



## **MINUTES OF THE ONE COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE Wednesday 22 January 2014 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Ashraf (Chair), and Councillors Chohan, Harrison, Long, Mitchell Murray and Powney ,

1. **Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests**

None declared.

2. **Deputations (if any)**

None.

3. **Minutes of the last meeting held on 26 November 2013**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2013 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. **Matters arising**

None.

5. **Public Realm Contract**

Chris Whyte (Head of Recycling and Waste) introduced the report which informed Members on the Public Realm Contract in terms of scope, proposed improvements, savings and how it would be managed. He explained the contract offered annual savings of £1.3m over a nine year period with the option to extend. The contract will incorporate waste and recycling from 1 April 2014 and street cleansing from 1 September 2014 whilst introducing new services such as commercial waste collections. The contract performance will be monitored by a newly created client team with 65 operational targets and four main contractual targets which would carry financial incentives and penalties. It was explained that risk would be that of the contractor with changes already implemented such as bins being left at the end of driveways resulting in a reduction of vehicles and crews accumulating to a £300,000 saving. It was clarified that if a resident failed to put their bin in the correct place then it would not be collected for a further two weeks whilst tags were currently being left on bins explaining why they were not collected to educate residents in the future. A 98% compliance rate was currently being reported with complaints being dealt with on an individual basis where it may not be possible due to physical ability and the property access to place the bins close to the curb. It was highlighted that Veolia had a £250,000 annual education/communications budget which would be able to address language barriers across the borough. Additionally fleet crews would log information electronically which would be fed

directly to the office, enabling residents queries to be dealt with effectively and to enable problem areas to be detected and education to occur. During queries it was explained that the work currently undertaken in relation to hotspots was an extra resource in relation to the current process however once the new contract came into force on 1 April 2014, Veolia would be required to clear flytipping within 24 hours of being reported. It was further clarified that smaller bins would be available upon request on return of a fully sized wheelie bin and future residents being offered the option of a smaller bin. Members queried the state and maintenance of the rubbish removal trucks. It was explained that the vehicles would be brand new and were designed to last the length of the contract with Veolia responsible for repairs and replacements to ensure all vehicles were up to standards whilst meeting the required green standards. During discussion it was confirmed quarterly meetings with residents would continue, with community champions sought and working in partnership with Brent Housing Partnership to ensure a seamless service. Members queried the target for generated commercial waste. It was clarified that there was no target as such although Veolia would benefit greatly by increasing commercial waste as it would subsidise the contract. In response to a request for a map of problem areas, it was explained that all areas will be required to meet a grade B standard at all times in the future with online monitoring enabling problem areas to be identified and rectified promptly. The Head of Recycling and Waste informed members of incentive schemes for residents such as improvements to blocks of flats and local community spaces if improvements to recycling levels were made. Members raised concerns regarding illegal disposal of commercial waste and difficulties customers may face when contacting the Council via phone. It was explained that an app would be made available allowing residents to report rubbish issues easily with photos if required as well as crews also being able to report issues immediately. Concern regarding flytipping from residents outside of the borough and how they would be educated and addressed was expressed. Chris Whyte informed the Committee that prosecution was the most appropriate route to stop flytipping from out of the borough with CCTV a key role in successful prosecutions, with the Council receiving any revenue from prosecutions. It was confirmed that complaints would be dealt with in line with the Council complaint's policy with Veolia hoping to have even shorter response times. A shared system would give the Council and Veolia access to complaints and information recorded by crews.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the report

## **6. Update: Brent One Oracle Project**

Andy Donald (Strategic Director, Regeneration and Growth) introduced the report which provided an update on the Brent One Oracle project which was previously known as project Athena. Members were informed that the project was initiated in 2011 to replace a number of existing Council support systems including Oracle Financials Release 11 and Interact HR system. The project was in partnership with five other London boroughs where a joint partnership board (JPB) appointed Capgemini to undertake the technical works following a joint procurement process. The system would enable a streamlined back office whilst also enabling savings to be identified in the future through shared services and efficiency savings. The project was currently within budget although it was reported that there may be an

overspend due to the project missing the 'go live' date. Andy Donald informed Members that the system was currently not yet live due to accreditation of the system being required which was currently being sought by Capgemini. He noted that there was potential for commercial compensation to be sought alongside the other five boroughs once discussions had taken place.

