

## SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL 4 – Future Ealing

### MINUTES

Thursday 26 July 2018

**PRESENT:** Councillors: Dierdre Costigan (Chair), Sitarah Anjum, Jaskiran Chohan, Kamaljit Dhindsa, *Steve Donnelly* (Substitute for Amarjit Jammu), Gary Malcolm (Vice-Chair), Gurmit Mann, Karam Mohan and Alex Stafford

**Ealing Officers Present:**

Harjeet Bains	- Scrutiny Review Officer
Charles Barnard	- Assistant Director, Integrated Early Years, Preventative and Youth Services
Gary Pyke	- Assistant Director of Transformation
Sharon Scott	- Children's Principal Social Worker
Lee Teasdale	- Democratic Services Officer

**1. Apologies for Absence**  
(Agenda Item 1)

Councillor Jammu had tendered her apologies for the meeting and was substituted by Councillor Donnelly.

**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 Terms of Reference and Work Programme 2018-19**  
(Agenda Item 4)

The terms of reference for Scrutiny Panel 4 were agreed by Panel Members.

It was agreed not to co-opt anyone on to the Panel but instead invite experts to the relevant meetings.

It was agreed that the Work Programme would be considered following the substantive agenda items.

**Resolved:** That the Panel's Terms of Reference be agreed.

## 5. Overview of Future Ealing Programme (Agenda Item 5)

The Chair invited Gary Pyke (Assistant Director of Transformation) to provide the Panel with an overview of the Council's Future Ealing Programme, providing them with the opportunity to identify items for further review.

Eight objectives had been agreed for the Programme which would feed into nine approved priority outcomes. The outcomes sought to help people and communities do things for themselves. The outcomes were informed by analysis undertaken on resident priorities, consultation with the Cabinet and opposition parties, Local Strategic Partnership and Health and Wellbeing Board Members, trade unions and members of staff. The outcomes outlined a vision for Ealing that was widely shared and could be used to deliver the Corporate Plan objectives and inform the long-term planning necessary to deliver the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

The objectives and outcomes had then led to five transformational themes:

- Digital, Data and Customer
- Commercialisation and Assets
- Cross Cutting and Assets
- Children's and Adults Review
- Service Efficiency

Key highlights from the delivery of the programme so far had included the running of an outcome based budgeting process with all savings proposals assessed against delivery on outcomes to meet the MTFS requirements. This had led to:

- Investment of an additional £29m in providing essential services for adults and children.
- The identification of £17.3m savings from the Future Ealing programme over the period 2018/19-2021/22.
- A further £16.3m of cost reduction associated with the Better Lives transformation programme to be realised by 2019/20 inclusive of investment of £3-4m.
- Amendments to the Council Tax support scheme to provide more support to the most vulnerable members of the community.

Focus was being placed upon responding to the major areas of demand that reflected poor community outcomes and rising costs pressures for the Council. This included the continued delivery of the Brighter Futures programme, the launch and implementation of the Better Lives programme, the development of the Homeless Reduction Strategy, sustained increases in recycling and helping people back into work.

The future of the Council's strategic direction was being aided through the adoption of the digital strategy and the refreshed Customer Service Strategy.

Active Citizens was a major initiative currently going through piloting to test how different services and community assets could be brought together to support active

citizenship and find out where the activity had a visible impact and contributed towards reducing demand on the Council.

Another major initiative being undertaken was an assets review. The purpose of the Property Assets and Neighbourhood Offer programme was to make the best possible use of the Council's property assets, improve community outcomes and enable the Council to realise a number of strategic objectives. The programme would involve taking a more commercial and strategic approach to the use of Council-owned property and assets.

Continuous Improvement and Efficiency (CIE) had continued from the completion of Wave 1 into Wave 2. A report had been presented to Cabinet for Wave 2 recommending a proposal to reduce the organisational headcount by 48 posts. Wave 3 would commence upon the closure of the Wave 2 consultation and the finalisation of savings.

