

SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL 4 – FUTURE EALING

MINUTES

Thursday 28 February 2019

PRESENT: Councillors: Dierdre Costigan (Chair), Sitarah Anjum, Jaskiran Chohan, Gary Malcolm (Vice-Chair), Gurmit Mann, Karam Mohan.

Ealing Officers Present:

Harjeet Bains -Scrutiny Review Officer
Liz Chiles -Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development
Maira Mercer -Head of Communications
Paula Porta -Democratic Services Officer
Kieran Reid -Director of Strategy and Engagement
Samantha Whittick -People & Organisational Development Business Partner

1. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 1)

Councillor Stafford and Cllr Jammu had tendered their apologies for the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 2)

There were none.

3. Matters to be Considered in Private (Agenda Item 3)

There were none.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 December 2018. (Agenda Item 4)

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2018 be signed as a true and correct record.

5. Talk Future Ealing Post-Summer Review (Agenda Item 5)

The Chair invited Moira Mercer, Head of Communications, to provide the Panel with an overview of the Talk Future Ealing Post-Summer Review.

Moira Mercer explained that Talk Future Ealing was the name given to the public engagement events to communicate Ealing Council's transformation programme, Future Ealing. The objectives of the engagement activity were to:

- communicate the new council vision and priorities and how they would make the borough a better place to live
- deepen understanding of the council's financial context
- mobilise residents to become active citizens.
- gather insight about how to engage active citizenship.

The context for the engagement was the need, perceived in May 2018, to communicate to residents the Council's new priorities, informing them of the economic context it faced and talking to them about what they could do to enhance the life in the borough. It was stressed that the conversation sought with residents ought to happen on their own terms.

Between June and October 2018, the Ealing Bubble website was overhauled and updated with information about the ways that residents could get involved and do their bit to make the borough better. Besides, an online engagement 'room' was launched with information about the Council's priorities, Future Ealing goals and financial challenges.

There were also a few summer roadshows organised. The Talk Future Ealing roadshows visited:

- Hanwell Carnival
- Greenford Carnival
- Acton Carnival
- Ealing Jazz Festival (Saturday and Sunday)
- London Mela (Sunday only)

The roadshows were housed in a large Ealing Council and Talk Future Ealing branded marquee staffed by Councillors and Council officers. Residents were invited to come along to discuss their ideas with officers and members. There was an electronic feedback kiosk on site that visitors were encouraged to use to record their views via a quick survey. The roadshow also had a community 'Bubble Board' which visitors were encouraged to populate with their ideas on how to make the borough better and details of local projects that they were involved in.

The exact number of people who visited the roadshow was not recorded. However estimates were that interactions took place with more than 100 residents at each event, with busier events such as Hanwell Carnival and Saturday's Jazz Festival, attracting larger numbers. In addition, thousands of leaflets and cards were handed out.

The feedback received to the questions asked was as follows:

- Do you agree that Ealing Council should focus on the following priorities? Good, genuinely affordable homes: 82% agreed, 11% neither agreed or disagreed, 7% disagreed.
- Do you agree that Ealing Council should focus on the following priorities? Opportunities and living incomes: 83% agreed, 11% neither agreed or disagreed, 6% disagreed.
- Do you agree that Ealing Council should focus on the following priorities? A healthy and great place to live: 87% agreed, 6% neither agreed or disagreed, 7% disagreed.
- How well do you understand the financial challenges that Ealing Council faces? 52% understand, 28% didn't know, 20% didn't.
- How willing would you be to give your time to do something good to make Ealing a better place? 62% would be willing, 27% don't know, 12% wouldn't. Respondents were also asked what they would be willing to do to help

Hence, there was positive recognition for the Council's priorities as well as a considerable number of people expressing willingness to give time to do something good for the borough. Almost 200 comments were collected from the Bubble Board. In addition, council representatives noted specific issues or problems that residents raised, along with the resident's contact details. These were passed on to the relevant service to follow up. Around 50 different issues were actioned. Besides, visitors to the Bubble website increased over the campaign. Between 1 June and 31 October 2017 Bubble had 4,827 new users. Over the same period in 2018, there were 7,858 new users – reflecting an increase of 61%. Ward forum meetings were also well attended, with residents from within and outside the ward coming along. Attendance at the meetings ranged between 40 to 130 residents at each event. Approximately, 1700 people visited the Talk Future Ealing online room and 53 comments were left there. The room closed at the end of November 2018. Social media shares and retweets resulted in a reach of 1.4million page impressions over the campaign.

The Chair thanked Moira Mercer and invited Panel members to comment and ask questions.

