



**MINUTES OF THE ONE COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday 29 May 2013 at 7.00 pm**

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

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillors Ashraf and Colwill.

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

None declared.

**2. Minutes of the last meeting held on 2 May 2013**

Resolved:

that the minutes of the last meeting held on Thursday 2 May 2013 be recorded as an accurate record of the meeting.

**3. Matters arising**

None.

**4. Libraries Transformation Project**

Sue McKenzie (Head of Libraries) gave a presentation on the current progress of the Library Transformation Project. The Committee were reminded that the vision for the project was that wherever people lived in the borough and however they used the library service they would have access to over six million books, they would have access to services online and they would have opportunities to learn, create and improve their life chances. This vision had been the basis of the project for the past three years.

Members were provided with details of how successful the project had been in 2012/2013 compared with 2011/2012. Book issues were slightly down by 2.3% in the six libraries now open compared to the twelve libraries open in 2011/2012. However visits to the six libraries were up, as were the number of new members by 35%. Customers were also 6% happier compared to the last CIPFA survey in 2009. The key reasons as to why the project had been successful, despite the closure of six libraries, had been because the library service had been working hard to ensure that the book stock they had reflected the books that users wanted to read. They had used an electronic programme that analysed which books had been borrowed at each of the libraries. It was added that the library service were also looking at

other data sources, such as mosaic data, to ensure the most appropriate books were at the right libraries. It was noted that the Library Service had been able to increase their book stock by over 25% as they were now part of a book buying consortium.

Members were informed that children and young people made up over 50% of the users of Brent libraries and therefore the library service had paid particular attention to this demographic. They were also campaigning to ensure that all Brent school children had a library card. The library service had also increased the number of home visits it did to those who were unable to get to libraries, as well as the number of community locations it delivered books too.

Members were advised that the library service recognised that it had to increasingly ensure that resources were available online. Therefore it now had access to online encyclopaedias, online magazines as well as search facilities such as 'ancestry' and driving theory practice. The new Wembley Library, due to open on 17 June, would be completely wi-fi enabled, ensuring that customers would be able to get online from their own devices. There would also be 16 Ipads in the library for customer use. The Wembley Library would be the first library in Brent to have a café within it and it was hoped that the library and the café would be able to do joint promotions.

The library transformation project was due to be concluded at the end of June 2013. The project had delivered 85% of its 129 actions, with the rest due to be completed in the coming year. The priorities for the rest of the year would be to firstly support residents through the welfare reforms and recession. Its second priority would be to improve the CIPFA indicators compared to other London Boroughs. Lastly, the library service wanted to increase its number of e-books.

During member's discussion, it was questioned what was happening to the museum at Willesden Green. Members also asked what the net difference was between people joining and people leaving the libraries, as well as how the libraries were going to prepare themselves to help people struggling with the new changes to the benefits system. Councillor Long informed the Committee that she had visited the new Willesden Green Library sites as well as Kingsbury Library and all were very well used. Councillor Chohan added that his constituents had informed him that they now found it much easier to find the books they needed.

In response to the issues raised, Sue McKenzie informed the Committee that the museum was currently on tour and had a number of events organised for the summer. There would be a museum in the new Willesden Green centre which would be much more visible and user friendly than the previous museum. In regards to the number of people leaving the library compared to joining there had been an overall drop in memberships. This was the norm for most London Boroughs who had such a transient population like Brent. However in the last 3 months there had been a net increase in memberships and the Libraries were looking to ensure this trend remained. Jenny Isaac (Assistant Director-Neighbourhood services) informed members that in November 2012 it was demonstrated that 48% of people who used one of the six libraries that had been closed were now using one of the six remaining libraries.

Sue McKenzie assured members that the library staff were being trained to help people who may need help with the changes to the benefits system. However it was added that the Enterprise Unit were going to bid for funding to get specifically trained staff to help people in libraries as well as it was recognised that this wasn't the libraries staff area of expertise.

Members asked if the Library service would mind giving this presentation to Brent Connects and the Library service happily agreed.

## 5. **Services for Young People**

Cathy Tyson (Assistant Director of Corporate Policy) gave a verbal update to the Committee on Services for Young People which was in the process of being reviewed. The first phase of the review had now been completed and it had demonstrated that there were a wide range of activities provided across the borough, delivered by a number of groups including statutory agencies as well as voluntary and community groups. The review found that most of the provision tended to be for recreational, leisure and arts activities and the council spent approximately £3 million on funding these activities.

The Council had consulted with young people via a series of focus groups as well as web-based surveys to find out their views on the provisions in the Borough. The consultation highlighted a number of key findings including that young people were keen to engage in activities that would offer them some sort of qualification/accreditation or boost their employability. It also highlighted that, although the Council tried to ensure its costs were kept low, sometimes the fee to participate in an activity was a barrier for some young people.

The next steps in the review included Children and families department working on proposals for the future provision of youth services which would be considered as part of the council's budget and service review process in June and July. These proposals would include; articulating a clearer role and expected outcomes for youth in Brent across all providers, making the best possible use of the excellent facilities at Roundwood Myplace and targeting resources at particularly vulnerable young people in the borough. It was also believed that the service should become more accountable at tackling unemployment and low skill levels amongst young people.