It was advised that a full list of tracked projects was attached at appendix A to the report. These were currently undergoing review to ascertain their red, amber, green (RAG) status and when completed these would be made available to the Panel.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director of Transformation for his introductory presentation and invited Panel Members to comment and ask questions.

## **Questions**

The Chair asked if the overall aim of Future Ealing could be described within a sentence.

It was described as the transformation of the Council's budget and processes into something fit for the future. Moving funds into areas where support was required whilst making the Council more accessible and gaining better results for the citizens of Ealing.

Councillor Malcolm asked for further information on savings. What were the overall savings expectations over the next two to three years? Would growth always be needed for these, and would upfront investment be needed for all of them?

It was advised that a lot of work was happening around cost containment, one of the areas of focus for this was the contract management of third party spend on Special Education Needs (SEN) transport. All outcome reviews had targets and a total of around £55 million was expected to be found in savings throughout the life of the programme. In some cases, investment would be required to 'prime' some of the changes.

Councillor Donnelly asked for further detail on the interaction between Future Ealing and the Better Lives programme, and where they sat as brands. To what extent did the Better Lives programme sit underneath Future Ealing – and to what extent could these be considered traditional programmes of service improvement? There needed to be clarity on how these programmes worked and interacted so that Members could guide members of the public.

It was explained that Future Ealing was the overarching programme that contained all other programmes (including Better Lives) within it. There was demarcation between each individual programme in terms of where the governance sat. But the overarching Future Ealing governance sat within the Corporate Board.

Councillor Chohan asked how this outcome led approach would be measured. With regards to the concept of 'One Council' – how was it envisaged that this would function? Reference was also made to the Active Citizens Programme. How was it envisaged that this would happen, what roles were envisaged for citizens and how would they interact with the outcome led approach?

It was advised that the outcome led approach would be measured against a specific outcome indicator – with sought outcomes being around cost reductions and quality retention.

With regards to the concept of One Council – it was stated that there was still a lot of silo working seen at the Council which needed to be removed. This was important as it helped to ensure that a strategy or metric was not put into place in one department that could have a detrimental impact upon another department. All departments needed to converse about on-going work taking place, being more transparent and working together to interlink projects where possible.

Active Citizens was still at a trial and prototype stage. Testing was taking place on different solutions across different areas to see which would have the best impact upon projects such as the modal shift towards helping to keep the streets cleaner. It was explained that what might work in Acton may not necessarily find the same solution in Southall for example. An emphasis was being placed on looking at small and medium scale projects which would not take a lot of funding to initiate, but could still provide positive nudges to the public.

Councillor Chohan responded further, stating that the outcome led approach appeared to be solely judged against economic drivers. Were there any more socially led, needs meeting outcome indicators?

She also asked how officers would ensure that silo working was eradicated. What was being done to encourage different departments to work closer together? And how would it be ensured that the work with citizens had full buy-in from the departments?

It was advised that currently emphasis was being placed on building in more qualitative rather than quantitative measures. There would of course be a need to look at how the qualitative measures referenced were being met, and that in due course a balanced set of measures would be in place.

Work had taken place to bring officers from different departments together and to give giving them more responsibility for finding savings. Cross-service groups were also being brought together to look at single problems from a collective point of view. There was far more cross-council working being seen now than had been seen two years previously. Further specific detail on how departments related to the Active Citizens programme could not be elucidated at present. However, the business case had considered issues around how citizens could be engaged by officers and how their ideas could be used.

Councillor Anjum asked for further information on the Digital Strategy – including specifics around the ‘technical recommendation’ referred to in 2.23 of the agenda papers, and whether such a strategy had been tested and implemented elsewhere.

It was advised that the digital strategy was about building a system of intelligence. Every resident record would have a body of information that all in the Council could see. This would mean that once a resident had provided information, they then would not need to provide the same information again when contacting other departments and therefore expediting processes such as benefits claims and assisted transport requests. It would also help to tell officers where there needed to be improvements to service provision and show where less service provision was required in the borough. A lot of the technical detail was included in the digital strategy paper submitted to Cabinet. It was advised that this paper could be brought to the Panel if it wished to further consider the technical recommendations.

