



Full Council
22 January 2018

**Report from the Director of
Performance Policy & Partnerships**

**Report from the Chair of the Resources and Public Realm
Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Matt Kelcher**

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	1
Background Papers:	N/A
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Mark Cairns, Policy & Scrutiny Manager, mark.cairns@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the work carried out by the Council's Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committee in accordance with Standing Order 36. The report covers the period from 19th Sept 2017 to present, detailing a programme of work and items discussed during the committee meeting on 27th November 2017.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 Council is recommended to note this report.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee covers corporate resources, (including Customer Services, Policy, Partnerships and Performance, Procurement and IT) as well as regeneration, regulatory services, environment, transport and community safety. The committee is composed of eight elected members (seven from the Labour Group and one opposition group member which is consistent with current political balance arrangements).

3.2 2017-18 Resources and Public Realm Committee Members

Councillor Matt Kelcher (Chair)
Councillor Joel Davidson (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Abdi Aden
Councillor Lia Colacicco
Councillor George Crane
Councillor Ernest Ezeajughi
Councillor Sam Stopp
Councillor Roxanne Mashari.

- 3.3 The committee has met twice, in November 2017 and January 2018. The January meeting fell after reporting deadlines for Council, and so that meeting will be covered in a future report to Council. However, a summary of the items discussed at the meeting on 27th November 2017 follows.

Complaints Annual Report 2016-17

- 3.4 Irene Bremang (Head of Performance and Improvement) introduced the Complaints Annual Report 2016 – 2017, which had been presented to Cabinet in October. The report set out complaints performance in Brent Council and Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) for the period April 2016 to March 2017 and included high level data for the previous two years for comparison.
- 3.5 Members welcomed the report and commented that it would be improved by the addition of comparative data for other authorities and data on the level of service interactions against volume of complaints. The committee questioned the cost of complaints for the council, querying the size of the complaints team and the number of officer hours spent. Members also queried the reasons for some complaints not being dealt with within timescales. Acknowledging the impact of central government's policy of austerity on local government services, the committee examined whether or not timescales for departmental responses had been adjusted to accommodate reduced resources and if so, whether this was communicated to Brent's residents. Officers were asked to comment on the impact of the Customer Access Strategy.
- 3.6 The committee also stressed that it believed that officers should be honest with the public at all times in relation to financial pressures and their impact on service provision. If the Council was no longer able to provide a service, or had had to reduce the level of a service in response to government cuts, then it had to be clear about this and the reasons why.

Report for Scrutiny on Call-In Report on South Kilburn Regeneration Programme - Carlton & Granville Centres Site - Development Options

- 3.7 Councillor Tatler (Lead Member for Regeneration, Growth, Employment and Skills) presented an update report to the Committee on the South Kilburn Regeneration Programme, Carlton & Granville Centres Site, detailing the consultation undertaken and progress made. The committee had requested the update at a meeting in the previous municipal year, when it had considered the project in response to a call-in of Cabinet decisions. Councillor Tatler advised that a lot of progress had been made as a result of recommendations implemented by the previous Lead Member.
- 3.8 The committee was pleased to note that stakeholders had been involved in the drafting and finalising of the brief for appointment of design teams and endorsed the approach for similar projects. To further strengthen the council's practice in this respect, it recommended to the Lead Member and officers that all public

consultation events undertaken regarding regeneration projects in Brent include both a weekday evening event and weekend daytime event, which would ensure maximum opportunities are provided for members of the public to attend.

Tree Management Policy

- 3.9 Councillor Southwood (Lead Member for Environment) presented a revised Tree Management Policy to the committee for pre-decision scrutiny, prior to consideration by Cabinet in December 2017. The revised policy had been developed to consider the benefits and importance of maintaining the borough's trees, aiming to raise the profile, value and appreciation of trees in Brent. In doing so, the policy aimed to improve understanding of tree issues, manage expectations and meet the challenge of adapting to climate change in the coming decades.
- 3.10 During the discussion, members questioned whether the council targeted the planting of new trees to areas most affected by poor air quality and suggested that an aspirational target for the planting of trees in the borough be set. They also queried sources of funding, including the use of Community Infrastructure Levy and the Mayor of London's Tree Fund. Reflecting on the success of other boroughs in engaging community support to deliver tree planting schemes, members asked whether the council had explored these approaches for use in Brent. The committee learned that the revival of the resident sponsorship scheme had resulted from consulting other councils.
- 3.11 A number of amendments to the Tree Management Policy were recommended by the committee. Some of these recommendations included a section to be included on Air Quality which emphasises the importance of street trees in mitigating the impact of air pollution. A further section to be included to outline why street trees are good for the borough. And a section to detail the funding opportunities available to the council.