Comments and questions:

Panel members:

- Asked what survey feedback was left by visitors using the kiosk on site during the summer roadshows. Members commented that figures must be presented with care not to give the impression that a majority of people agreed with the Council's proposals.
Heard that not every member of the public that had engaged with Councillors and officers at the summer roadshows had been willing to leave feedback. The number of feedback responses was in the low hundreds. However, it had not been intended to gather a representative sample of the borough residents.
- Queried what was the Council's social media strategy.
Heard that the Council's social media strategy was geared towards increasing the Council's media presence. Ealing's twitter account had 17,000 followers. Ealing's social media strength was like that of comparable Councils. There had been an issue with the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation, as some people had not re-subscribed to the Council's web pages. Ealing's strategy on Facebook, for instance, was geared towards having content relevant to place and what people liked to share. The Council aimed to empower Councillors and officers to share messages with residents themselves, rather than relying on the communications team to act as a mediator.
- Asked what insight had been gained from this exercise in terms of its objectives.
Heard that the engagement exercise had been an initial, general contact with residents. More specific types of engagement and different approaches would be pursued in the future to seek active engagement from residents.
- Queried the figure showing a 62% agreement with giving own time to 'do something good to make Ealing a better place'.
Heard that residents' stated intentions were not always matched in practice. The responses had to be taken with a dose of scepticism. However, it also possibly showed that people saw themselves as already doing things for the community which cannot be labelled as 'volunteering' - i.e. helping their neighbours.
- Asked what officers would do differently if they could repeat the engagement exercise.
Heard that there had been some insights gained, for instance about which settings worked better for different purposes. That knowledge would be applied in future engagement events. There had been very specific and practical insights gained about locality and format for this type of exercises. What had been taken away was the need for rounded conversations with local people to see what worked for them. The key question had been: how could we have effective conversations with different communities that resonate and trigger interest?
- Suggested that Councillors could share with residents' relevant messages in their surgeries.
Heard that Councillors commanded great community leadership and brokerage power. However, at this point, what was being created was a

system of tools for engagement, pushing them out so that people could generate activity themselves.

- Suggested that the Council sought collaboration from Job Centres to spread the message.

Heard that officers would take the suggestion into consideration and look at the possibility of realising it via the Local Strategic Partnership.

- Asked whether (and how) the comments collected from the feedback kiosk and the Bubble board at Talk Future Ealing events and presented to the Panel had been processed and what purposes would they fulfil.

Heard that the rich list of comments and ideas collected had been presented as raw data to the Panel to provide members with a feel of the sort of discussions that had taken place at the events. These anonymised comments and feedback had been shared with appropriate colleagues across the Council. The aim was to encourage residents to sign up to the Council's communication channels so that further communication could follow via those channels.

- Asked for further details of the 200 comments collected from the Bubble board. Suggested that, as there was some repetition in the issues collected, presenting these in a word cloud would help visualise key themes.

Heard that there had been issues across the board: from rubbish collection, bills, to parking, etc. A log of the issues raised was kept and officers informed to allow them to sort out issues and get back to residents.

- Suggested that the Council could also engage with inter-faith organisations in the borough to drive the message and highlight individual stories of personal active engagement in the community.

- Queried whether the Council would have the capacity to respond to the enhanced level of communication and engagement that it was asking from residents.

Heard that the Council was setting up the mechanisms to have conversations with residents on an ongoing basis. The main aim was to feed people into these channels.

- Asked about the engagement and consultation in relation to the possible closing of libraries in the borough.

Heard that the libraries consultation methodology included surveys and meetings, with dedicated sessions on each of the areas where a library could close and specific events for people interested in volunteering.

Resolved: That the Talk Future Ealing Post-Summer Review be received.

6. Future Ealing -One Council Approach (Agenda Item 6)

The Chair invited Liz Chiles (Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development), Samantha Whittick (People and Organisational Business Partner), and Kieran Reid (Director of Strategy and Engagement), to introduce the Update on the Future Ealing - One Council approach.

Future Ealing (FE) was about taking an outcome-led approach to the Council's business. By agreeing the outcomes that were most important and taking a 'one Council' approach to delivering these, Ealing Council could best deliver improvements for residents, operate as the most effective organization it could be and address financial challenges. The programme involved major initiatives aimed at driving organisational effectiveness and culture change.

