

SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL 3 – FUTURE EALING

MINUTES

Thursday 13th July 2017

PRESENT: Councillors: Josh Blacker (Chair), Paul Conlan, Joanna Dabrowska, Gary Malcolm (Vice-Chair), *Gurmit Mann* (Substituting for Kate Crawford), Rajinder Mann, *Kamaljit Kaur Nagpal* (Substituting for Dee Martin), Swaran Padda, Ian Proud and David Rodgers.

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Peter Mason - Portfolio Holder for Prosperity, Skills, Employment and Transformation

LBE Officers Present:

Harjeet Bains - Scrutiny Review Officer
Kieran Read - Director of Strategy and Engagement
Lee Teasdale - Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies for Absence
(Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillors Theresa Byrne, Tariq Mahmood and Karam Mohan.

Councillor Gurmit Mann substituted for Councillor Kate Crawford and Councillor Kamaljit Kaur Nagpal substituted for Councillor Dee Martin.

2. Declarations of Interest
(Agenda Item 2)

There were none.

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

There were none.

4. Panel Operations in 2017-2018
(Agenda Item 4)

The Scrutiny Review Officer asked Panel Members to consider the scope of the Panel for the year ahead and whether to co-opt external members to the Panel.

It was agreed that as the topics being considered were wide-ranging and largely internal, there would be no co-option to the Panel and that any guests would be invited on a meeting by meeting basis.

With regards to the Work Programme, it was considered that commercialisation and assets may be split into two separate items if the timetable allowed for it.

It was suggested that witnesses invited to future meetings could include the Local Government Network and the RSA (The Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce).

Resolved: That the Panel's Terms of Reference, Work Programme and co-option arrangements for 2017-2018 be agreed.

5. The Future Ealing Programme (Agenda Item 5)

The Chair welcomed Councillor Peter Mason (Portfolio Holder for Prosperity, Skills, Employment and Transformation) and Kieran Read (Director of Strategy and Engagement) and invited them to provide the Panel with an overview of the development of the Future Ealing programme.

Councillor Mason provided scene setting background context. Local government was in the midst of a funding crisis exacerbated by growing pressures in social care, housing, welfare reforms and legislative duties. It was expected that there would be a funding gap of £5.8 billion by 2021.

Within this financial situation, Councils faced two stark choices – to either preside over a slow decline or to attempt a new approach. Choosing to continue to slice away at services or raid capital reserves was not sustainable and not a viable option.

By 2021 it was expected that the revenue support grant would be as low as £9.1 million in Ealing, leaving a budget gap of circa £49 million, this was on top of the many cuts already made since 2010. It was absolutely clear therefore that the Council required a co-ordinated impact. There was a need to co-opt residents into a sense of civic pride, and to 'lead the borough'.

The Director of Strategy and Engagement was then invited to give a presentation on Future Ealing.

The presentation highlighted that Ealing was an ambitious Council and sought a clear vision and strong leadership to help it continue to perform in an increasingly strained financial landscape. The Future Ealing approach would be informed by, and built upon, good practice and innovation in both the public and private sectors.

The objectives of the Future Ealing programme included:

- Providing a framework for partnership between members and officers.
- Motivating and driving the 'one council' and 'one public sector' approaches to achieving outcomes.
- Linking aspiration, delivery and organisational development.
- Identifying the areas where the Council needed transformation versus continuous improvement.
- Driving resource allocation against priorities.
- Ensuring the Council delivered a balanced budget.
- Helping to 'tell the Council's story' more effectively externally.
- Helping to 'tell the Council's story' more effectively internally to motivate and engage staff.

Arising from this a series of nine key outcomes had been established as follows:

- **Growth** – A growing economy would create jobs and opportunities for Ealing residents to reduce poverty and increase incomes and skills.
- **Children’s Potential** – Helping children and young people achieve educationally and fulfil their potential.
- **Children Are Safe** – Ensuring that children and young people grow up safe from harm.
- **Healthy and Independent** – Ensuring that residents were physically and mentally healthy, active and independent.
- **Affordable Housing** – Ensuring Ealing had an increasing supply of quality and affordable housing.
- **Crime is Down** – Making sure that crime is down and that Ealing residents feel safe.
- **Environment** – Ensuring that the borough had the smallest environmental footprint possible.
- **Ealing is Clean** – Making sure that Ealing is a clean borough and a high quality place where people wanted to live.
- **Strong Community** – Ensuring that Ealing is a strong community that promotes diversity with inequality and discrimination reduced.

Councillor Padda made reference to increasing incomes and skills, how were businesses being engaged on this? He also asked how the Council would be tailoring its approach to physical and mental health.

The Director of Strategy and Engagement advised that it was agreed that these approaches would require wide ranging input and that the Council could not push these agendas on its own. However, the development of such plans was still in progress so the focus of the introductory meeting was to help in framing the approach the Council would be taking. Many businesses were in the process of being engaged across all sectors, but the Council needed to define the stakeholders and partners it wished to focus on working with.

It was advised that as part of the development of the strategy it had been taken to Cabinet in April 2017 and was being viewed by the Local Strategic Partnership. The goal was to publish the strategy following the introduction of the new administration in May 2018.

Councillor Rodgers expressed concern that any strategy would be hampered by the constraints of neo-liberal ideology, which saw a need for a ‘growing economy’ which only served the wealthy take precedence over the needs of the many. This created a malaise that fundamentally threatened civil society.

