However, it was confirmed that quite a few other boroughs had a technical edge either provided externally or skilled up within the team. This meant they had access to more technical support, either provided externally or through inhouse inbuilt

SQL development skills to speed up the process of getting the data. This enabled performance teams to focus more on presentation, distribution of the data and analysis. It was confirmed that this additional level of support could be achieved in a number of ways; either at service area level with additional data officers working on data quality or by means of higher level technical skill within the performance team to focus on SQL type work.

Perry Scott, Corporate Director – Infrastructure, Transport & Building Services, informed the Committee that a lot of work had been undertaken in recent years to refresh IT, provide staff with new kit and move from Google to Microsoft. The focus now was on looking at where the data sat within the core systems and what was needed to extract the data and get it to people in a timely manner. A technical solution was being explored to drive this forward.

In response to requests for clarification from Committee Members, it was confirmed that certain data sets, particularly in social care, were quite small therefore it was difficult to draw meaningful statistical conclusions. Data sharing partnerships existed in London to mass up the data sets to get a broader insight from a wider population. More work on data preparation so it was in a standardised format made it more consistent and easier to analyse. It was further confirmed that, given a stronger data warehouse and SQLs, Hillingdon had the skillset to tell the story effectively. The Business Performance Team members had a thorough and nuanced understanding of the service areas and of the Borough itself therefore were well placed to spot anomalies in the data. Members heard that IT provided SQL support to the Business Performance Team. It would be possible to upskill the existing staff members and they would welcome the opportunity.

In response to further questions from the Committee, it was confirmed that the Team did not routinely provide data for all 700 services but would provide ad hoc support when requested to do so. Recent examples included work to support the transformation of libraries and to assist waste services with its new recycling programme. It would not be feasible to provide CMT with regular reports on all 700 services at the same time. Members heard that the Business Performance Team conducted an overview of their reporting every year or two to ensure the reports produced were still relevant and useful. However, some reports were automated and would therefore be sent out regularly regardless of usage.

It was felt that the Council was now in a good position to make a step change; once officers had access to the required tools and the data had been lined up correctly, the Business Performance Team would be in a position to perform more analysis of the data and tell the detailed story with less requirement to focus on data production and checking. In terms of data culture across the Council, Members were advised that there were some areas of very good practice while other areas still had a way to go.

Members requested further clarification regarding benchmarking and heard that services were often benchmarked against statistical neighbours; however, the clients decided who they wanted to benchmark against – sometimes the West London context was most appropriate. In terms of Covid, LBH was benchmarked against near neighbours including London boroughs, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire. Benchmarking varied according to who was asking for the data and what they requested as the benchmark. The Business Performance Team had a good working relationship with the services and weekly meetings were held with service heads at which benchmarking could be discussed.

Members enquired whether back data was used for forecasting future expectations of demand. It was confirmed that this was an area for development. Straight line forecasting could be achieved based on previous trends. One area of effective forecasting was in school places planning which was supported by the GLA. Over the years, accuracy had usually been within 2.5% - 5% accuracy.

In response to further questioning from the Committee, Members heard that the CMT balanced scorecard, in one guise or another, had been in place for at least 5 years. It was presented to CMT by the Head of Business Performance and Insight as a collective piece and included information across all areas. The format of the CMT report had changed over the years and was now more dynamic. The Corporate Director – Infrastructure, Transport and Building Services confirmed that the current quarterly reporting frequency to CMT appeared to be working well. Each balanced scorecard was reviewed regularly and updated by individual service areas. It was noted that KPIs were additionally produced on a weekly and monthly cycle and seen by service managers and heads. Information could be requested on an ad hoc basis to support the needs of services. At the request of the Chairman it was agreed that the Head of Business Performance and Insight would liaise with Democratic Services to provide further detail and clarify this process further outside the meeting.

Members heard that CMT reports were usually available within 3 weeks of quarter end i.e. meetings with CMT were weekly and the Business Performance Team would attempt to gather all the information for the 3rd CMT meeting after quarter end.

The Committee was informed that options in terms of data tools to extract the data were currently being explored – the Council wanted to invest in the right product and ensure the data extracted was of value. One option was Power BI which was a Microsoft product – this was a good product but expensive. In response to further questions from Members, it was confirmed that cross departmental analysis was carried out; one example was the provision of information extracted from Children's Social Care to support the Green Spaces team with the FIESTA programme.

It was agreed that Mike Talbot would be requested to attend the next witness session in October. James Wigley would not be required to attend again. A representative selection of witnesses across Council services would also be requested to attend the next witness session (from Adults' and Children's Social Care, ASBET, Housing and Waste Services).

