



MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE Wednesday 2 December 2015 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Kelcher (Chair), Councillor Colwill (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Daly, Farah, Long, Miller, Stopp and Tatler, together with co-opted members Mr Alloysius Frederick, Dr J Levison, Mr Payam Tamiz and Iram Yaqub

Also Present: Councillors Connelly, McLennan and Pavey

Apologies were received from: co-opted Member Ms Christine Cargill

1. Declarations of interests

Councillor Miller declared a non pecuniary interest in item 5 on the agenda by virtue of being employed by a mental health charity.

2. Introduction

Councillor Kelcher introduced himself as the new chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

He referred to the decisions taken at the Cabinet meeting on 16 November 2015 on parking charges. He stated that he would be writing to express his concerns over aspects of the decisions taken and setting out the questions he wanted answered. He would report back on the outcome of his enquiries.

3. Order of agenda

The Chair stated that because there were a number of people present to hear the discussion on item 7 – South Kilburn regeneration programme – he intended to bring forward consideration of this item to take place after considering Matters arising.

4. Deputations

Mr Firmin, Chair of Alpha, Gorefield and Canterbury Tenants and Residents Association addressed the committee. See minute 7 below.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 November 2015 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting, subject to minute 7 – Scrutiny task group on CCTV -.resolution (i) being amended to make it clear that it was agreed that an additional recommendation from the task group was to call for a piece of work to be undertaken on compiling a central record of all CCTV in the borough.

6. **Matters arising**

None.

7. **South Kilburn regeneration programme**

The Chair invited Pete Firmin, Chair of the Gorefield and Canterbury Tenants and Residents Association to address the committee. He referred to the circulated report and stated that whilst it updated the committee there was no reference to some of the problems that had arisen from the redevelopment of the area. There was a need to critically appraise the project, review the balance between the provision of private and social housing and the implications of the delays to the project. He stated that the experience of contractors working with local people had not been all good. A new health centre was being provided but this was needed for the existing population before it increased from the new housing being provided. Pete Firmin also referred to a lack of consultation on the changes resulting from HS2. He felt that as the regeneration project moved forward there needed to be a new commitment to work with local residents. In response Richard Barrett (Operational Director, Property and Projects) replied that the report before the committee provided a broad outline of activity. He acknowledged that there was now a need to engage local people in the review of the South Kilburn masterplan. Councillor McLennan (Lead Member for Housing and Development) reminded the committee that the remit of the South Kilburn regeneration programme was to provide new housing with every secure tenant being offered housing within the redeveloped scheme. She responded to the suggestion that there was a lack of consultation and assured the committee that there was engagement with the local community and the regeneration scheme was giving hope to people that things would get better.

Questions were asked regarding how many units of social housing were being provided as compared to private housing. Councillor McLennan undertook to provide this figure. It was pointed out that successive schemes within the project appeared to result in the provision of less social housing. Concern was expressed that as budgets got tighter less social housing would be provided. Richard Barrett clarified that the target was to provide 50% social housing within the regeneration scheme overall.

Members enquired about the slippage to the programme and how local residents were informed of this. Richard Barrett stated that he attended a tenants steering group every 2-3 months to keep them up to date. He agreed that the delays were unwelcome and led to longer periods of disruption for local people. However, the scheme still offered local people the best opportunity for moving into better accommodation.

Reference was made to complaints received from residents about the behaviour of some contractors. It was explained that it was the responsibility of Brent Housing Partnership or the housing associations to work with the contractors. It was recognised that the Catalyst scheme had been the worst managed scheme and this had been raised with the developer and lessons learnt from it.

Questions were asked about employment opportunities within the area created by the regeneration programme. In answer to a question about Coventry Close, Richard Barratt explained that this was outside the regeneration area but the opportunity was being taken to try to influence the improvement of the area. The Committee heard how work with the police attempted to design out trouble spots within the new redevelopments. Members were interested in receiving more information on this.

Members were also concerned that the planned expansion of local schools would provide sufficient places for local children. Richard Barrett explained the plans for the expansion of Carlton Vale Infants and Kilburn Park Junior schools. He explained that discussions were ongoing to get agreement to an arrangement that both schools supported but that it was at an early stage.

Members expressed their continuing concern over the need to provide better outcomes for local people and not just provide new housing. At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Conneely addressed the committee and stated that local people were very concerned about the way they were being decanted and moved back into the area. There was concern that local communities were being split up and the implication of this particularly for older people. She wanted to see the process completed on time and people treated fairly. Richard Barrett replied that every tenant was visited to assess their needs for the property they were moving in to. In partnership with the housing service, decanted flats were being used for temporary accommodation. Members asked for more detail on how this arrangement was working.

The Chair thanked Councillor McLennan and Richard Barrett for their attendance.

