

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BUSINESS PANEL

Tuesday, 7 November 2017 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Alan Hall (Chair), Gareth Siddorn (Vice-Chair), Liam Curran, Carl Handley, Maja Hilton, Jim Mallory, Liz Johnston-Franklin and Luke Sorba

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor John Muldoon and Councillor Pauline Morrison

30. Minutes

Beckenham Place Park Regeneration Update

The Chair asked whether Business Panel's request for more involvement with key stake holders had been addressed. The Head of Business and Committee said the Mayor received the written comments of the Overview & Scrutiny Business Panel and had stated he was under the impression active consultation was being undertaken. This was confirmed by Councillor Millbank. The Executive Director for Customer Services added that more could always be done.

The Chair requested that the Executive Director for Customer Services advise Panel Members where officers thought improvement could be made.

Action >>>>> ED Customer Services

RESOLVED that the minutes of the open meeting held on 25 July 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

31. Declarations of Interests

None Received.

32. Outstanding Scrutiny Matters

Report noted.

33. Notification of Late and Urgent Items

Report noted.

34. Decisions Made by Mayor and Cabinet on 25 October 2017

Business Rates Revaluation Support

The Head of Public Service introduced the report. The Chair asked what progress local authorities had made since the revaluation came into effect. The Head of Public Service said local authorities, including Lewisham had started the process. He added that Lewisham was already dealing with their Small Business Rates and

rates relief for pubs. The Chair asked for a briefing note to include which pubs qualify for the relief and the Wards they were located.

Action >>>>> ED Customer Service

Councillor Johnston Franklin received confirmation that the relief ceiling was £600. Panel Members were told that 178 out of 6,000 pubs approximately were entitled to the relief. The Chair said this was a very small percentage, and that would explain the representations he received from the public. The Chair thanked officers for the report.

RESOLVED that the decision of the Mayor be noted.

London Business Rates Pilot

The Head of Corporate Resources introduced the report.

The Chair stated that members were led to believe that in the long run this scheme could adversely affect the Council, but they were now being told that there would be no detrimental effect. The Head of Corporate Resources informed Panel Members that the risk Lewisham face would be very small as this was a government initiative. He added that there should not be any detriment to the Council. The Head of Corporate Resources said by working together London Councils were promoting the right attitude.

The Chair said as this was a pilot scheme there should be an evaluation process. He asked when members should expect this, and was told that it would be in 2021. It was noted that a lot was still to be done and setting up the process would be in 2018/19, then adjustments would need to be made before the evaluation stage. The Chair asked that the Chair of the Public Accounts Select Committee be kept updated on the governance arrangements.

Action >>>>> ED Resources and Regeneration

Councillor Mallory asked whether the governance arrangements would be in place before the pilot was launched, and was told this was the case. Councillor Mallory asked if there was any indication of what it would be and was told the intention was that one of the London Boroughs would do the administration on behalf of the others. Councillor Mallory said Members needed to be kept informed of developments.

Councillor Mallory asked if this scheme could be imposed on local authorities given the tight deadline, and was told that London Authorities were willing to get involved. It was noted that it was initiated during the June general elections and then revised in the Queen's Speech. It was emphasised that this scheme was voluntary.

Councillor Johnston Franklin asked whether there had been any further distinction on funding, and was told there had not been any. It was noted that it had not been clarified how growth would be distributed. The Chair asked how much money was available Londonwide and was told £240m in the London pool, of which £2/3m

could come to Lewisham, less administration fees. The Chair thanked officers for the report.

RESOLVED that the decision of the Mayor be noted.

Lewisham Homes Business and Delivery Plan 2017-20

The Housing Strategy and Partnerships Manager introduced the report.

The Chair asked when the plan would be revised and was told that although it was a 10 year agreement, it had a break clause at 3 years, and the Business would be reviewed every year. The Chair said there had been extensive remodelling of the plan and it would be useful for officers to share this information with Panel Members. The Housing Strategy and Partnerships Manager said the best time to share this information with Members would be after the budget. The Chair commented that it would be good for Panel Members to see what the options were. He thanked officers for the report.