The Chair asked how the nine priority outcomes interacted with the Council’s budget given that these could not be read as hard financial outcomes. It was noted that two of the objectives centred around the Council’s need to ‘tell our story’. What was the Council’s story?

It was stated that some of the priority outcomes were tied more closely to continuous improvement initiatives. These, however, could still help to guide financial decisions.

With regards to the Council ‘telling its story’ – the aim was to inform residents and staff about the impact of severely reduced finances and how the world was changing in terms of local government finance and how the Council would be unable to give residents every service they sought anymore. It was considered that some staff tied up with day-to-day delivery were not fully aware of the significant level of change required.

Councillor Chohan referred to the Community Assets Review. Had research been undertaken into how some assets could be used to engage citizens?

It was advised that there were links between the Active Citizens and Asset Review initiatives. Further information on this would be fed back to the Panel.

The Chair noted that one of the objectives was “to identify the areas where we need transformation vs continuous improvement” how would this be achieved? More information was also requested on the reference to ‘Transformation Targets’ at 2.2 of the report.

It was advised that investment had been made into the Grant Thornton decision analytics product ‘Illumin’ which allowed the Council to compare how it benchmarked against other similar London boroughs, and acted as an indicator for where innovation and transformation was most needed – thus in a sense it fostered a combination of benchmarking and peer reviewing.

The Chair asked for further information on the governance aspects. For example, who sat on the Corporate Board and how did it add value to the management of Future Ealing.

It was advised that the Chief Executive and the Executive Directors sat on the Corporate Board and that the Board had responsibility for the overall oversight of Future Ealing. Underneath the Corporate Board sat the Better Lives, Brighter Futures and Modern Council Boards. The Future Ealing Programme Management Office sat within the Chief Executive's directorate. The Office comprised of the Assistant Director of Transformation, a Programme Manager, a Senior Change Transformation Officer and two junior officers. The Office policed and reviewed the changes taking place, going out to individual departments and helping to make the initiatives work – providing the departments with new tools and techniques to help push things forward. Departmental managers faced difficulties in trying to enact the change required for Future Ealing initiatives on top of their regular day job. The Office also managed work with some external partners, looking for best value and policing contracts.

Councillor Donnelly expressed concern that the work undertaken on removing silo working could be undone following the conclusion of the Future Ealing programme. What work was being done to future-proof these changes and ensure the principles continued? How could the Council future-proof relationships that were worth preserving, and stop them costing more in future?

It was stated that behavioural change formed a large part of the work being undertaken. Mechanisms were being embedded that would allow staff in future to carry the new ways of working on as a natural part of daily operations rather than requiring a heavy hand from above. Outcome reviews would be used to help best inform how to embed the new practices. There were activities that added value that the Council potentially would not be able to invest in going forwards so the Council needed to look at how it could help moves towards increased self-sufficiency. If services were going to be given away to an organisation in some cases, they could not just be abandoned.

The Chair noted that a strategic review of commercial opportunities had identified 18 projects with high materiality and then following further process of analysis and verification, five projects had been accepted into the commercial savings schedule within the MTFS. What commercial opportunities would the Council be focussing on and would these relate to procurement at all?

It was advised that not a lot had been listed in terms of commercialism – officers had looked at Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contracts, and a Contracts and Procurement Office had been set up that would be looking for better terms and conditions. Part of the review was the ongoing process of looking at each individual contract, and an update could be provided on the findings to date.

The Chair noted that third party contracts were one of the Council's biggest areas of spend, and therefore expected that more information would have been made available on work being undertaken around the contracts.

The Chair then referred to organisational values. She asked how these were decided upon, what they mean in practice, and how they related to the priority outcomes. In reference to outcome reviews, it was enquired as to how Members and residents could get involved, and what data would be used to inform the outcome reviews?

It was advised that the agreed organisational values had arisen following focus groups with staff and Members had also been invited to attend the focus groups. The

organisational values were due to be officially launched soon. Behind the values would sit a series of indicators that would have to be met. The values would also link into the priority outcomes.

