



MINUTES OF THE ONE COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE Wednesday 21 March 2012 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Ashraf (Chair), Councillor Colwill (Vice-Chair), Chohan, Mitchell Murray, Ketan Sheth and Harrison

Also Present: Councillor Choudhary

Apologies were received from: Councillors Lorber and McLennan.

1. Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Deputations (if any)

3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 25 January 2012

The minutes of the last meeting of the One Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 January 2012 were approved as a correct record.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Direct Services Transformation

Alison Elliott (Director of Adult Social Services) presented a report to the Committee outlining the learning disabilities direct services transformation project. This project encompassed a redesign of the provision by Adult Social Care of direct or in-house day services to adults with learning disabilities in Brent. It aimed to deliver improved service outcomes, increased independence and customer choice, and the creation of more personalised services, in contrast to the existing model of building-based service delivery. As a result of this project, savings of between £1.033m and £1.118m would be achieved by August 2012 against a budget of £3.7m. Savings to date had amounted to £644k and are on track.

With reference to the report, Allison Elliott advised that the project had been designed to be delivered in four stages and at present, the project had progressed to stage three. The first stage of the project had involved a comprehensive process of consultation with service users, carers and affected staff. Methods of consultation had been tailored to the needs of the particular group. The second phase of the project included assessment of service user needs, utilising a new assessment tool and via the transparent application of the eligibility criteria. Following this, individual support plans were developed. The process was co-designed with service users and was aligned to the principles underpinning Valuing People. The third stage of

the project was focussed on service transformation in preparation for the move to the new John Billam Resource Centre. Several work-streams were currently on-going to ensure that the current service delivery and operational structure was better co-ordinated and streamlined to improve service users experience and outcomes. Specifically, the centre would represent a new operating model for supporting people with disabilities in the borough by focussing on sessional based activities in the centre as well as out in the community. The final phase of the project was the construction of the John Billam Resources Centre and the transferring of services from existing centres. A Decant and Transition Plan for the move had been developed and would be implemented by June 2012. The Resource Centre was now scheduled to be completed by the autumn of 2012.

In the subsequent discussion members raised several issues. The Chair queried whether the closure of local services would reduce accessibility for some service users and sought further details about the feedback received via the consultation. Allison Elliott advised that the New Millennium Day Centre, which catered for those with physical disabilities and the Day Centre in Kingsbury which provided services for elderly people, were not part of the planned closures. However, these services would be examined within the wider review to determine how to improve service delivery. The Albert Road Day Centre in Kilburn currently provided services for individuals with high level needs and options were currently being explored to improve transport to the new resources centre. Feedback from service users and carers had reflected the concern that they would lose the respite that these building-based services represented. However, those service users who had taken advantage of the new system of accessing alternative services, had indicated that they were happier with these arrangements. Advocacy work to assess the impact on service users formed a key part of the transformation project.

With reference to paragraph 2.9 of the report, Councillor Harrison noted that the assessments conducted as part of the project had determined that 50 people were no longer eligible for Adult Social Care services. Councillor Harrison queried why this was and Councillor Mitchel Murray sought further details of what support these individuals had been given. Alison Elliott advised that the existing criteria had been more robustly applied than it had previously. A period of adjustment had been allowed for these individuals and support had been provided to help them identify other more appropriate services or activities within the community that they could access.

The Chair sought further details regarding the type of services that would be offered at the John Billam Resource Centre. Alison Elliott advised that the Centre was intending to draw together several resources in one venue. The Centre would offer high quality sensory activities, supported by highly skilled staff and high quality facilities. In planning the services for the centre, officers had drawn on significant input from the National Autistic Society. Recruitment of staff to deliver these services would be open to existing day centre staff. Councillor Colwill sought specific details of who the Centre would cater for, the budgetary implications of the delay of its construction, and planned parking capacity. Alison Elliott advised that the Centre would cater for those service users with high needs which included those who were currently accessing the Albert Road Day Centre and the ASPPECT (Strathcona Autism Services Promoting Partnership, Empowerment, Creativity and Teamwork) services. The construction of the Centre had been delayed over the winter of 2011; however there were no known concerns regarding

the associated budget. The Centre car park would have capacity for three cars. It was expected that there would be one or two busses transporting service users to the Centre during the day. As an integral part of the planned services of the Centre, service users and staff would be coming in and out of the Centre during the day.

In response to Councillors' queries regarding the direct payment system, Alison Elliott advised that this system enabled service users to identify and purchase their own preferred services. Currently, 47 people had chosen to move on to this system and feedback from these individuals had been very positive. As take up of the scheme had been smaller than hoped, the department would focus on the encouraging use of direct payments across different service user groups. Support plans identifying suitable service options had been developed and a risk based review system was in place to ensure that the money was being used appropriately. A further safeguard was provided by the pre-paid card provided to direct payment users which enabled real time monitoring of expenditure. Councillor Harrison queried how the redesign of services had taken in to account the personalisation agenda and stronger element of personal choice that this represented. Alison Elliott advised that consultation with service users and carers regarding the types of services desired was on-going.