RESOLVED:

1) **Naveed Mohammad liaise with Democratic Services to clarify current processes in relation to the CMT balanced scorecard and reporting;**
2) **That Mike Talbot and a representative selection of witnesses across key Council services be requested to attend the next witness session in October; and**
3) **That the information provided in relation to the Performance Monitoring and Reporting review be noted.**

| 27. | **INFORMATION GOVERNANCE (DATA PROTECTION)** *(Agenda Item 6)* |

Raj Alagh, Borough Solicitor, presented the report. Members were informed that the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) had come into force in May 2018 introducing a new set of laws and procedures. The Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) had also been enacted in May 2018 bringing GDPR into English domestic law

and the two statutes needed to be read together. GDPR and the DPA provided a composite set of rules for safeguarding data in the UK. GDPR required all organisations to appoint a statutory Data Protection Officer and Raj Alagh as Borough Solicitor had been appointed to this role in January 2018. The Data Protection Officer and his team had worked to prepare the Council for the new data protection regime. Approximately 12 policies had been devised and training provided across the Council for all officers and Councillors. Verbal training had been provided together with a compulsory online GDPR training module which continued to be rolled out on an annual basis.

Members were informed that, under new GDPR rules, consent to process a person's data had to be provided in writing and an individual had the right to withdraw consent, request erasure of their personal data or correction to their data at any point. Individuals also now had the right to submit a Subject Access Request (SAR) asking for information held by the Council about them to be disclosed to them. A large number of SARs were received by the Council and there was no longer a £10 fee chargeable for this service. In respect of SARs, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) had found that the majority of local authorities (including Hillingdon) were not complying with the one-month timeframe within which they needed to respond. Therefore, in October 2019, the Borough Solicitor had attended a Senior Managers' Conference at which he had emphasised the importance of complying with SARs to avoid the ICO taking enforcement action against the Council. Since then performance had improved significantly and compliance now stood at approximately 90% which was acceptable.

The Committee heard that one area of concern related to data breaches. It was recognised that there was always scope for human error and a couple of significant breaches had been recorded in recent years. All breaches had to be reported to the Monitoring Officer, no matter how minor they appeared to be. In cases where it was felt that a breach compromised the rights and freedoms of an individual, it had to be reported to the ICO within 72 hours. Failure to do so could result in a significant fine.

It was noted that resourcing was somewhat limited – the Borough Solicitor was responsible for assessing data breaches and, where necessary, reporting them to the ICO; an Information Governance Lawyer dealt with day to day matters and Glen Egan did a lot of work on FOIs and provided training on FOIs and SARs. During the pandemic a large number of officers had been obliged to work from home therefore had needed to take assume more personal responsibility. Members were informed that the Borough Solicitor was generally satisfied with the Council's adherence to GDPR. Refresher training would be provided following the May 2022 elections and Councillors could complete the online training at any point should they wish to do so.

Members enquired whether recently elected Members had received GDPR training. It was confirmed that packs of information had been sent but no face to face training had been provided. Members requested clarification regarding their individual registrations with the Information Commissioner's Office as it appeared that these had been cancelled in 2019. It was agreed that this was probably an oversight - the Borough Solicitor would investigate the matter further and report back. Councillors extended their thanks and congratulations to officers noting that no major breaches had been recorded to date which was commendable.

RESOLVED:

1) **That the Borough Solicitor investigate the matter of Councillors' individual registrations with the ICO; and**

	2) That the Information Governance information report be noted.
28.	**HILLINGDON DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY STRATEGY** *(Agenda Item 7)*

Sajad Rashid, ICT Project Manager, presented the report noting that the Digital Connectivity Strategy had been considered at Cabinet on 2 September. There were 3 strands to the Strategy:

1) Digital place - to uplift the structure of the Borough. Current data showed that the level of Full Fibre was 5% in Hillingdon compared to an average of 20% in West London;
2) Digital Council – Hillingdon wanted to be investor ready to encourage investment in the Borough; and
3) Digital Inclusion – the pandemic had highlighted the fact that many people were unable to access the internet due to the Digital Poverty.

In February 2021, a consultancy team had been set up led by Perry Scott. A steering group was held every six weeks with all the services within the Borough to ensure transparency. The aim was to achieve a single channel of digital inclusion for the Borough. In terms of progress to date, a Wayleave Agreement had been signed with Openreach who had agreed to invest approximately £7m in telecoms exchanges including 7 in the Borough – 2 of these had already been uplifted to Fibre Optic. Openreach were currently doing surveys for the Council to uplift social housing in multiple dwelling units. Moreover, Wayleave agreements had been signed with Community Fibre who had agreed to assist to Full-Fibre the Borough's social housing and to provide 10 free Full-Fibre connections for community centres or community spaces. With regards to 4G, Telefonica had expressed a desire to upgrade their network availability across the Borough by installing 4G small cells technology which would alleviate the network congestion they were experiencing. In terms of 5G, few operators were trying to come into the Borough at present. However, some planning applications had been received. Fortunately planning colleagues had agreed to consult with the Digital Connectivity project team to establish whether the applications were viable or otherwise.

In response to Members' requests for further clarification, it was explained that Fibre Optic was underground therefore there was no requirement for large boxes on the surface; however, small boxes on telegraph poles were a possibility and there would be more boxes on buildings. For 4G and 5G small cells there would be additional cabinets on streets and boxes placed on columns. 5G technology necessitated the erection of 20m masts hence was likely to have the most significant impact on the street scene. It was confirmed that BT work was predominantly under the ground and, once in place, the fibres could be used by residents or businesses with any provider as they all rented the same line.