The outcome reviews were currently at around the midpoint. By September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018 there would be a series of Future Ealing papers available to be brought to Members for consideration.

Councillor Chohan stated that the Panel would welcome the opportunity to see the outcome reviews and analyse the contents.

The Chair then thanked the Assistant Director of Transformation for his attendance at the Panel and drew the item to a close.

**Resolved:** That

- (i) the report providing an overview of the Future Ealing programme be received by the Panel;
- (ii) the Red Amber Green (RAG) status of the tracked projects be brought to the Panel as soon as available;
- (iii) the digital strategy paper submitted to the Cabinet be made available to the Panel for consideration;
- (iv) further information on the links between the Active Citizens and Asset Review initiatives be fed back to the Panel;
- (v) further findings arising from the review of commercialism opportunities and third-party contracts be fed back to the Panel; and
- (vi) further information on the ongoing outcome reviews be made available to the Panel.

**6. Update on Brighter Futures Programme**  
(Agenda Item 6)

The Chair invited Charles Barnard (Assistant Director, Integrated Early Years, Preventative and Youth Services) and Sharon Scott (Children's Principal Social Worker) to make a presentation to the Panel highlighting the lessons learned from the undertaking of the Brighter Futures programme.

The Brighter Futures programme had been developed to include three key components:

- Early Intervention and Prevention – Changing Early Help to focus on preventing Looked After Children (LAC).
- Children's Services Re-design (Innovation Bid) – Change at the heart of the social work model – shifting power to Children & Families, incorporating intensive engagement and workforce reform.

- Fostering – Radically improving the performance of Ealing’s in-house fostering service.

The aims of the Brighter Futures programme had been to move away from the traditional social care model of working with those in and on the edge of care, there would be an increased focus on building positive, intensive and consistent relationships, the workforce would be reshaped to help them work in more dynamic and flexible ways. Partnership work would be key to ensuring decisions were made in the right place, by the right people at the right time, the number of children and young people who became LAC would be reduced, current social worker recruitment and retention issues would be improved and better value for money all round would be found.

Upon meeting these aims, it was felt that the positive outcomes arising would include the fact that young people would feel better supported, listened to, have fewer transitions and changes of worker as well as more power and control over their lives, enabling greater resilience, self-regulation and decision-making abilities. It was also considered that more young people who became looked after would be able to return home safely and there would be a sustainable reduction in on-going costs allowing savings to be used to apply the model throughout the whole system.

Every step which led to a child being taken into care had to be considered, as every time a child or young person was passed along the system, their ‘life chances’ were further degraded.

The new Brighter Futures service had gone live in April 2017 and was divided into four sections:

- Ealing Children’s Integrated Response Service (ECIRS) – this was the ‘front door’ through which all referrals came through.
- Early Intervention and Prevention – the Early Help offer would be delivered through three key elements: Supported Early Help Assessment and Plan, Supportive Action for Families in Ealing (SAFE) and SAFE Plus, which would provide an intensive offer, focusing on families most in need and most likely to escalate into social care.
- ‘Children in Need’ Service – Four Mental Health Awareness & Safeguarding Teams (MAST) were in place. These were multi-disciplinary teams, providing intensive early support and intervention for young people and families on the edge of care.
- ‘Children in Care’ Service – Two Connect Teams were in place, incorporating an integrated LAC and Fostering support service. Multi-disciplinary teams worked with children in care and foster carers to prevent an escalation of need and placement breakdown.

The Panel was advised about the ROLI (Risk of Looked After Children Index) which was used to identify and prioritise more complex cases at the point of referral. The criteria featured a wide series of risk factors including examples such as substance misuse, mental health issues, repeated domestic violence and disability concerns.

Analysis of performance in 2017/18 had shown a 33% reduction in LAC (excluding Unaccompanied Minors (UASC)) when comparing 2012/13 to 2017/18. This delivered on an ongoing reduction trend of 20% between 2013-14 and 2017-18. This sat against a +8.3% growth nationally, and a 22% growth in the total Ealing 0-18 population in recent years. The rise in the local population had exacerbated the difficulties but targets were being achieved despite this.