RESOLVED: -

That the report be noted.

6. Performance & Finance Review Quarter 3

A report providing a corporate overview of performance and finance information for quarter 3, 2011-12, was presented to the committee by Phil Newby (Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement). Members' attention was drawn to the supplementary document which set out in full the performance and finance data for this period. This supplementary report reflected the improved method of performance reporting which aimed to provide more relevant and accessible data. Improvements included the provision of more meaningful data regarding public health and a more accessible format for the presentation of data regarding the shortfall of school places within Brent. Work to improve the quality of performance data was on-going and at present there was a focus on developing better local performance indicators (PIs), improving the PIs relating to complaints and revising some of the indicative PIs included for Regeneration and Major Projects. With regard to the financial data for this period, the Council was currently forecasting a breakeven position. This represented a positive development from the position reported at quarter 2 and was due principally to the improvement in the outturn position for Finance and Corporate Services / Central Services. At present, the main overspend pressures on the budget included the Adult Social Care transition (£980k), Children's Social Care legal costs (£830k) and the temporarily accommodation budget (£750k); these demand costs were currently being met by a centrally held provision of £2m. The overspend on schools budget for 2011/12 continued to be about £1.5m; however agreement had been reached with the Schools Forum to bring the schools budget deficit back into balance by the end of 2014/5.

The Chair thanked the officers for their report and commented that the new format was clearer. He added that for future reports, indicators rated as high risk should be accompanied by a brief outline of the reasons for the rating and a summary of actions planned to address these.

During the subsequent discussion, members raised several issues. The Chair noted that there were several performance indicators for Environment and Neighbourhood Services that had been rated as high risk and in particular, incidences of fly tipping were increasing. He queried whether any action had been taken to address these. Phil Newby advised that the way in which the council was required to report on fly tipping was slightly peculiar as it measured both incidences and enforcement action, with a low figure being desirable for the first measure and a high number for the latter. Information on the actions taken to address the performance indicators rated high risk would be forwarded to the Chair/Committee.

Turning to the performance indicators for Adult Social Care, the Chair sought details of why NI32 and NI33 had been rated as high risk. These indicators related to the timeliness of social care assessments for mental health and the subsequent production of care packages. Phil Newby advised that there was a sizable project in operation seeking to better integrate the NHS and Social Care Services and it was hoped that this would improve both the service offered and the quality of performance data. With regard to obtaining performance data from the Social Work system, performance I, this information needed to be manually moved across to the performance management system.

The Chair noted that the number of looked after children placed with in-house foster carers had increased from 103 to 109 and sought details of how this had been achieved. Phil Newby explained that the Head of Service for Placements had investigated what attracted foster carers to an agency and had found that of greatest importance was the quality of support services provided to them. Efforts had subsequently been made to further improve and highlight these services. In addition, the council had undertaken a substantial advertising campaign to attract more foster carers to Brent. The upward trend in the number of in-house adopters was also reflected in the downward trend in the number of children placed with independent fostering agencies.

RESOLVED: -

That the report be noted.

7. One Council Programme

Peter Stachniewski (Head of the One Council Programme) presented a report updating the committee on the operation of the One Council Programme. The aim of this programme was to significantly improve the organisation of the council and delivery of council services. The programme offered a robust framework to support the delivery of change quickly and effectively. The progress of projects was monitored by the One Council Programme Board, which utilised a Red, Amber or Green (RAG) rating system and took an active role in ensuring that any issues or barriers to delivery were addressed. The programme had delivered gross savings of £11.6m in 2010/11 and was forecast to deliver a further £30.2m in 2011/12. The

target for total savings over the four year period 2010/11-2014/15 was £90m to £100m.

Peter Stachniewski further explained that there was currently a total of 36 projects within the One Council Programme, 7 of which had been completed and formally closed, 18 were in delivery and a further 11 were in pre-delivery stages. These were a mix of single department, multi-department, cross council and partnership projects. At present, the overall rating for the programme was Amber; however this did not reflect the considerable progress made since the last update had been presented to the committee. This progress included the formal closure of two projects and the movement of several other projects into delivery. Governance across the programme had been reviewed and strengthened and this included the implementation of a revised governance structure for the delivery of the Civic Centre and associated move within which clear lines of ownership and accountability had been established. The pilot of the Environment and Neighbourhood Services Departmental Portfolio Board (DPB) was still in process and was progressing well. DPBs were still required to report to the One Council Programme board but were intended to ensure that greater departmental responsibility and ownership of One Council projects was undertaken. DPBs were designed to oversee single department projects and were required to report regularly to the portfolio co-ordinator. These reports would be copied to the Programme Management Office, which would also receive a subsequent composite report from the departmental management team regarding all projects within the departmental area.

