

SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 1 November 2016 at 6:30 pm in the Council Chamber, the Town Hall, Croydon.

This meeting was filmed for broadcast on the council's internet site at:

<http://www.croydon.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

MINUTES – PART A

Present Councillor Sean Fitzsimons
Councillors Jan Buttinger (Vice Chairman), Carole Bonner (Deputy Chair),
Kathy Bee and Joy Prince.

Also in attendance for part or all of the meeting:

Councillors: Stephen Mann, Bernadette Khan, Matthew Kyeremeh, Helen Pollard and Andrew Rendle

A60/16 APOLOGIES (Agenda Item 1)

Councillor James Thompson

A61/16 MINUTES (Agenda Item 2)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2016 be agreed.

A62/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 3)

None.

A63/16 URGENT BUSINESS (Agenda Item 4)

None.

A64/16 EXEMPT ITEMS (Agenda Item 5)

There were none.

A65/16 QUESTION TIME: The Cabinet Member for Culture Leisure and Sport (Agenda Item 6)

Councillor Timothy Godfrey, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport was in attendance supported by his deputy Councillor Stephen Mann, Colm Lacey - Director of Development, Stephen Tate - Director of District Centres & Regeneration, Steve Iles – Director of Streets, Jane Doyle – Director of Universal People Services and Paula Murray - Creative Director Fairfield Halls .

A presentation focused on the key areas of his portfolio and highlighted the following: Libraries, Museum Heritage, Arts and Culture, Leisure Centres, Sport & Physical Activity, Parks & Open Spaces and Registrars and Bereavement.

Libraries – in terms of successes – 20% of residents actively used the service, an engagement exercise would be undertaken to help shape future delivery, the Upper Norwood Library Trust would now be co-funded and CIPFA had stated that the service had achieved excellent value for money. Priorities for the next 12 months would be to try new models of delivery, support wider community use & partnerships, explore achieving efficiencies, income generation and enhancing the book stock. In order to deliver these ambitions libraries would have to be taken to the heart of the Community, local needs would have to be tailored and the widest range of digital and online services would be necessary in order to offer and achieve best value for money.

Museum & Heritage – audiences had grown by 6% year on year and significant website visits had increased. Many HLF projects had been delivered and supported and the Museum of Croydon research room had been refitted. The museum of Croydon collections had also been launched. The priorities for the next 12 months were to secure accreditation for the archives service in 2017 and for the museum of Croydon to develop collections and services ‘past’ and ‘present’ in key areas such as Fairfield/Croydon’s theatrical heritage and the Great War. Long term ambitions include Museum accreditation by 2018/19, the Museum of Croydon to be valued as a key cultural asset (locally and regionally) by 2020 and to deliver an engaging and popular exhibitions and events programme at the Clocktower and in the local community.

Arts & Culture – National Trust Edge City sell out tours had raised the profile for Croydon, a Youth Arts Festival had been established along with a Box Park Festival, a cultural partnership fund had been launched and there had been a Theatres Trust Peer Review. Priorities for the next 12 months were the Fairfield Halls procurement completion, the development of programmes for key venues and to support sectoral growth to bring in additional funding. Key ambitions were to grow further a lively cultural offer which would engage communities and support regeneration and to find a sustainable model for Fairfield Halls.

Leisure Centres - the Sports Community Development Programme had been a success resulting in a 20% increase in participation, there had been steady growth in swimming school, over 60’s participation had increased with women, minority ethnic and disabled, a new rugby style fitness class had been launched for 16-24 year old females in partnership with the RFU and there had been more take up of free swimming for under 16’s. Priorities for the next 12 months were an integrated leisure services model, a high quality consistent approach and to further develop the ambitious Leisure Agenda and offer. The overall intention was to

deliver a robust leisure offer which would engage communities, increase health & wellbeing and achieve best value.

Sport & Physical Activity – successes had included the Walking for Health Team being shortlisted for a Team London Award, becoming para games champions at the London Youth Games, completion of an indoor facilities strategy and freesport and funding secured resulting in 300+ participants at Croydon Athletics Arena. Priorities for the next year were - Implementation of 'Live Well' (an integrated lifestyle service), development of an outdoor Facility strategy and completion of a Borough wide physical activity needs assessment. In order to deliver on these ambitions, health & wellbeing would need to be increased in deprived areas, there would also need to be a strategic approach to resources and funding and more opportunities for volunteering created.

Parks & Open Spaces – there had been a substantial increase in volunteer hours, success in shortlisting for various awards along with securing several green flag awards, support for friends of Grange Park and South Norwood to raise 100K and up to 1000 responses were received from Croydon Talk Parks. Priorities for the next 12 months were to disseminate the findings of a completed Talks Parks, a master plan for six key parks, delivery of a Borough wide outdoor gym investment programme and to work with Quadron to deliver a high performing service. Ultimate ambitions were to continue to develop the ambitious for parks agenda, increase health & wellbeing and ensure community stewardship.