Action >>>>> ED Customer Service

RESOLVED that the decision of the Mayor be noted

35. Overview and Scrutiny Select Committees Work Programmes 2017-18 - verbal update

The Chair informed Panel Members that this might be the right time to look at the governance of Scrutiny Committees, and the way they were set up. He said some flexibility would be needed in their structures.

Councillor Mallory said a review would be good, with recommendations for consideration by either the last Council meeting in the Municipal Year or the new Administration. Councillor Mallory said there were some political issues to be considered too especially if there was a change in the political balance of the Council. The Chair said the Terms of References of Scrutiny Committees could be looked at too.

The Scrutiny Manager informed Panel Members that the Select Committees were currently reviewing the savings proposals. The Public Account Select Committee was scheduled to meet on 16 November and could make a referral to Mayor and Cabinet on 6 December if required.

Panel Members noted that the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee set up to scrutinise proposals from the South London and Maudsley NHS Trust relating to the mental health of older adults had agreed a series of recommendations to the Trust.

It was also noted that following scrutiny at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Healthier Communities Select Committee, the CCG has agreed to postpone its decision on the future of the New Cross Walk In Centre and extend the current contract until March so it could fully review the consultation responses and consider the suitability and effectiveness of the alternative provision in place.

Panel Members were informed that a number of Select Committees were concluding their in-depth reviews as follows:

- Children and Young People Select Committee will consider the final report and recommendations arising from its review into the recruitment and retention of teachers at its next meeting on 11 December.
- Safer and Stronger Select Committee's review into LGBT provision has one further evidence session which is a telephone conference with Leicestershire County Council taking place next week. The report and recommendations will then be considered at the Committee's December's meeting.
- Housing Select Committee will hold its final evidence session into types of housing provision on Thursday, 9 November. The final report and recommendations will be considered in December.
- Healthier Communities Select Committee will be holding its second and final evidence session into social prescribing on 6 December. The final report and recommendations will be considered in January 2018.
- The Sustainable Development Select Committee is continuing its longstanding review of the Catford regeneration plans.
- The Public Accounts Select Committee will have an in-depth session on household budgets at its December meeting.

The Chair of Housing Select Committee, Councillor Handley said the Committee was looking at ways to increase the availability of social housing.

The Chair of Sustainable Development Select Committee, Councillor Curran said that the response for Grenfell Towers's inquiry was due on 15 November, he asked if this information would be going to the Sustainable Development Select Committee or Mayor and Cabinet. Councillor Curran said 60% of the safety checks had been done by Lewisham Building control, whilst 40% was done by a private firm. Councillor Mallory asked whether recommendations from Select Committees would go back to Sustainable Development Committee or would be brought to the Business Panel. The Chair said this would be considered and a decision made as to what meeting it would be presented.

Councillor Curran asked if Councillor Sorba had received an adequate response following his query at the last meeting about the appointment of the Management of Beckenham Place Park.

Councillor Sorba said although he received a response, he was not satisfied as the information was inadequate. Councillor Sorba said he noted that when Councillors had delegated their responsibilities to outside bodies it becomes very difficult to monitor their activities.

The Chair said a lot of concerns have been raised and an officer review of the issue could be necessary. He added that Business Panel could refer this issue to the Audit Panel for them to ensure proper processes had been followed. The Principal Lawyer said as far as she was aware there were lettings and contract

procedures which would have been followed. She said Business Panel could ask the Executive Director for a review of the current procedures.

Councillor Mallory commented that the Audit Panel might not be the best forum for this issue, and concurred with the Principal Lawyer that requesting a review from the Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration might be the best option. The Chair said he was happy for the Head of Corporate Resources to speak to the Executive Director for Resources to report back to Business Panel. The Chair thanked the Scrutiny Manager for the update.

RESOLVED that:

- i. the report be noted.
- ii. the Executive Director for Resources review the current lettings and contact procedure, and a report be brought to Business Panel.

36. Exclusion of the Press and Public

No confidential item was requested for discussion.

37. Decision made by Mayor and Cabinet (Contracts) on 25 October 2017

This item was not identified for further discussion.

38. Decision made by an Executive Director Under Delegated Authority - Proposed single tender action with Retrofit Works to deliver a grant funded programme of domestic heating and related works

This item was not identified for further discussion.

Meeting ended 7:50pm

Chair.....