Community Access and Vulnerable People

- 3.12 David Oates (Head of Service, Benefits & Customer Services) introduced the report on Welfare, Benefits and Customer Service provision for vulnerable residents. The report detailed the key factors used to determine if a resident was considered vulnerable within the welfare and benefit functions and provided an update on the former Community Access Strategy.
- 3.13 The committee emphasised the importance of ensuring that the council was able to measure its performance in supporting its most vulnerable residents. Members suggested a working group or task group be established to determine a way to define this cohort, drawing on outside expertise, such as that provided by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. It also learned that certain groups of vulnerable people were largely 'hidden' to the council, such as those with no recourse to public funds.
- 3.14 Members suggested a working group or task group be established to determine a way to define this cohort, drawing on outside expertise such as that provided by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. It was therefore agreed by the Chair of the committee in conjunction with scrutiny officers for an establishment of a

member-led group to include outside expertise, such as that provided by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, to explore how to define vulnerable residents.

Food Banks and Poverty Task Group Report

- 3.15 Councillor Mashari chaired a task group into the use of food banks in Brent, due to the significant rise in their usage nationally and the lack of a detailed picture of this in Brent. Members were also concerned with the human impact food poverty is having on local communities and wanted to understand the scale and drivers of food poverty and food insecurity.
- 3.16 Its concern was focused on vulnerable residents such as the elderly, disabled and children, for example the impact of hunger on children and young people's education. The task group also explored why individuals need to use food banks, and ways to tackle stigma associated with this. This included the impact of welfare reform changes from central government, unemployment, rising costs of living and low pay. There also exists a varying degree of regulation, safe guarding and data collection across different providers.
- 3.17 The task group considered that the impact of welfare changes such as Universal Credit could be far reaching, and that it is vital therefore that the council and other local public sector partners put in place organisational arrangements that enable Brent to mitigate the impact of Universal Credit as far in advance as possible.
- 3.18 The task group made 36 individual recommendations, grouped into themes of why people use food banks, policy development, working in partnership, the user experience, future models, and general and best practice.
- 3.19 Additionally, a video has been made of the task group's work, including interviews undertaken with foodbank staff and volunteers.

4.0 Upcoming Scrutiny Meetings and Activities

- 4.1 The next meeting of the committee following full Council is scheduled for 21st February 2018 and the items which it will consider are:

- Employment and employability in Brent
- Property and assets
- Social regeneration
- Community cohesion task group scoping report.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications.

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 There are no legal implications.

7.0 Equality Implications

- 7.1 There are no equality implications.

Report sign off:

Peter Gadsdon

Director of Performance Policy &
Partnerships

Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2017-18

Tuesday 11 July 2017

Agenda Rank	Item	Details	Cabinet Member/Member	Brent Council/Partner organisations
1.	Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny committee 2017-18 Forward Plan	Committee to review and agree programme of work and forward plan for 2017-18	Cllr Matt Kelcher, Chair of the R&PR Scrutiny Committee	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships
2.	Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17	Committee to review and agree the 2016-17 annual report for publishing	Cllr Matt Kelcher, Chair of the R&PR Scrutiny Committee	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships
3.	Strategic overview of the Council's Funding	A presentation on the council's wider funding and what the council is planning to do to adapt to changes in the way local government is funded	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader	Althea Loderick, Strategic Director of Resources
4.	Food banks and poverty Task Group Scoping Report	Scoping document on Poverty task group, to be approved by committee.	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader Cllr Roxane Mashari, Task Group Chair	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships

Tuesday 5 September 2017

Agenda	Item	Details	Cabinet Member/Member	Brent Council/Partner organisations
1.	Outcome Based Reviews (OBR's)	<p>Update from 2016-17 OBRs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Support & Welfare • Regeneration <p>Emerging findings from 2017-18 OBRs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gangs • Domestic Abuse <p>Also review how the OBRs process has worked</p>	<p>Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member Regeneration, Growth, Employment & Skills</p> <p>Cllr Tom Miller, Cabinet Members Stronger Communities</p>	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships
2.	Follow up review on Brent high street initiatives	<p>A report on how uniformed litter patrol officers are performing after being brought in-house.</p> <p>An analysis on how have the town centre managers performed since being appointed and how the Digital High Street project performed</p> <p>*Visit to high street(s) with managers to see how they work?</p>	<p>Cllr Eleanor Southwood, Cabinet Member Environment</p> <p>Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member Regeneration, Growth, Employment & Skills</p>	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment
3.	Update on S106 and Community Infrastructure Task Group	A report (with RAG rating) providing an update on recommendations made by the task group in July 2016	Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member Regeneration, Growth, Employment & Skills	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment
4.	Update on The Devolution of Business Rates Task Group	A report and RAG'ed report providing an update on recommendations made by the task group in November 2016	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader	Althea Loderick, Strategic Director of Resources