In response to queries the Strategic Director Regeneration and Growth explained that Capgemini were responsible for the submission for accreditation and were currently working on the additional information required. It was noted that due to six Council's using the system a higher accreditation was required and Capgemini was keeping the JPB informed. The risks were cost related which were greater the longer the project took to go live although it was hoped that commercial discussions would lead to compensation. Members expressed concern that the system relied on accurate portrayal of the structure. Andy Donald noted that the system required an up to date establishment which HR were currently compiling for Directors to confirm. Monthly reconciliations would take place to ensure all information was correct with changes being made as employees left and joined the Council. It was confirmed that the system enabled users to set up delegates who would have appropriate permission to approve invoices and payments should an employee be on leave. It was noted that similar schemes were being produced however it was felt that this was the most developed

RESOLVED:

Members noted the report.

## **7. Civic Centre and Move to the Civic Centre - Programme Updates**

Andy Donald (Strategic Director Regeneration and Growth) updated Members of the Committee of progress in respect of the Civic Centre and the move to the Civic Centre. Members were informed that the design and building of the Civic Centre were delivered under budget and on time with the majority of staff relocated to the building by the end of summer 2013. It was reported that the project had yet to be closed due to a snagging list and various outstanding issues with the building which meant the building had yet to be signed over from Skanska. Andy Donald reported that they hoped to have all remaining issues with the building resolved by Spring 2014. The Strategic Director Regeneration and Growth informed the Committee that moving to the Civic Centre created £2.6m savings each year and was carried out with minimal disruption to staff and the public. The move incorporated new flexible ways of working in an open plan environment, reduce desk ratios and remote working. It was hoped that the building would generate income of approximately £1,000,000 each year in future with £200,000 generated in 2013/14. Andy Donald highlighted that successes included communication on the move, the move to thin client which was partially rolled out prior to the move however recognised that there were still large issues surrounding telephony in the building. It was explained that a report would be submitted to the Corporate Management Team (CMT) identifying improvements required and issues still remaining.

During discussion members expressed their disappointment that their views on aspects of the building such as a public gallery in the conference hall and braille signage had not been incorporated into the building. It was noted that lessons would need to be learnt to ensure secure council meetings and braille was included

on a list of improvements to be made. In response to queries it was confirmed that the Starbucks franchise that would occupy one of the retail units would comply with the Council's recruitment policy. Members were informed that an independent review of the telephony service had been instructed by the Interim Chief Executive and some fixed phones had been in place. It was reported that there had been an increase in calls being answered and recognised that as well as technical restrictions, managers also needed to address the issue with staff. Richard Barrett (Operational Director Property and Projects) confirmed that the Wi-Fi network interfered with the microphone system purchased and work was being undertaken to find a solution or procure a hardwired system if appropriate. Members queried the lack of publication of events on the bridge and the option to move them to a more prominent ground floor area. It was explained that there were issues with noise placing events in the main reception area although it was recognised that events should be better promoted with the use of spaces forming part of the six month review being presented to CMT. Members noted that not all staircases led directly out of the building and felt that improved signage and maps would be beneficial when ensuring a swift emergency exit of the building. It was agreed that maps would be provided to members. In response to catering options for events, Richard Barrett explained that Europa as the in house caterer were promoted however explained that an approved list of companies would also be available to customers wishing to host an event at the Civic Centre. Concern regarding crossing Filton Road were noted and it was anticipated that section 106 money may be available to create a safe crossing. In response to queries regarding the retail units it was confirmed that they were all to be let except one by the end of February with Starbucks fitting out one unit at the end of January 2014. During discussion it was confirmed that most previous buildings had been disposed with discussion to reduce and/or terminate leases on remaining buildings taking place. Members noted that the 50% reduction in room hire for community groups may still be too high and it was noted that if appropriate this may need to be referred to the Executive. In response to concerns over the lack of parking, it was clarified that there was a limited number of spaces to encourage greener transport and formed part of the BACES accreditation.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the report.

#### **8. One Council Overview and Scrutiny work programme**

Members noted the importance of effective Scrutiny.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the work programme

#### **9. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the One Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee is scheduled to take place on 18 March 2014.

#### **10. Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm

J Ashraf  
Chair