Registrars & Bereavement – a 25% increase in income had been delivered in the last 12 months, there was now open access to the Town Hall in relation to wedding ceremonies, the bereavement service achieved a London award and cashless transactions were standing at 85%. Priorities were to generate a further 250K, secure additional burial land, deploy new IT systems and to look at a possible Council funeral service. In delivering these ambitions this would increase and improve the digital offer, establish the longer term delivery model and ensure that more vulnerable customers could be reached to access services by utilising registration data.

As well as his presentation Councillor Godfrey thanked officers for the recent significant upgrade in the Central Children's Library. He reported that they were hoping to achieve the purpose built arts gallery in the next 12 months and that £250,000 had been invested in libraries for the next two years. Support would continue to be given to London Mozart Players and the Warehouse Theatre. A new events policy would be submitted to Cabinet for approval to provide many opportunities and build communities. He stressed that It was vital for the replacement of New Addington and Purley Leisure Centres and for them to operate as co-locations. There would be an expansion of artificial grass pitches at Sports Centres in the Borough. Work on Park Hill and Ashburton park

were well on track.

Councillor Sean Fitzsimons asked members for questions – Councillor Carole Bonner asked about data with regard to libraries and how it was collected. Jane Doyle said this had been obtained from contractors. Intelligence gathered had resulted in service improvements meeting local needs. Councillor Bonner asked about timescales for outdoor gymnasiums. Stephen Tate said that he had been talking to Ward Councillors about assisting with funding for this and that the next few months would give a better idea about locations.

Councillor Sean Fitzsimons asked about how much was spent each year on the book fund in comparison with other Boroughs and where it was hoped to get it to. In response Councillor Godfrey said that £275,000 would be spent on the book fund – but that he wanted it to be closer to £500,000. IT in libraries needed significant investment and improvement along with furniture. The largest proportion of young people in London were in Croydon so this area needed addressing as a matter of urgency. Councillor Godfrey in response to the Chair said that libraries in Croydon were not fit for purpose and that in the next 10-20 years libraries would need replacing.

Councillor Kathy Bee asked about where the greatest concentration of volunteers were. Jane Doyle in response said that there had been a significant increase with older volunteers of 60 upwards. Councillor Godfrey encouraged more communities to get involved in the running of their libraries along the lines of Upper Norwood library to assist with cost savings and for them to be able to still remain open. Libraries needed to become more outward reaching and be available at more varied times beyond 6pm to the community.

Councillor Sean Fitzsimons asked about the contractors Quadrant and 'Idverde' in terms of marks out of 10 and was told 3/10 for grass cutting and general contract 6/10. Steve Iles reported that he had written to them under the terms of the contract reminding them of their obligations. The Chair expressed concern about the lack of a more robust monitoring system around this contract and the inability of IT systems to work and talk to each other. Steve Iles confirmed that he had secured funding to assist with this and improve the IT relationship.

Councillor Godfrey suggested Scrutiny looking at IT systems as a future item around paperwork being computerised. Councillor Fitzsimons expressed concern about outdated parks' bylaws. Stephen Tate confirmed that all bylaws needed looking at as a matter of urgency and that they were doing so. In response to a question from Councillor Kathy Bee, Councillor Godfrey confirmed that cycling was a priority area under his portfolio area along with access to more green space areas including cemeteries. Councillor Joy Prince asked about how parks were

contributing to the health agenda and was told that this was very much the case by Councillor Godfrey and how important it was for the health and wellbeing of the community. Councillor Bonner asked about allotments and whether there was a waiting list to gauge popularity. There should be more sites made available to take account of demand she said. Stephen Tate confirmed that there were 17 sites managed by the Council. In response to a question from Councillor Jan Buttinger, Councillor Goddard confirmed that he was taking steps to address obesity in young children maintaining a healthy lifestyle through an excellent physical activity team. Stephen Tate referred to a number of events taking place with young people and schools intended to develop a healthy lifestyle. Councillor Stephen Mann confirmed a number of activities such as cricket and cycling were being aimed at the less mobile members of the community which the Council is supporting. Councillor Fitzsimons asked about the decline in people playing cricket at many parks and open spaces. Councillor Mann confirmed that there was much good work going on at local clubs which had not been recognised. One of the biggest successes in cricket had been in the women's game but said that professional clubs could do more in this area.

Councillor Fitzsimons asked why bereavement services was part of his portfolio – in response Councillor Godfrey said it was a historical area which he had inherited.

Councillor Fitzsimons asked about a tourist information office being reinstated and was told that this was a wider issue as to who would fund this. The Committee noted that the Ashburton park project was progressing well. Councillor Mann as Ward Councillor welcomed the progress made. Funding for this project was coming from the Council's capital budget.