He made reference to the concept of ‘the circular economy’ in which money was retained and re-invested within local sustainable activity. He also recommended ‘solidarityeconomy.eu’ which promoted a positive model that would stop monies being “sucked out by the leeches of neo-liberalism”.

He stated that if change did not take place at this fundamental level then democracy as a concept was doomed, and knowledge of this needed to frame the narrative.

Councillor Mason responded that despite devolution in many areas, the Council remained hamstrung and heavily regulated. The Council's duties were aligned to its income and it could only be so ambitious within this picture. Councillor Mason agreed that there were areas of serious concern such as profit motives in regeneration schemes, social care market profit margins leaving some operators on their knees, etc. The Future Ealing strategy would open conversations regarding alternatives, looking at different and innovative approaches.

Councillor Dabrowska asked how the success of the nine key outcomes would be judged. She also enquired as to the type of non-profit business models that had been explored such as the social care sector.

The Director of Strategy and Engagement agreed that a metric for success needed to be defined, however the nine key outcomes were just expressions of ambition at the current stage. The Council would work closely with partners to define impacts. 'Brighter Futures' was cited as a good example of where the Council was able to measure the best outcomes for children with explicit targets on reductions in looked after children.

Councillor Mason stated that social care models were about our duty and related specific transaction outcomes. There were significant financial costs to the CCG in delayed transfers of care; if the borough does not have a thriving care market then it costs a lot more. The best outcomes revolve around people being healthier from the start; therefore Future Ealing would look at this issue first.

Councillor Dabrowska asked how Members could be made confident that the decision making would be of a sufficient quality. What measures were in place to ensure this?

It was advised that decision making would be closely scrutinised and carefully monitored. With the sought outcomes defined, and the transformation required understood, delivery plans would be prepared to set out how the Council would achieve its goals. The Adult Transformation Programme was cited as a good example of such work already being prepared.

Councillor Rajinder Mann expressed concern spanning several areas, such as the increases seen in dementia and the fear of crime still felt by many residents in the borough.

Councillor Mason stated that these concerns spoke of the need for clarity on the high level outcomes and the deliverables. For example, it was known that one of the main drivers of dementia was cardio-vascular dementia; this was an area where work could be focussed on early intervention. Equally with crime, early intervention with youth offenders can save the whole system money as well as assuaging the concerns of residents. Future Ealing was about creating a mechanism for conversations with partners on intervening early and not just dealing with impacts.

Councillor Proud stated that for Future Ealing to truly work, Council departments needed to be more actively engaged with each other. He stated that he knew of cases where social carers had been charged for parking in CPZ zones for example. There needed to be mutual support across all levels of the Council.

The Director of Strategy and Engagement stated that he agreed absolutely with the principle that the Council needed to ensure that it was not working within silos.

Further information was then provided on what being outcome led would look like:

- Cross Council teams would be working on community problems sponsored by senior accountable leaders.
- Front line and support services would be working on shared problem solving of community problems.
- There would be a push for community and customer insight and wellbeing as well as satisfaction.
- The testing of strategies against their impact on outcomes as well as the organisation.
- Working with and influencing partners to play their part in improving outcomes.
- A budgeting process less focused on departments and reducing organisation size in line with budget and more focused on solving underlying problems and expanding the cake.
- Maintaining a ship-shape, efficient, continuously improving service areas as a basic requirement.

Councillor Rodgers expressed concern regarding the language used. Particularly references to 'community problems', which could be more respectfully noted as 'challenges' or 'opportunities'. It was important to build community resilience and engage them, and the use of potentially combative language would not aid this.

Councillor Mason agreed that careful use of language was important and this would be noted.

The Chair asked about how the Council could really empower residents.

It was stated that active contributions from residents would be key. Whereas in the past the Council may have been perceived to have adopted a 'patriarchal' approach to service provision, it was important to now approach the resident relationship in a different way "how can we help you?"

The outcomes based budgeting approach was detailed to the Panel. It was stated that if the Council was to tackle complex problems, it would need to align resources behind key outcomes. Therefore, the Council was adopting an outcomes-based approach; this would be a fundamental change to how resources in Ealing were allocated and how commissioning decisions were reached. By February 2018, the Council's decisions would be informed by Future Ealing outcomes and set on an outcomes-based budgeting approach, an approach which had been endorsed by the Cabinet in March 2017.

The Chair asked how the Council would approach dealing with the 'competing visions' of some partners?

It was advised that it was fully understood that not all of the partners would have a focus aligned with that of the Council. The Council needed to be clear on what it stood for and how it could bring its influence to bear. It was important that strong political leadership was in place and to keep having conversations to build up confidence and resilience.

Brief updates were provided on key enablers such as:

Digital – promoting the digital strategy and ensuring that the customer experience and efficiency were at the heart of the approach.

Commercialisation – evolving the entrepreneurial approach and increasingly thinking creatively about how to deliver services differently.

Councillor Rodgers stated that there needed to be a degree of caution regarding this approach and that it must not be thought of as a ‘silver bullet’.

Continuous Improvement – Identifying opportunities to rationalise and improve business processes and leverage efficiencies.

Staff Engagement and Culture – This was a key part of any major programme shift and the senior management team had been undertaking lots of early engagement, including regular events with the Chief Executive.

The Chair then drew the item to a close, thanking all present for their input.

Resolved: That the presentation providing an overview of the Future Ealing programme be received by the Panel.

Councillor Josh Blacker, Chair.

The meeting ended at 8.45pm.