Tuesday 27 November 2017

Agenda	Item	Details	Cabinet Member/Member	Brent Council/Partner organisations
1.	Annual Report on Complaints 2016/17	Committee to receive update on the councils 2016-17 complaints performance.	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships
2.	Update - South Kilburn Regeneration Programme	A report detailing in full the extent and nature of the collaboration between the council, the community and key stakeholders in the progression of the development of the Carlton and Granville Centres Site. This report will also provide an update on the twelve-month timetable.	Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member Regeneration, Growth, Employment & Skills	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment
3.	Community access and vulnerable people	Analysis of access to all the residents of Brent, including digital provision and factors which make some customers and users “vulnerable”.	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader Cllr Harbi Farah, Cabinet Member Housing and Welfare Reform	Althea Loderick, Strategic Director of Resources
4.	Trees Policy	Pre-scrutiny of forthcoming policy;	Cllr Eleanor Southwood	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment
5.	Food banks and poverty Task Group Report	Finding and recommendations on the task group review of Food Banks and poverty.	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader Cllr Roxane Mashari, Task Group Chair	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships

Tuesday 9 January 2018

Agenda	Item	Details	Cabinet Member/Member	Brent Council/Partner organisations
1.	Budget Scrutiny Report	Committee to scrutinise and agree the Scrutiny Budget report for 2018-19, and to consider plans for the London retained business rates pool.	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader	Althea Loderick, Strategic Director of Resources Conrad Hall, Chief Finance Officer
2.	Digital Strategy channel shift	Analysis on the experience of our residents interacting with the Council; explanation of the Brent “Customer Promise” and customer service standards. Discussion, should we call people who use our services “customers” or “residents” or something else?	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships Sadie East, Head of Transformation
3.	Recycling rates	Analysis of Brent’s recycling rates. How does our performance compare to other authorities? What can we do reduce food waste in the recycling stream? What new technology could be deployed to improve recycling?	Cllr Eleanor Southwood Cabinet Member Environment	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment Chris White, Operational Director of Environment Services
4.	Trading standards	Analysis on the role of trading standards in 2017. Are we targeting the correct areas? What do the public want trading standards to do?	Cllr Tom Miller, Stronger Communities	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment Aktar Choudhury, Operational Director Regeneration Simon Legg, Senior Regulatory Service Manager

Wednesday 21 February 2018

Agenda	Item	Details	Cabinet Member/Member	Brent Council/Partner organisations
1.	Employment and employability in Brent	Invitation to the DWP to come to scrutiny. Analysis of their role, in partnership with the council, for boosting employment in Brent Focus on the DWP Brent officers to provide context where possible, specifically about the Jobcentre closures in Brent and how impact will be mitigated.	Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member Regeneration, Growth, Employment & Skills	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment Aktar Choudhury,,Operational Director Regeneration Matthew Dibben, Head of Employment, Skills and Enterprise
2.	Property and assets	Are we getting the most out of our assets? List of all property owned by the council for the committee. *Site visit to properties the Cttee identify as of interest ahead of the meeting	Cllr Muhammad Butt Leader	Althea Loderick, Strategic Director of Resources Sara Chaudhry, Head of Property
3.	Social regeneration	Analysis on whether Brent policies for ensuring our regeneration projects have a positive social impact? What is our vision for the Wembley regeneration? *Visit to a regeneration project	Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member Regeneration, Growth, Employment & Skills	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment Aktar Choudhury,,Operational Director Regeneration Jonathan Kay, Senior Regeneration Manager
4.	Task group scoping report TBD	TBD	Task Group Chair	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships

Monday 26 March 2018

Agenda	Item	Details	Cabinet Member/Member	Brent Council/External organisations
1.	Annual Safer Brent Partnership Report 2016/17	Annual report of the Safer Brent Partnership and update on community safety. *Borough Commander	Cllr Tom Miller, Stronger Communities	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment Karina Wane, Head of Community Protection
2.	Task group report TBD	TBD	Task Group Chair Cabinet Member TBD	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships Officers TBD
3.	Engagement and Consultation Review	A report on the emerging findings from the Engagement and Consultation review.	Cllr Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader	Peter Gadsdon, Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships Pascoe Sawyers, Head of Strategy & Partnerships Genevie George, Partnerships and Engagement Manager
4.	Update on The Small & Medium Enterprise Task Group	A report and RAG'ed report providing an update on recommendations made by the task group in May 2017.	Cllr Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member Regeneration, Growth, Employment & Skills	Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment Aktar Choudhury,,Operational Director Regeneration Matthew Dibben, Head of Employment, Skills and Enterprise