Requests for information:

- accurate figures on the number of social housing units existing pre redevelopment and the number post redevelopment compared to the number of private units provided.
- members to be provided with a schedule of rents for the area including a comparison with the pre redevelopment level of rents.
- a population profile for the area showing how the number of people was projected to rise.
- information on employment in the area so that it could be seen if the regeneration of the area was leading to a rising employment rate.
- more information on how the plans for the area attempted to design out potential crime and the involvement of the police in this.
- more information on the use of decanted units to house homeless people, including the number involved, the timeframes involved and the financial considerations.

8. **Update on the procurement processes for five General Practice services in Brent**

Julie Sands (Head of Primary Care NW London, NHS England) introduced the report before the committee which provided an update on the processes being undertaken by NHS England to procure contracts to continue services for patients of five practices across the borough. She stated that the period of engagement had now ended and the outcomes were being compiled. However, the proposal to bring together under one contract the Acton Lane surgery with Harness Harlesden needed more time for work to be undertaken on the proposed premises and further engagement activity which would have the effect of delaying the procurement process outlined in paragraph 6.1.

In answer to questions from members about the consultation process, Julie Sands explained that the original timetable had envisaged decisions being made in August, plans being finalised in September and consultation taking place in October. However it had been discovered that letters had not been delivered and this had added a delay to the process by two weeks. She re-assured the committee that existing staff would have the opportunity to transfer to the new provider and that restrictions written into the contract would ensure a certain number of GPs being engaged. Julie Sands explained that the procurement process was part of the QIPP programme which sought to ensure quality and value for money but there was no intention to reduce the amount of resource going into this service specifically.

Members discussed the provision of PMS contracts and what they saw as the unannounced phasing out of some contracts. The committee asked for details of any existing PMS contract holders that had a role in the CCG. It also asked for information on the performance issues with the Sudbury surgery.

With regard to the standard service provision including remote access for appointments, it was explained that this was included in the specification because it was desirable to encourage such provision. The current capacity for this provision varied within each practice. The committee emphasised the importance of engaging with patients over how to use on-line appointment facilities.

Councillor Mitchell Murray addressed the committee as a patient of one of the practices. She criticised the public consultation carried out by NHS England. She questioned the opening hours under the new contracts. The practice she used also ran a blood service and it was not clear within the proposals if this would continue. Councillor Mitchell Murray questioned exactly who within the list of those engaged shown in paragraph 5.1 of the report had been contacted and criticised the fact that the procurement timetable did not include time for feedback on the results of the consultation. She expressed support for her existing practice which had been built up by the two GPs working there who now faced an uncertain future. In response, Julie Sands explained that NHS England was legally obliged to seek new contracts because it could only extend existing contracts for a limited time. She added that there was no intention to reduce opening hours. Sarah Mansuralli (Chief Operating Officer) added that GP access hubs were let on a separate contract which allowed for additional hours to be provided.

A member of the public addressed the committee criticising the proposals and supporting the existing provision.

Requests for information

- details of any existing PMS contract holders that also have a role in the CCG.
- information on the performance issues with the Sudbury surgery

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the briefing and timeline for the procurement process for five GP practices in Brent be noted;
- (ii) that an update on progress be submitted to the Committee in March 2016.

9. **CCG Commissioning Intentions**

Opening the discussion, the Chair asked how it was intended that the CCG would move from a deficit position to a surplus with no reduction in service. Sarah Mansurali (Chief Operating Officer, Brent CCG) explained that the CCG had inherited a surplus position from the PCG but an unprecedented growth in hospital activity over what had been planned for meant the CCG was now facing an in year deficit position. There was therefore a need to look at how services could be provided more efficiently with no impact on their delivery whilst addressing the overspend. She could not guarantee that similar challenges would not arise in the future.

Councillor Tatler expressed concern at the change of approach to post-discharge advice and education for mental illness shown in paragraph 8.13.a of the report. She stated that this would lead to patients seeing different doctors. She felt there was a need to improve the service provided for people with mental health issues and their carers. Councillor Tatler felt GPs needed more training on treating mental health issues. Dr Sarah Basham (Brent CCG) sought to re-assure the committee that continuing care would still be provided and that a similar approach had been trialled in Hounslow. The need for continuity and consistency of care was acknowledged and efforts to achieve this were being made. More had been invested in mental health services year on year so there was no question that this area had received cuts and a programme of training for doctors had taken place. Members felt that more work was needed on looking into mental health services and undertook to discuss this outside the meeting.

Reassurances were sought that the views of Patient Voice would be taken into account and that public access to the services provided was incorporated.

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

Noted.

11. **Scrutiny forward plan**

The Chair reported that two new task groups would be established to look at housing associations operating in Brent and the use of Section 106/Community

Infrastructure Levy payments so the work programme would be updated to reflect the forthcoming approval of the terms of reference. He added that related to the item on South Kilburn discussed at the meeting, the S106/CIL task group would be considering South Kilburn as a live example.

12. **Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 10.00 pm

M KELCHER
Chair