The New Ways of Working (NWOW) programme's strategic objective was 'to create a flexible workforce, enabled to work effectively from different locations, including a smaller, modern new work environment which can also function as a public service hub'. There were four workstreams within the programme:

- Technology – key deliverables included the roll out of Skype, surfaces and updating applications, all of which have enabled staff to work more flexibly.
- Property - (in relation to the decant of Ealing Town Hall and Perceval House).
- Processes – there were 3 key projects in this workstream: re-procuring the contract for managed print and hybrid mail; the contract for records and document management, and a project on data retention (electronic and physical paper).
- People - NWOW workshops had been organised covering an overview on Future Ealing and an introduction on 'Why New Ways of Working' and what it meant for staff.

Values and Behaviours - New values and behaviours were launched in the summer 2018 following developmental workshops with staff at all grades and the involvement of members. To date, 199 staff members had attended these workshops. The aim of the workshops was to explain to staff why the new values and behaviours were introduced and how they had been developed in a collaborative way with staff. The new values and behaviours were key to moving forward to work as one Council, particularly in terms of collaboration. They were now embedded in new role profiles at all levels and the plan was to embed them as part of the appraisal process. In addition, these values were also embedded in the new induction process for all new starters.

A short video was presented that showed staff responding to questions and describing how they had implemented the new values and behaviours and how these had been useful to them.

Continuous improvement and efficiency - Continuous improvement and efficiency (CIE) provided the opportunity to transform the organisation and its operating model so that it would be sustainable, fit-for-purpose and innovative in how it met the outcomes sought through Future Ealing and Modern Council. The logic of the exercise was to prioritise the resources available to spend on delivering ongoing efficiencies and proposals had been developed across two areas to allow this:

- Cross-cutting functional review
- Management restructure. A copy of the new structure chart was provided.

Future Ealing Governance - Future Ealing was a complex programme with delivery objectives running across traditional service boundaries. The scale of the programme also meant that it was essential that the organisation worked in line with the new values. To support these goals the governance of Future Ealing had been reviewed. At member level, all Cabinet members were on the Future Ealing Board. At officer level, the Future Ealing Programme Board met monthly. It was chaired by the Chief Executive and comprised of the Corporate Board members, the Director of Strategy and Engagement, the Director of Finance and the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development.

The Chair thanked officers and invited Panel members to comment and ask questions.

Comments and questions:

Panel members:

- Noted that communication was key for the success of this programme. Experience from other settings suggested that increased proficiency in the use of Skype communications and the sharing outlook calendars were important steps.
Heard that with forthcoming changes to the working space available for employees the new communication technology would be more relevant. They were ingrained from the new starter process and there was a digital skills training programme available for those who needed it. All new starters, whether agency workers or Ealing Council staff, received a surface on their first day at work and were introduced to the helpdesk. The roll out of Skype had some teething issues but it was now well established and adopted by staff. The sharing of outlook calendars was very important yet required a change in culture and therefore it faced some resistance. However, it was part of the NWOW team protocols for managers that there should be access to diaries. Managers had to drive the point to team members. The decamp working group had also been reactivated.
- Queried the efficacy of cross departmental communications and information sharing for the benefit of residents.

Heard that the Digital Customer workstream, part of the Digital Programme, was tasked with sorting cross departmental information sharing to facilitate communication and service provision to residents and provide a better customer experience.

- Asked about the support available for Ealing Council's workforce facing the diminished availability of resources and redundancies.

Heard that the Council endeavoured to retrain employees and move people to different vacancies when facing redundancy. If employees were no longer able to remain in the Council there was an attempt to support them through that journey (and help was available on issues such as CV writing, interviewing skills, etc). The Council was working with its workforce to help them gain new qualifications and sponsoring some staff to undertake degree-level apprenticeships. The apprenticeship levy is being used to upskill members of our existing workforce and new apprentices/trainees. Yet, it was a reality that work was being reduced and the number of agency staff had decreased.

- Asked about communication of officer responsibilities and contact details for members following the restructuring of the corporate board. Suggested that a 'frequently asked questions' information sheet for Members would be useful to avoid repetition in queries.

Heard that the charts for the new directorates had been finalised and would be published soon. These would be shared with Members. Issues with the responses to member queries and questions would be taken back to colleagues to clarify what the procedure to respond to Member queries was.

- Queried the Council's recommendation that employees could work from home 'up to one day a week' when comparable boroughs were asking staff to work from home 'at least two days a week'.

Heard that the recommendation of working from home one day was because managers were concerned about managing an agile and flexible workforce, this issue was being addressed through the workshops. Another reason for the slow uptake of working from home was because approximately 1000 staff members could not access specific work applications from home, this was a technical issue that was being addressed by the ICT Department. Also, there were members of staff that needed, due to the requirements of their position, to work on location rather than from home. However, there was a need to modify the recommendation. It was perceived that following initial implementation trust was now building. It was important to note that the trade unions opposed the making of remote working mandatory.