In response to their enquiries, Members heard that Fibre Optic was essential for future proofing as this technology was required for 5G small cells. It was not thought that any other boroughs in the West London Alliance had signed agreements with Openreach. The benefit of Openreach was that it offered open access so any provider could rent the line whereas Community Fibre did not offer this flexibility. In terms of timescales Openreach aimed to have surveyed all properties in Hillingdon by the end of the year and planned to start building at the beginning of 2022. Thereafter implementation would be on a rolling basis and would be monitored. |

In response to Members' requests for clarification regarding the laying of fibres, it was confirmed that, in addition to Openreach, agreements had been signed with Community Fibre (who would be laying their own fibres) and a Wayleave Agreement was currently being signed with Hyperoptic. Members were informed that the existing telephone exchange would be utilised but other providers would probably add a splitting device at the exchange from which they ran their own cables using the existing ducting of Openreach. It was confirmed that service providers would use the existing Openreach infrastructure where possible and would not need to dig up pavements to create their own networks.

Councillors suggested that the word 'with' at the bottom of page 35 of the agenda pack should be replaced by 'and' to read 'the Borough's social housing and the addition of….' In terms of social housing, Members heard that Fibre would be connected to both individual houses and estates so everyone would benefit from the faster technology in the longer term. Members queried the 'levelling up' programme to improve digital connectivity in the North of the Borough as referenced on page 48 of the agenda pack and enquired why the North of the Borough needed extra investment. It was confirmed that there were some black spots in parts of the north of the Borough where connectivity was low.

In response to further questions from the Committee, it was confirmed that Hillingdon had fallen behind because channels of communication had not been open. Moreover, 5G masts applications had often been rejected due to siting and appearance concerns. The Digital Strategy demonstrated that Hillingdon was now open for business and ready to engage with providers.

Members commented that it may not be advisable to use multiple service providers across the Borough and recommended that infrastructure be kept to a minimum. In response to Members' requests for clarification it was confirmed that the main contributors were Openreach, Community Fibre and Hyperoptic – all these parties lobbied Government for funding and some were able to access grants. It was felt that one service provider might be more efficient – it would be useful to be appraised of the works as they progressed.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the Council's plans for digital connectivity.

29.	**COMPLAINT & SERVICE MONITORING 1 APRIL 2020 TO 31 MARCH 2021** *(Agenda Item 8)*
	Ian Anderson, Business Manager – Complaints and Enquiries, presented the report which set out an overview of complaints and Members' Enquiries received between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021. It was noted that data was provided over a 5 year period and the outcome of all Ombudsman investigations were included in the report at the request of Councillors. Members were informed that the Covid-19 pandemic had impacted on the numbers of complaints and Members' Enquiries received – with more informal complaints, less formal complaints recorded, fewer Ombudsman investigations completed and 502 compliments recorded with wildflowers being an area for which residents had sent most compliments. Overall fewer Members' Enquiries were recorded and this was as a result of the impact of Covid 19 and the restrictions in place.
	In relation to Members' Enquiries by Ward, it was confirmed that figures for Uxbridge South were misleading as all enquiries submitted with no specific location were

automatically logged against the Civic Centre, which was then recorded against Uxbridge South Ward. Alternative options would be explored to rectify this discrepancy. Moreover, Members were advised that some clarity as to what constituted a Members' Enquiry as opposed to a service request would be beneficial as this was a grey area.

In response to Members' requests for clarification, it was confirmed that all Members' Enquiries were recorded on the Council's Onyx database. . Members were informed that a move to a Goss system was being investigated; it was envisaged that this would be a more efficient and receptive system which would provide better self-service options. It was hoped that it would be possible to perform text analytics on complaints in the future.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the contents of the report and provided any comments to officers as appropriate.

30.	**FORWARD PLAN** *(Agenda Item 9)* Members enquired whether it would be possible to receive further details of the Financial Assistance to Hillingdon's local voluntary organisations item due to be considered by Cabinet in December 2021. It was agreed that Democratic Services would ask officers to attend the November meeting of the Select Committee to provide further information on this if possible. **RESOLVED: That the Corporate, Finance and Property Select Committee noted and commented on items going to Cabinet.**
31.	**WORK PROGRAMME** *(Agenda Item 10)* It was noted that a number of witnesses would be requested to attend the October meeting of the Select Committee in relation to the Performance Monitoring and Reporting review. **RESOLVED: That the Corporate, Finance and Property Select Committee considered the report and agreed any amendments.**
32.	**CYBER SECURITY** *(Agenda Item 11)* The minutes to this item were declared as exempt from publication as they involve the disclosure of information in accordance with **paragraph 7** of Part 1 of the Schedule 12(A) to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) in that the report contains **information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime** and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.
	The meeting, which commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.38 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Liz Penny on 01895 250185. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.