Member's attention was subsequently drawn to Appendices 1 to 4 which provided further detail in respect of the structure of the Programme (Appendix 1), project end dates (Appendix 2), individual projects, as presented in a dashboard form (Appendix 3), and the progress of current and new projects (Appendix 4). Appendix 2 had been provided at members' request. With reference to Appendix 3, Irene Bremang (Manager of the Programme Management Office) explained that the programme dashboard provided key information regarding the projects and particularly focussed on changes which had taken place since the last update. The Chair noted that the One Council programme dashboard provided at Appendix 3 was a very useful and commented that it could be improved by the inclusion of project completion dates.

In the subsequent discussion, members raised several issues. Councillor Colwill queried why the Civic Centre project had moved from Amber to a Red rating, and similarly, why the Children's Social Care project was rated red. The Chair noted that this latter project was due to close within the next month and queried whether it was now a priority to address the outstanding issues and further, whether the closure date was definitive. With regard to the Civic Centre Move project, Councillor Colwill also sought details of the associated costs and the Chair queried what preparatory training staff had received.

In response to these queries, Phil Newby advised that throughout the lifetime of a project it was expected that different RAG ratings would apply as issues or concerns arose and were negotiated. The Civic Centre project was currently rated red as the One Council Project Board felt that the facilities management tendering process should be taking place quicker. With regard to the Children Social Care and Transformation project, it was felt that it had progressed as far as it was able;

however, in view of the level of service pressure, it would continue to be monitored via the Strategic Finance Group. The Project closure report will show how the main project objectives have been met and how any residual activities will be managed by the department. The One Council Programme Board will then review and endorse the Closure Report on the basis that outstanding activities are being managed by the department and financial pressures are being monitored by SFG. Projects are time limited activities and therefore cannot be kept open indefinitely.. With reference to paragraph 6.3 of the report which set out the costs of each of the One Council Projects, Peter Stachniewski, advised that the Move to the Civic Centre project was forecast to cost £291k. In order to manage the impact on services during the move, work was taking place to ensure that staff were trained and practiced in working in new ways and with new technology as necessary prior to the move.

Councillor Mitchel Murray noted that as part of the Housing Needs Transformation project and the new staffing structure, it was intended that interim appointments would be considered where posts were not filled, and queried whether these interim appointments would be consultants, agency staff or drawn from existing staff. The Chair also noted that staff for the One Council Project was predominantly drawn from internal resources and sought further details of the arrangements for cover for these staff members. Councillor Colwill queried whether the Libraries Transformation Project had delivered the anticipated savings for this financial year.

Peter Stachniewski advised that the Housing Needs Transformation Project encompassed an extensive restructure but that any interim cover for presently vacant posts would be funded within the service budget. Interim cover for staff seconded to the One Council Programme was provided if deemed necessary but was largely dependent on individual circumstances. Turning to the Libraries Transformation Project, Peter Stachniewski noted that the projected savings for the current year had not been met due to the delay in implementing the decision following the judicial review; however, it was expected that the savings for the following financial year would be achieved.

Councillor Harrison sought information regarding the SEN phase 2 project which was currently in the developmental stages. Irene Bremang advised that prior to a project moving into delivery, a Project Initiation Document (PID) was required to be developed. The PID for the SEN phase 2 project contained detail which needed to be updated and the Programme Management Office were currently working to assist the project board with this process. The One Council programme also encompassed new ways of working and staff needed to be supported in their learning process. At present there was no Children and Families DPB as there were some issues which still needed to be resolved. Consequently, a member of staff in the Programme Management Office had been assigned to support Children and Families projects. Phil Newby added that there were several interlocking elements driving forward change in the delivery of services for Children and Families. These included a raft of central government initiatives such as that of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) regarding complex families, and the troubled families initiative championed by the Prime Minister. As reflected within the Children's Centre's project, there was also an emphasis on prevention through early intervention. Evidence demonstrated that poor parenting in the early years of a child's life led to greater difficulties in later life including increased incidences of anti-social behaviour. Similarly, there would be a

movement towards developing family-centred social workers who would act to bring in the required support at the right time for a family. The council was seeking to merge these different elements into a cohesive family-centred approach. There were several different funding streams associated with these different initiatives and further work was required to identify how these could be applied and to extend appropriate partnership arrangements.

During members' discussion, several suggestions were made by the committee. The Chair commented that it would be useful to have a diagram to illustrate the reporting structure of DPBs and with regard to Appendix 3, completion dates for the projects should be included. The Chair also requested that if, following the closure of a project there remained tasks outstanding, a report setting out these details should be submitted to the committee.

RESOLVED: -

That the report be noted.

8. One Council Overview and Scrutiny work programme

The Chair noted that the current meeting was the last of the 2011/12 municipal year and suggested that reports on the One Council projects regarding Services for Young People and the Complex Families initiative be brought to a future meeting of the committee.

9. Date of next meeting

The committee noted that the date of the next meeting would be confirmed following the Annual Council Meeting scheduled for 16 May 2012.

10. Any other urgent business

None.

The meeting closed at 21:18

J ASHRAF
Chair