- Queried the number of staff that had been trained on values in a workforce of around 3,500 staff.

Heard that the 199 staff members trained was not high. Workshops had started in September 2018 but it had not been mandatory. Workshops were also being offered and delivered to teams in order to increase awareness of the values and behaviours. It was suggested that attendance could be improved by making attendance to the workshop mandatory for all staff for

managers to provide this sort of training for team members. Resources had now increased to deliver more training.

- Asked how it would be ensured that the one council values were translated to the staff moving to the Local Authority Trading Company for delivering the Council's environmental services (waste and recycling collection, street cleaning, grounds maintenance, burials and associated services).

Heard that the Council would be in a better position once the company was running. The contractors were due to change in 2020 and the new company was being set up. This would be independent but part of the organisation.

7. **Resolved:** That the update on **Future Ealing -One Council Approach** be received.

8. **Outcomes Review** (Agenda Item 7)

The chair invited Kieran Reid, Director of Strategy and Engagement, to introduce the report on the Outcomes review.

Kieran Reid said that the outcome review programme was at the heart of Future Ealing and the strategy to deliver savings of £57m over the period 2019/20 to 2021/22. The objectives of the outcome review programme were to:

- Link and review activity against outcomes
- Identify evidence based implementable options for MTFS delivery to agreed savings targets
- Set service strategy to inform future activity.
- Provide expertise and capacity to challenge and innovate across Future Ealing agenda.
- Promote collaboration and tap into internal skills.

The programme had been conducted over the summer of 2018. Proposals arising from the outcome reviews had been adopted into the MTFS from 2019/20 through the budget process and delivery would be overseen through the Future Ealing governance.

The approach of the outcomes review was to focus on delivery against key measures in the Future Ealing performance framework rather than by service. It had to clearly define budgets that were in and out of scope for each review to manage dependencies between them and with existing transformation activity (i.e. Better Lives programme). It also required clear evidence-based propositions for change with associated performance and financial trajectories and an implementation plan, as key deliverables from the project. It was ensured that each outcome review had a director level lead to ensure ownership, delivery and internal challenge. External support was

procured to add capacity, expertise and challenge. IMPOWER and Grant Thornton were appointed after a procurement process.

General Fund Savings were presented and agreed from the outcome reviews to January 2019 Cabinet were £10.283m, with further non-General Fund efficiencies of £2.371m. The January Cabinet identified a further £1.458m General Fund savings and £0.492m non-General Fund Savings. In total, the outcomes review contribution to savings was of at least £14m.

The outcomes review was based on a redesign of housing and homelessness, disability, young people, neighbourhoods and employment and skills services. The new planned delivery of these services aimed to do things better and improve outcomes. The programme had substantial risks in its deliverability and therefore it was managed within the agreed Future Ealing governance. Priority programmes would have a lead director for implementation and would report monthly to the Future Ealing Delivery Board and onwards to the Programme Board and members.

The Chair thanked Kieran Reid and invited comments and questions from Panel members.

Comments and questions:

Panel members:

- Asked whether the outcomes review had investigated trading opportunities. Heard that trading issues had not featured much in the review. Market interventions did feature, via the review of the housing and homelessness services.
- Queried whether the Council staff would be sufficiently skilled now so as not to have to rely on consultants in the future. Heard that the aspiration was to make less use of consultants in the future. There had been an option to continue the consultancy arrangements into the phase of delivery but it had been chosen not to do this. The more successful that the Council became, the more likely it would be not to rely on consultants. However, there had been an urgent need to make considerable savings and the Council had not had a team of people with the right skills to achieve that. Consultants had brought in a fresh perspective and a rigorous challenge. The cost had been under £400,000 which had been substantial value for money.
- Asked what contingency plans were in place to deal with risk. Heard that the strategy to avoid a worst-case scenario was to have a credible plan, with a clear trajectory based on granular analysis, releasing some investment to support change; establishing solid governance structures; and to have honest conversations about risk.

Resolved: That the update on the Outcomes Review be noted.

9. Panel Operations Report 2018-19
(Agenda Item 8)

It was noted that Cllr Karam Mohan had provided feedback of his visit to Horsenden Farm on 13 December 2018 to observe how the site was being managed with the help of volunteers and the activities that take place there. It was recommended that the unused buildings should be put to use.

Resolved: That

- (i) further suggestions for items and site visits for the Panel be taken forward by the Scrutiny Officer.
- (ii) the updated work programme was noted.

10. Date of Next Meeting
(Agenda Item 7)

The next meeting of the Panel was due to take place on 1 May 2019.

Councillor Deirdre Costigan, Chair.

The meeting ended at 9: 25pm.