Every LAC that could be avoided had a significant impact upon the budget. The current average cost per placement was £52,629 per year. The reduction of placements since the introduction of the Brighter Futures model in 2013-14 (excluding UASC) had been 73 placements, generating savings of £3.842m. The last financial year had seen a reduction of 12 placements generating a saving of £0.632m

Cost savings on fostering places were referenced. There had been a 14% rise in the number of children placed within in-house foster carers compared to 2016/17, which had seen a cost implication of £379,000 over the last financial year. Alongside this, there had been a 14% reduction in the number of children in private and voluntary placements, which had generated a £489,000 saving. There had also been a 17% increase in the number of children in placements with a relative or a friend which had seen a cost implication of £53,000. Overall these changes in placement type highlighted a rise in in-house fostering utilisation which was less expensive, but more importantly, provided more stability in foster placements. Avoiding multiple foster placements across multiple years helped to minimise disruption to lives, and in turn improve life outcomes.

Lessons learned in developing Brighter Futures were imparted to the Panel. It was important to have clarity of purpose and vision underpinned by a robust needs analysis; commitment and buy-in was needed at a Member, corporate, partner, strategic and operational level; a robust finance and performance framework needed to be linked to the throughput model; a strong programme and project management framework needed to be in place with the involvement of lead personnel from all relevant departments; there needed to be values led recruitment; a consistent evidence based model of working needed to be in place; there needed to be effective regular communication at all levels; and there needed to be proper management of the cultural change.

The Chair thanked the officers for their presentation and invited Panel Members to comment and ask questions.

## **Questions**

Councillor Donnelly asked if more unaccompanied minors (UASC) were now being taken into care in the borough and if this influenced the way Brighter Futures worked.

It was advised that the level of UASC in Ealing was slightly higher than the London average and considerably higher than the national average. The Leader of the Council was very supportive of it and overall the Council did not have much control over it. Ealing has traditionally had a high migrant population and this attracted people to the borough.

Councillor Mohan asked for clarification on 'special guardianships'. It was explained that an example of this would be where a grandparent may take on guardianship of a

child. Where there were viable options around special guardianships, these were promoted as ideal solutions.

Councillor Chohan welcomed the work done, and suggested that the Brighter Futures achievements could form part of the Council's 'story' referenced in the previous item on Future Ealing.

Councillor Donnelly asked if staff involved in Brighter Futures had gone out to speak to contemporaries external to the Council about the strong work undertaken.

It was explained that officers had gone out to some authorities to show how they had achieved the positive results seen so far. One of the authorities visited had a smaller population than Ealing but had twice the number of LAC. Reputation was key to attracting the best staff and Ealing had a reputation as a good place to work.

Councillor Chohan noted that the local Caribbean and Somali populations had disproportionately high numbers of LAC. Had there been studies into why this was the case and were there long-term projections for reducing these numbers?

A tremendous amount of work had taken place with Somali communities in Ealing. There had been considerable progress in the community over the last five years, and they were on a huge trajectory of improvement, with increased engagement and learning to trust services. Many younger members of the community were still quite vulnerable in terms of exploitation, so there was still work to do. The Caribbean community was a more mixed picture, there was still a trend of falling back in educational attainment at high school level. There was work needed on the community infrastructure and this had been appropriately flagged.

Councillor Anjum asked who else could make referrals to the team. She also enquired as to how business analytical tools worked.

It was advised that referrals could be made by anyone, generally references tended to come through the police and GPs. Self-referrals were also encouraged. The business analytical tool was a digitalisation tool that only looked at council records, and gave us further insight by picking upon salient phrases.

Councillor Malcolm asked about the future of the programme. Were there plans to measure the cohorts that had come through Brighter Futures in 5 or 10 years? Would it be possible to measure the impact of the changes taking place now on the future life chances of the cohort?

