

**SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL 2 – ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP  
MINUTES  
Thursday 14 November 2019**

**PRESENT:** Councillors: Dhadwal (Chair), P Anand, Anjum, Kumar (Vice-Chair), Mahmood, Malcolm, Padda and Summers.

**Ealing Officers Present:**

Harjeet Bains	- Scrutiny Review Officer
Krishna Chapriban	- Democratic Services Officer
Carole Stewart	- Assistant Director Arts Libraries and Heritage
Tan Afzal	- Community Management Coordinator

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Chohan.

**2. Urgent Matters**

There were none.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

**4. Matters to be Considered in Private**

There were none.

**5. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

**6. Report – Thriving Communities**

The Chair invited Carole Stewart, Assistant Director of Arts Libraries and Heritage, to update the Panel on the Work Programme for Thriving Communities.

Carole Stewart explained to the Panel how Thriving Communities, part of the Future Ealing Work Programme, fed into the 2018-2022 Corporate Plan for Ealing Council. A key element of the Thriving Communities work programme was the 'Year Here' research which would build on the active citizen work started in 2018 as part of the Neighbourhoods Outcome Review. The Year Here Project commissioned an independent 8-week qualitative research in Hanwell and Northolt neighbourhoods during March and April 2019. Key themes and insights extracted from resident interviews provided a route map to develop a strategic approach to new ways of engaging with and involving residents in decision making and collectively addressing local issues through closer working with communities.

Tan Afzal, Community Management Coordinator, updated the Panel on the 'Transform Your Space' (TYS) project. The TYS fund was launched in 2015 for community initiatives that would support large capital place-based schemes. Ealing Council made £79,000 available, to match fund 50% (£10,000 maximum per project) schemes decided collectively by residents. Residents would then fundraise for the remaining 50% of the funding for each scheme. TYS was partnered with Spacehive, a

crowdfunding platform, which helped residents raise money for projects that would bring civic or community spaces to life.

The TYS fund provided confidence to external funders to invest into inspirational projects to improve outdoor spaces within the borough. It aimed to encourage residents to come up with ideas to improve where they lived. These self-motivated ideas encouraged residents to apply for additional funding from external sources. This in turn reduced the reliance on council grants for community projects.

A Thriving Communities objective was improved health and well-being through inclusive social networks and activities. For example, 73 people had signed up for the communal edible garden which had been planted at the Medlar Estate in Northolt West End Ward. It was supported by an employed gardener and agriculturalist. To fully enjoy and appreciate the produce from the garden plus promote healthy eating, a local chef and two apprentices had also been employed. This provided residents with cooking skills, starting with a Christmas cooking class. The 'Building Bridges' initiative was very effective in bringing people together through WhatsApp groups.

Other smaller projects such as physical training workshops for young mums and/or elderly had also been funded. These projects provided evidence of how an important aspect of a community initiative to be continuous was dependent on the involvement of trained individuals.

Thriving Communities provided guidance, resources and workshops to develop young people's ideas and processed their application to receive a grant of £1000.

Some of the Member questions/observations included:

- Why were Northolt and Hanwell chosen for the Year Here research when there were other areas in the borough e.g. Acton with similar demographics?
- There should have been a balanced approach for the research and not just speaking to two segments of the borough. It should also have included some of the more affluent areas of the borough e.g. Ealing, Hanger Hill and Ealing Common.
- Why were we doing these activities and how were these different from the present neighbourhood local plan?
- The executive summary to the Year Here report was quite vague and did not include any recommendations or drivers.
- Knew someone who was interviewed by the researchers and he was not asked how the Council should do this differently.
- What had come from the research?
- Acknowledged that the research was a good first step and the next step needed to be a more joined-up thinking.
- Southall, Acton and Ealing got a lot of Section 106 monies which other areas lacked due to limited regeneration/development. People in Northolt felt that they were miles away from the rest of the borough regarding such development.
- Asked whether there were any best practice examples of resident engagement in other areas that we could learn from.
- Acknowledged the advantages of going digital but expressed concern that there were many residents who were unable to participate in the Council consultations due to language barriers, mobility, technical skills, etc. leading to disengagement. How was the Council dealing with such residents?