Councillor Kathy Bee welcomed the increased culture programme. Councillor Godfrey stressed how important this was which included 'Boxpark', Fairfield Halls and quirky street art as part of a profile of cultural events.

Councillor Joy Prince asked for marks out of 10 for the current Leisure contractor Fusion. In addition she asked about bereavement services and the process involved. Councillor Godfrey said this was a complex area within a national service. Fusion received 5/10 where their contract is up for renewal next year but felt they were not ambitious enough but that they needed a contractor who connected more within the community. Councillor Fitzsimons asked about the involvement of scrutiny in the process of pre decision in terms of the letting of the leisure contract and others in general.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and his officers for their detailed and extensive presentation.

The Committee **Resolved** to recommend to Cabinet that

- (i) the Council's Bylaws relating to Parks and Open Spaces to be reviewed to ensure they remain relevant and enforceable
- (ii) Council IT systems supporting services in parks and open spaces are improved to provide greater integration between the different performance management software systems and the council's resident reporting platforms
- (iii) the Scrutiny & Overview Committee be invited to participate in pre-decision discussions on the re-commissioning of contracts relating to leisure services and grounds maintenance, specifically with regard to the outcomes to be delivered by new contracts

A66/16 FAIRFIELD HALLS (Agenda item 7)

The Committee received a report and presentation in respect of the above giving an update on the progress. The Committee noted that as the Council were currently in a formal procurement process for finding a suitably qualified operator that they could not respond or speculate on the actual process as this could prejudice the whole outcome and be open to legal challenge.

Councillor Timothy Godfrey along with several officers including the Creative Director Paula Murray gave details on the background and history saying that the venue, built in the 1960's, was steeped in history. In recent years it had been in decline in terms of entertainment and the building was showing signs of wear and tear.

The Council had taken the decision to revitalise the venue and the surrounding area as part of the town centre regeneration in order to create a stunning new cultural quarter which would include a new college, arts gallery, office space and much needed homes as well as a fully refurbished and modernised Fairfield Halls and had committed £30 million to the project. The formal procurement process was due for completion by May 2017 with the building due to reopen in 2018. The overall cultural quarter would take place over 10-15 years and be delivered in three phases.

The Chair then invited questions which included - venue design and retention of former staff expertise to contribute towards the whole process. Officers responded saying that the new operator would be involved in the design process and that previous staff were being consulted for their knowledge. In response to a question from Councillor Joy Prince it was confirmed that souvenirs would be part of the archive project. In addition there was to be 360 extra parking spaces created but people were encouraged to use other forms of transport.

Concern was expressed that the Fairfield website was not operational and that the Council's website was providing very few details on the progress. Paula Murray agreed to take back comments on these matters. It was confirmed that there would be extensive resident engagement once the new operator was appointed.

Resolved that:

(i) the report be noted; and (ii) the new operator be invited to the a meeting in a year to give an update on progress.

The Committee **AGREED** to suspend standing orders at 9:30pm in order for the meeting to continue.

A67/16

GYPSY AND TRAVELLER WELFARE IN CROYDON (Agenda item 8)

The Committee considered the report and appendices on Gypsy and Traveller Welfare in Croydon arising from a mini presentation carried out by Councillor Andrew Rendle at the last meeting held on 6th September 2016. Councillor Rendle, present at the meeting, thanked a number of participants for their assistance with the review. Councillor Sean Fitzsimons thanked Councillor Rendle for his extensive work in putting together the review and a report outlining recommendations for taking this further forward.

The Committee **Resolved** that the recommendations as outlined below be submitted to Cabinet for their consideration and adoption

ACCOMMODATING GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Ensure that Cabinet Members with individual portfolio responsibilities for services affecting Gypsies and Travellers work together in conjunction with a named lead officer in order to co-ordinate the collective Cabinet response to the needs of this community, help unblock any problems they have in accessing services, advocate best practice within the Council and its partners and support bids for funding.
2. Establish a Gypsy and Travellers Working Group with a membership drawn from the council (e.g. community safety and enforcement, parks, planning, health, tenancy, housing and education departments), partners (e.g. the Police, Public Health, CCG, Octavo, relevant schools) and elected Members.
3. Ask the Gateway service to establish a tailored approach to respond to Gypsy and Traveller needs, specifically in relation to cultural aspects of housing allocation and provision.
4. Urge the Mayor of London to take a pan-London approach to the

provision of transit sites across London to cater to Gypsies and Travellers passing through as this would result in fewer unauthorised encampments on both public and private land across the capital.

5. Actively work with neighbouring boroughs to investigate whether the provision of pan-borough transit site(s) is viable to help provide accommodation for travellers passing through the area as working with other boroughs is likely to reduce the amount of time the site(s) would be left empty.