It was confirmed that Early Start had a focus upon making sure that the early part of a child's life was good, this was partly overseen through the family nurse partnership. Good outcomes were being seen at this early level. Further up the age ranges attainment and attendance data was available. Once the child became an adult it became a lot more difficult to monitor their progress.

Officers had looked at the baseline families from when the pilot had inaugurated, conversations were still taking place with the Department for Education on tracking that, this conversation could be expanded to suggest looking at a 5-year period.

The Chair asked about the kind of lessons that the overall Future Ealing programme would take from Brighter Futures.

The Assistant Director of Transformation stated that a lot of encouragement had been taken from this first programme having shown many strong benefits. It had been learnt for future programmes that robust engagement with staff and stakeholders was key, and that it was important to ensure that the plans made were pragmatic and realistically achievable.

Councillor Mohan asked if the borough had enough access to potential fosterers.

It was advised that there was a lack of fosterers and it was very hard to recruit them in the numbers required, though work was always taking place on how becoming a foster parent could be made more attractive.

The Chair drew the item to a close, thanking the officers for the very hard work put into making sure that Brighter Futures was a success and it was requested that work continued around talking to other boroughs about the successes of the programme.

**Resolved:** That

- (i) the presentation on the Brighter Futures update be noted by the Panel;
- (ii) the Panel recommends that officers continue to talk to other councils about the positive results arising from the Brighter Futures Programme.

## **7. Panel Terms of Reference and Work Programme 2018-19** (Agenda Item 4 cont.)

The Panel were advised that Future Ealing Roadshows had been set up at events around the borough. There were further Roadshows due to take place at Ealing Jazz Festival (which Councillor Chohan would seek to attend on behalf of the Panel) and Southall Mela (which the Chair and Councillors Chohan, Jammu and Anjum would seek to attend on behalf of the Panel). Feedback from these would be made available at the next meeting of the Panel. Councillor Chohan noted that she hoped to see a diversity of languages represented at the Southall Mela.

The Chair and Councillor Jammu had attended the Greenford Carnival and had provided feedback in the agenda papers. Councillor Donnelly advised that he had recently attended the Acton Carnival – stating that he was concerned that residents were not encouraged to highlight their own concerns and instead ‘directed down particular paths’. Generally, it was felt that the overall presentation was good and that the overriding message around losses in funding leading to a need for new ways of working had been made clear.

The Chair and Councillor Jammu had also attended a Digital Strategy Meeting at Southall Town Hall. Concerns were expressed following the meeting that the presentation had been given at a very technical and corporate level, which attendees found difficult to understand. There was a need to understand that people wanted to be talked to clearly and not confused by an overemphasis on ‘management speak’. There was also a need to speak to people in their language and not adopt convoluted

management speak. There also needed to be clarity around what was being done to help residents who were digitally excluded.

The Work Programme was considered. It was confirmed that the next meeting of the would consider the Better Lives programme. Discussion took place around consideration of Outcome Reviews – this was planned for the February meeting but it was agreed that this should be considered earlier, therefore Outcome Reviews would now be considered at the October meeting of the Panel.

Discussion took place around whether to move Active Citizenship forward to October. Following agreement that Outcome Reviews would be moved forward, it was agreed that Active Citizenship should be considered in detail at the December meeting.

Consideration was given to other potential areas for focus. Councillor Chohan suggested that further consideration should be given to how successful departments had been at breaking down silo working and working towards becoming 'One Council'

The Chair suggested that commercialisation and procurement could be an area of focus. It was also suggested that the work undertaken on the transformation of Copley Close could form the basis of a site visit.

**Resolved:** That

- (i) the feedback from site visits be noted;
- (ii) the item on Outcome Reviews be moved forward to the October meeting of the Panel; and
- (iii) further suggestions for items and site visits for the Panel be taken forward by the Scrutiny Officer.

**8. Date of Next Meeting**  
(Agenda Item 7)

The next meeting of the Panel was due to take place on Wednesday 3 October 2018.

Councillor Deirdre Costigan, Chair.

The meeting ended at 9:15pm.