



**MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday 5 November 2015 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Colwill (Chair), and Councillors Daly, Farah, Kelcher, Stopp and Tatler, together with Ms Christine Cargill, Mr Alloysius Frederick, Dr J Levison and Iram Yaqub

Also Present: Councillors Long and Perrin

Apologies were received from: appointed observer Lesley Gouldbourne

1. **Dan Filson**

Councillor Colwill spoke of the shocking news that Dan Filson had died a few days previous to the meeting.

The committee stood in silence for one minute in memory of Dan Filson.

Councillor Colwill and the other members of the committee paid tribute to Dan Filson remembering him for his committed work as chair of the Scrutiny Committee, the high principles he lived by, intelligence and the generous time he put into being a local councillor.

2. **Declarations of interests**

None declared.

3. **Deputations**

None

4. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 October 2015 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

5. **Matters arising**

*Parking strategy 2015*

Members asked for the data listed at the end of minute 6 to be supplied.

6. **Brent Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report**

Councillor Colwill welcomed Mike Howard, independent chair of the Brent Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to the meeting.

Mike Howard stated that he had been newly appointed to the role of chair on 1 June 2015 and it was his responsibility to present the annual report of the LSCB. Having outlined the statutory guidance underpinning the LSCB, Mike Howard referred to aspects of the annual report dealing with:

- children missing from education, which showed a reduction in the number of cases and that the Quality, Audit and Outcomes sub-group now included this data set,
- domestic abuse, where more emphasis would be placed on establishing the impact this had on children, and
- private fostering, which was felt to be under reported and action would be taken to improve the data set supporting this.

Under the heading of Governance and Accountability, Mike Howard explained that he had made a number of changes to the meeting frequencies and structure of the sub-groups. Referring to the budget contributions, he had raised the feeling that the Metropolitan Police contribution could be more but acknowledged that this was governed by the Mayor of London's office. Turning to the Board's priorities, Mike Howard referred to the thematic inspection carried out in October 2014 by OFSTED which had refocused the work on child sexual exploitation (CSE). He stated that a lot more work was needed on harmful practices, especially female genital mutilation (FGM). With reference to the training programme, Mike Howard stated that significant progress had been made utilising Learning Pool and further work was going into evaluating the effectiveness of the training.

Members of the committee asked a series of questions of the Chair and the officers supporting the Board. It was explained that the OFSTED inspection concerned CSE and had been a thematic one with Brent being one of ten authorities involved. It had found examples of some good front line practice but the Board needed to strengthen its oversight of the issue. With regard to appendix C of the report, it was explained that membership of the groups changed during the year and that partly explained why some members had attended fewer meetings. An undertaking was given to supply the number of incidences of CSE reported to the Council and whether any convictions had resulted. In response to a comment, Mike Howard agreed that the report in future needed to include more information on the impact of the work of the Board.

Referring to the school section 11 undertaken and those schools that had not completed the audit, it was explained that efforts were being made to engage more with schools and colleges to ensure they all kept their child protection procedures up to date. Using the example of landlord licensing it was stated that a number of Council officers had cause to visit properties and it was confirmed that there was a requirement for all such staff to be aware of safeguarding issues for both children and adults and to report any concerns they had. In response to a question about the funding cuts faced by the Metropolitan Police and how this would impact on the work of the Board, it was explained that as with all the agencies dealing with cutbacks, it affected their ability to attend meetings and free staff to support the work of the Board.

Although NHS England was now starting to collect data from GPs on incidents of FGM, it was asked if Brent had any current data. Mike Howard undertook to look into this and inform members accordingly. With regard to work on anti radicalisation, it was explained that this was the responsibility of schools and colleges and the role of the Board was to be aware of the activities and monitor their impact. The Council had undertaken a range of creative work with schools and colleges on this matter and the Board would seek engagement with the schools as partners in this work.

Members expressed concern that the Board did not have a specific strand of work on looking at the welfare of those children who were homeless. It was felt that children who moved around the country as a result of a lack of permanent housing faced issues around health and welfare. Members were re-assured that the Board sought to capture children in such circumstances and a representative of the housing service sat on the Board. In addition the housing service and children services worked jointly on assessing the impact that the housing situation and the welfare reforms were having. However, it was acknowledged that there had not been specific work carried out on the impact of the housing crisis on children. The Committee recorded its concern over the issue of transitory families and the effect this could have on children and that all the partner agencies were fulfilling their responsibilities in this area.

In response to questions regarding the outcome of the work of the Board and the evaluation of the training, Mike Howard explained that information was sought by asking people and data was collected to measure activity. The effect of the training was in how it impacted on performance and he stated that it was resource intensive to capture this. Nevertheless it was an area that was being looked at and the suggestion of asking staff three months after their training what difference it had made was noted. It was confirmed that the work around children missing from education included those missing from home and care as well. It was requested that figures be supplied on children missing from education divided between the primary and secondary sectors.

Mike Howard was requested to return to the Committee in spring 2016 to report on the outcome of the Government's spending review announcement and what impact this was having on the work of the LSCB.

In recognition of the overlap between the work of the LSCB in overseeing the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Brent and the role of the Council's children services, the committee requested that an item be included in the Committee's work programme on the report due from the recent OFSTED inspection of children's social services.