In response to a number of questions raised by Members, Cathy Tyson explained that to ensure that there was enough funding for different activities, the Council was going to have to support the Voluntary Sector to access external funding that the Council was unable to access. It was also noted that preventive measures were crucial to helping vulnerable young people and that the Brent Young People's Centre was renowned as a centre of good practice for mental health services. It was then clarified that during the mapping exercise of the borough there were no significant gaps in the borough in terms of provisions for young people. However it was noted that children and young people did not always want to travel, for a variety of reasons, to access provisions elsewhere in the borough. It was reiterated that employment skills were very important to young people, so the Youth service would try to ensure that the cultural and leisure facilities they offered helped to maximise these skills. Cathy Tyson concluded by stating that it was hoped that the Youth Partnership Scheme would be implemented by autumn.

## 6. One Council Programme update

Sue Harper (Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods) informed members that there had been a change to the senior levels of the One Council Programme. A CMT/One Council Strategic Programme Board had been established and was chaired by the Interim Chief Executive and its remit was to manage the strategic direction of the One Council Programme. A One Council Programme Delivery Board had also been developed to focus on One Council projects and Sue Harper was the Chair of the One Council Programme Delivery Board.

Irene Bremang (PMO Manager) introduced her update on the One Council Programme by informing Members that since the last update in December 2012 there had been an increase in the number of One Council projects from 36 to 41. Two of the new projects had already begun and were in delivery, these were the Customer and Visitor Management project and the Promoting Pupil Inclusion project. Three further projects were in the pre-delivery stage. It was added that six projects had now been completed which included the Future Customer Services project and the Website Enhancement project. The Members were then kept up to date with the two projects that had been rated as Red in December. The first project was within Procurement and there had been a delay in identifying additional savings; this had now been resolved. The Web Enhancement project was the second project had been Rated red because there had been an issue with using online forms. This has been addressed and the project has been completed. Both of these projects moved to an Amber status prior to their completion and closure.

It was added that there were two other projects currently rated Red as well. The first was the Brent One Oracle E-business suite, which was previously named Project Athena. It was a partnership project and the go live date had been pushed back from July until November 2013 due to some changes to the system requirements made by the partnership. Moving the go live date had meant that Brent had had to temporarily extend the current payroll contract and incur extra costs. The other project also rated Red was the Parking Enforcement Review. This was a large project with 6 interdependent work streams which needed more effective project management. Good progress had been made with project delivery and a new project manager had been put in place to help keep the project moving in the right direction. The project was expected to move from Red to Amber shortly when the revised Project Initiation Document was approved.

Members were further informed about the new governance arrangements for the One Council Programme. The interim Chief Executive had become the One Council Programme Sponsor and the CMT/OC Strategic Programme Board would start meeting on a 4-weekly basis from June 2013. The One Council Programme Delivery Board, chaired by Sue Harper would also begin meeting in June. Robust project and programme management and reporting would still continue to be maintained as part of the One Council Programme. It was added that there had been a drop in risks reported by One Council Projects from 183 to 155. This was largely due to several One Council projects having been completed and closed since the last report to members in December 2013.

In 2012/2013 the One Council Programme had delivered cumulative savings of £54 million, in 2013/2014 another £10 million was forecast to be saved and it was

expected that there would be further savings of £14 million in 2014/15. It was added that there had also been a number of non-financial benefits being delivered through One Council projects as well, and the non-financial benefits from the Adult Social Care Learning Disability Transformation project was used as an example. There were no legal implication arising and no significant cumulative impacts on any one diversity strand across the One Council Programme as a whole. The update was concluded by members being told that the One Council Programme still had a lot to deliver. However, the remaining One Council projects were the harder and more complex projects to deliver in the One Council Programme.

During discussion it was queried whether Brent had any possible sanctions against its partners in the One Oracle project due to the costs that Brent had incurred. Members also asked whether it would have been advisable to ensure the Head of HR had been appointed before the restructure of HR had taken place, especially as the interim head of HR had been in place for over 13 months. Members also sought clarification as to when the new senior management structure would be put into place and how the recruitment of senior posts was progressing. Members also had a number of questions regarding the new parking scheme and therefore it was agreed that an update on the parking project should be on the agenda of the next meeting. Members agreed that they would also like an update on the Adult Social Care project as well.

Irene Bremang replied by stating that system changes agreed by the partnership had resulted in the Oracle go live date being pushed back. Brent had to take responsibility for the temporary payroll arrangements required before the payroll system went live in the Oracle system. Although partners were aware of critical timelines, Brent was unable to regain these costs from the other partners in the project. In regards to the Senior Management restructure, it was explained that the process had begun and the external recruitment of certain posts was imminent. It was projected that the new structures would be in place from the September and that any potential costs would be offset by the savings in this current year. Therefore the project was still expected to save £2.9 million per annum from 2014/15. It was noted that there could potentially be some gaps between the new structure being implemented and the appointments being made to certain roles. However until those gaps were identified, it could not be estimated what implications there may be. The Chair asked for these risks to be highlighted at the next meeting, as well as the lead member to attend, as the Committee were rather concerned at the potential of extra costs and service breakdown.

In conclusion Irene Bremang stated that there was confidence that the One Council Programme would be able to meet its financial targets as they still had a number of projects in delivery or pre delivery as well as projects that would continue to give savings for a number of years. It was recognised that more projects were needed for the future and new opportunities were being discussed in the council at various levels in order to achieve this. Once new potential future projects were identified it was agreed that the Committee would be informed of them.

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

Members had before them the committee's work programme. It was noted that Members had asked for the new Parking project, the Adult Social Care project and

Senior Management restructure to be added to the work programme for the next meeting.

**8. Date of next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the One Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee was scheduled for Wednesday, 10 July 2013 at 7.00 pm

**9. Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm

J Powney  
Chair