6. Investigate whether the development of pan-borough transit site(s) would allow the strategic use of S62a powers (under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994).

7. Monitor the new combined transit and permanent site operated by Brighton & Hove council in order to assess its viability and whether it achieves its desired outcomes including reducing the number of unauthorised encampments within the city while providing a self-funded site.

8. Explore the option of making an application to the Mayor of London for funding from the Affordable Homes Fund for the development and refurbishment of sites and funding for a Gypsy and Traveller liaison officer.

9. Understand that it is vital that Pitch Allocation Policies for any new permanent site(s) are carefully drawn up and include clear and transparent procedures for allocating pitches and that they are developed in conjunction with Gypsy and Traveller communities.

10. Make sure the council is at the cutting edge of design so any site can be future proof and successfully house both English Gypsies and Irish Travellers. Additionally even though it is not relevant today but other groups such as New Travellers should be considered at the design stage.

11. Investigate the possibility of some Latham's Way residents moving to the new permanent site to make renovation of Latham's Way easier and cheaper, produce two mixed English/Irish camps and give Latham's Way a fresh start so the council can manage and take "ownership" of the site. In addition if a mixed permanent/transit site was to be considered Latham's Way would be then be a candidate as it would have space and is located on a major arterial road.

12. Consider the immediate use of negotiated stopping places and the use of 'social contracts' (as exemplified by Leeds GATE) for Gypsy and Traveller families known to have connections to the borough.

13. Undertake early engagement with Traveller family groups that are at risk of repeated evictions and allow creative and tailored approaches to provision of permanent sites in order to stop repeated evictions for the family and reduce costs to the council and Police.

14. Provide Biffa bins, waste services and portaloos to Gypsies and Travellers at unauthorised encampments and negotiated stopping places to help reduce waste and clean-up costs.

15. Establish Member learning and development sessions to increase knowledge and understanding of Gypsy and Traveller issues (see point 5.20, page 35, GTANA 2013).

16. Continue the good work already achieved in educating residents about un-licensed waste removal operators and encourage the Gypsy

and Traveller community to get involved with “Don’t Mess With Croydon”.
17. Instruct the council’s press office to make sure good news stories about Gypsies and Travellers are promoted and help the Traveller community build a good relationship with the local press and, therefore, the wider community.

The Streets, Environment and Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee is recommended to:

1. Seek and review information from the Council’s housing department about Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar accommodation within the borough and the council’s approach to these protected ethnic groups.
2. Review and question how the needs of Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar accommodation are being delivered through the Council’s tenancy and homelessness strategies when the Sub-Committee reviews these strategies as part of its work programme 2016/17.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION OF GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Work with Health partners to ensure that the social isolation and exclusion needs of Gypsies and Travellers are considered within the joint commissioning and volunteering priorities identified by the Fairness Commission, particularly in relation to ‘Leaving No Child Behind’.
2. Consider using existing resources to develop an outreach service to cover the healthcare and mental health needs of families possibly using peer Health and Education mentors drawn from Gypsy and Traveller communities.
3. Explore the potential for role models and mentors to be identified to support, guide and encourage other young people from Gypsy and Traveller communities stay in education and/or training from Key Stage 3 and beyond (as highlighted in the 2010 DfE report Improving the outcomes for Gypsy Roma and Traveller Pupils).
4. Encourage all schools and academies to share best practice on the particular cultural needs of Gypsy and Traveller pupils particularly from Key Stage 3, including those needing special education needs support.
5. Explore the opportunity for vocational courses to be offered in Croydon for young people aged 14+ including Gypsy and Traveller young people.
6. Consider the schools admissions process and in particular undertake targeted work to prevent late applications, provide support for online applications and to take into account ‘home to school’ distance during the school admissions process in order to help drive up attendance at school.
7. Review its funding for Croydon’s TES to ensure that this valuable service, which supports pupils, parents and schools and increases the

likelihood of Gypsy and Traveller pupils accessing and staying in education, is protected from further cuts.

8. Encourage schools and academies to promote Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month so that Gypsy and Traveller culture, language and history receive greater recognition.

Public Health Croydon is recommended to:

Undertake a Health Needs Assessment for housed and transient Gypsies and Travellers within the borough as part of the next JNSA cycle to ensure effective commissioning of health services for these communities; their inclusion in NHS data monitoring systems and up-to-date research; and develop community engagement training for frontline staff engaging with these groups.

The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

Support a 1-2 year outreach project for a Health Visitor(s) in order to gather information and test interventions e.g. for immunisation, diabetes and screening programmes.

A68/16

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17 (Agenda Item 9)

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee had a constitutional responsibility to monitor the scrutiny programme each municipal year.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- To agree the scrutiny work programme overview (as set out in Appendix 1 of the report)
- To agree the work programme for the Scrutiny and Overview Committee 2016-17, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report

The meeting ended at 10:05pm.