#### Requests for information

- number of incidences of CSE reported to the Council and whether any convictions had resulted.
- the data held by the Council on FGM.
- figures on children missing from education divided between the primary and secondary sectors.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the LSCB annual report be noted;
- (ii) that the Committee's concerns regarding the welfare of children within transitory families and temporary housing be passed back to the Board.

## **7. Scrutiny task group on Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)**

Councillor Kelcher introduced the scrutiny task group report and stated that he had been determined to hear what residents had to say on the matter. He introduced Sandria Terrelonge from Heather Park Neighbourhood Watch to the meeting who had participated on the task group along with Mike Wilson from the Harlesden Town team. Councillor Kelcher referred to the five points listed under the report's executive summary and stated that the task group had decided not to produce easy and popular based recommendations and so some would be challenging to implement. Councillor Long added that the task group members had visited Enfield Council's CCTV control room and learnt about some cost saving measures.

In answer to questions, Councillor Kelcher stated that the law on the deployment of CCTV was more strict than he had at first realised and if this was better understood people would be less concerned about the privacy aspect. Reference was made to the Cleaner Brent App and if this could be linked to CCTV. It was explained that the officers that monitored the CCTV did report incidents of dumping when they witnessed it but they did not receive feedback so did not have statistics on the outcome of this. Concern was expressed that by adopting a traffic light approach to deploying CCTV, this would take from areas of less crime which would then be vulnerable to an increase in crime. There was no central record of all CCTV in the borough and it was felt this would be a useful piece of work to undertake. Asking social landlords and private developers to ensure they provided adequate CCTV coverage had the danger of the costs being passed on to the tenants.

Councillor Denselow (Lead Member for Stronger Communities) responded to the report by saying that it would help inform the CCTV strategy being developed. He identified eleven of the recommendations as being capable of either being included in the strategy or that were already in progress. The other eleven recommendations would need to be further explored with input from other parts of the Council such as legal and planning. However, he felt all the recommendations could be implemented and had detailed responses to each of them he could provide.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the recommendations of the scrutiny task group on closed circuit television (CCTV) be approved and the development of an action plan across the Council and with partner organisations be supported;
- (ii) that a progress report against the recommendations be submitted to the committee in six months time.

## **8. Scrutiny task group on Fly tipping**

Councillor Stopp introduced the report of the task group by stating that there was significant public concern about the issue and there was a need to rethink how the

matter was dealt with. The implementation of the recommendations of the task group would not incur additional resources. He introduced Mr Chirag Gir as a member of the task group. Mr Gir explained that he was one of 400 Wembley residents who had raised with their local councillors the opportunity to work with different community groups in the area to improve the cleanliness of Wembley.

It was suggested that the recommendation to give the Cleaner Brent App further publicity could be actioned by adding a footnote to Council correspondence. It was pointed out that a lot of the recommendations involved Veolia and it was questioned whether Veolia would take on these suggestions. With regard to the collection of bulky waste, the view was put that it was important to provide an efficient collection service to avoid it being dumped. Reference was made to the people whose job it was to go out in the borough and it was asked whether they had a duty to report dumped waste. Questions were asked on how the suggested community clean-ups might work.

In response, Councillor Stopp felt that those people who through their jobs came across dumped rubbish had an obligation to report it back to the Council. He stated that one of the reasons for proposing community guardians was to provide support to people who might otherwise feel isolated when reporting dumped rubbish. Community groups might be empowered to take responsibility for getting rubbish cleared. A point was made that it was more difficult for people without a car to get their rubbish removed and that the report dealt more with clearing dumped items rather than looking at the causes for items being dumped.

Councillor Southwood (Lead Member for Environment) thanked the members of the task group for their work. She stated that there was nothing in the recommendations affecting Veolia that could not be implemented through the current contract the Council had with them. She supported the point made about language leading to a misunderstanding of what fly tipping was. Emphasis need to be placed on the illegality of dumping because not all items dumped was rubbish. She felt that none of the recommendations presented anything that was unachievable or undeliverable. She agreed that local people needed to be empowered to take action against illegal dumping. The Council was already in discussion with Veolia to provide a quicker service to landlords so that they did not resort to dumping items. Councillor Southwood supported the idea of producing a charter in which it could be made clear that anyone could contribute to making Brent a cleaner borough and it could include the message that the Council would adopt a zero tolerance to people found dumping items.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the recommendations of the scrutiny task group on fly tipping be approved and the development of an action plan across the council and partner organisations to take them forward be supported;
- (ii) that a progress report against the recommendations be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee in 6 months time.

## 9. **Scrutiny forward plan**

The committee asked for the report due from the recent OFSTED inspection of children's social services to be included in the forward plan (see minute 6 above).

RESOLVED:

that the Scrutiny Committee forward plan be noted and the report due from the recent OFSTED inspection of children's social services be added.

10. **Scrutiny key comments, recommendations and actions**

The actions listed against the key comments and recommendations from meetings of the Scrutiny Committee during 2014/15 were noted.

11. **Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 9.55 pm

R COLWILL  
Vice Chair in the Chair