- There was a perception that people who engaged with and ran the TYS projects were the educated middle class but it was important to target the rest as they too had a wealth of knowledge and skills to offer their communities.
- How was volunteering promoted in the borough to raise better awareness?
- How were the young groups (e.g. Northolt Cinema) being recognised to encourage more young people to engage in different activities on offer?
- Commended the high resident engagement for the communal edible garden project at the Medlar Estate and queried the methodology that had been used for its success.
- Recommended that this methodology of incentivisation (e.g. healthy smoothies for the edible garden project, etc.) should be applied to other Council activities to improve resident engagement e.g. Ward Forums which often struggled to get people to lead on and effectively run projects.

In response to questions from the Panel, Carole Stewart and Tan Afzal explained:

- A number of pilot projects had been identified under The Year Here research project and some had already been implemented. Young people had suggested several arts and culture projects. One project that was being delivered was a community cinema – which held free film screenings in Northolt Library funded by Library Services. A steering group of six young people from the Medlar Estate and the Alec Reed Academy were leading the development of this project through a steering board, as well as being involved in running the cinema.
- The cinema steering group welcomed the opportunity to present at the next Panel meeting and for the Councillors to join their film screening in February 2020.
- The activities and projects had been resident led, as this was a key principle of ‘Thriving Communities’. The Council wanted to move away from what had happened in the past where it had developed activities and projects with little resident involvement.
- Hanwell and Northolt represented two very different neighbourhoods within the borough. The findings from the projects could not therefore be uniformly applied to the whole borough. However, asking people to volunteer within their community or participate in activities; and considering “how do you get the people who don’t come or turn up” were likely to be issues present in the wider borough.
- To understand the reasons and challenges faced by people who did not or could not engage, plans had been formed to engage directly with groups and organisations– for example, Transport for London (TfL) and Northolt High School.
- Careful use of community facilities, for example the local leisure centre, could help to overcome the challenge of ‘starting the conversation’ by ensuring that residents felt comfortable in spaces they were used to frequenting.
- The Government’s platform to promote awareness of volunteering opportunities was called “to do something good”, which already had 700 residents signed up on their twitter account. There were plans for an event next year, and to invite

the mayor, to celebrate in recognition of volunteers' contribution to the community.

- The results of the research undertaken for 'The Year Here' project, as well as the projects in progress through the TYS programme, had helped to contribute to Ealing's emerging strategy for community engagement.

The Chair thanked the two officers for their contributions to the project and presentations.

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

## 7. Panel Operations

Harjeet Bains, Scrutiny Review Officer, updated the Panel on their operations since the last meeting:

- Friday 25th October 2019 - Councillor Malcolm attended a Street Pastors Patrol at Ealing Broadway.
- Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2019 - Councillors Kumar, P Anand and Mahmood attended the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service ceremony for the Nishkam Sikh Welfare and Assistance Team (SWAT).
- Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019 - Councillors Kumar, P Anand and Padda visited the Nishkam SWAT Outreach Team on site in Slough.
- Tuesday 12th November 2019 - No members attended the Let's Go Southall Summit.
- Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019 - Councillors Kumar, P Anand, Malcolm and Padda attended the All Member Workshop on Resident Engagement.

The Members who had attended site visits fed back the following to the Panel:

- Ealing Street Pastors: During the Ealing Broadway Patrol, feedback from locals was generally positive. There had been a considerable decrease in violence and littered glass from broken bottles since the licensing hours had been reduced. On speaking to the TfL staff at the station, there was a reluctance of reporting a homeless person to an outreach team. The reason given was that a homeless person could have left the location by the morning. Street Pastors were handing out lollipops and giving advice, instigating chatter and interaction and had built up a good rapport. Ealing Council support was required to help generate volunteers. The patrols commenced at 10.30pm and finished around 3.00am. More information on Ealing Street Pastors was available online.
- Nishkam SWAT: The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service ceremony was well executed, and the award justly deserved.
- Nishkam SWAT: The Outreach Team visited in Slough was well known by its users and well organised. Extra dried breakfast cereals were passed onto other volunteer groups to distribute.

- All Member Workshop: There was a lot of discussion between the two groups about the Ward Forums as well as other ways of engaging residents. The service officers to provide the notes of the workshop to the Panel members.

The Panel was scheduled to consider Resident Engagement and the Ealing Parks Foundation at the next meeting. The Scrutiny Review Officer would remind the Members of the outstanding site visits.

**RESOLVED:** That the Panel's Work Programme (Appendix 2) be approved.

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Panel was due to take place on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020

**Councillor Karanvir Singh Dhadwal, Chair.**

The meeting ended at 8.33pm.