



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

Westminster Scrutiny Commission

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Westminster Scrutiny Commission** Committee held on **Thursday 30th November, 2017**.

Members Present: Councillors Brian Connell, Tony Devenish, Jonathan Glanz, Andrew Smith and Barrie Taylor

Apologies for Absence: None.

1 MEMBERSHIP

1.1 There were no changes to Membership. All Members of the Commission were present.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 No declarations were received.

3 MINUTES

3.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2017 were approved, subject to the amendment of paragraph 4.4.3 to make reference to the need to avoid placing tall buildings along busy roads.

3.2 Matters Arising

3.2.1 Minute 4.6 - Sustainability & Transformation Plan (STP): The Commission noted that the minutes from meetings of the Joint Health & Care Transformation Group had now been circulated.

4 THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

4.1 Stuart Love (Deputy Chief Executive) provided an update on matters of corporate interest, which included the Tax Incremental Finance (TIF) Bid; Devolution; and the Health & Social Care Sustainability & Transformation Plan (STP).

- 4.2 The Deputy Chief Executive reported that since the written update had been prepared, the City Council had been informed that the TIF bid seeking investment in the West End had been unsuccessful. Although funding for the initial transition scheme would be provided by Transport for London, following the failure of the TIF bid, other funding options which included the business community and the Mayor of London were being investigated. The Deputy Chief Executive agreed to provide the Commission with clarification of what would be effected by the loss of the TIF bid.
- 4.3 A Memorandum of Devolution with the Greater London Authority and London Councils on further devolution to London had now been signed. The agreement had included joint working to explore the benefits and scope for an infrastructure for development and funding, transport, Business Rates and health. The Work & Health Programme was now progressing, and the funding that had been available to the Department of Work & Pensions would now be spent by local authorities to support people with health issues in returning to work.
- 4.4 The Commission noted progress in establishing a Bi-Borough agreement with RB Kensington & Chelsea, and noted that staff consultation had been completed. Proposals for the new Bi-Borough structure for Adult Social Care and Health would be submitted to Cabinet for approval in December, prior to implementation by 1 April 2018. The Commission discussed bringing in another local authority to assist in finance, and Stuart Love confirmed that this would be considered after Bi-Borough arrangements had stabilised. The Deputy Chief Executive agreed to provide the Commission with copies of the report used for staff consultation.
- 4.5 Members commented on concerns that had been raised over the delivery of enhanced care in Westminster's care homes. The Deputy Chief Executive suggested that reports in the media had not been a true reflection of the current situation, in which 65% of the beds in Westminster's care homes had been rated outstanding. It was agreed that care homes would be added to the agenda of the next meeting of the Adults & Health Policy & Scrutiny Committee on 31 January 2018.
- 4.6 The Commission discussed progress in implementation of the Health & Social Care Sustainability & Transformation Plan (STP). Although additional funding for the STP programme was not anticipated until 2019-20, support from other areas such as the Better Care Fund enabled some elements of the programme to progress, and integration to move forward. The Deputy Chief Executive agreed to provide Commission Members with a briefing on the STP in the spring, which would include risks and opportunities, and an organisational chart.
- 4.7 The Deputy Chief Executive also provided the Commission with updates on Corporate Transformation and Managed Services, and highlighted the revision of the Westminster City Plan as a potential issue for scrutiny over forthcoming months.

5 LEARNING FROM TERRORIST INCIDENTS AND THE GRENFELL FIRE DURING 2017

- 5.1 At its last meeting on 24 May 2017, the Commission had discussed the City Council's role in responding to the Grenfell Tower fire (Minute 5). Stuart Love (Deputy Chief Executive) had acknowledged that there were still lessons to be learned that would enable the City Council to further improve, and confirmed that a review of Westminster's response to Grenfell and the recent terror attacks was being undertaken, which would be referred to scrutiny. The Deputy Chief Executive accordingly now presented the outcome of the review, together with areas of learning.
- 5.2 The Commission agreed that under Section 100 (A) (4) and Part 1, paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public and press would be briefly excluded from the meeting during the consideration of confidential Pan-London Emergency Planning Arrangements that had been set out in an Appendix to the report. It was considered that in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information that had been given.
- 5.3 The Commission discussed the findings of the report, and how knowledge and good practice gained by Westminster and the City of London could be disseminated across London. Members noted that a review of arrangements for resilience was currently being undertaken across London, and that when asked, Westminster's Chief Officers had been sharing expertise with other boroughs. It was acknowledged that the initial response to Grenfell had been ad hoc, and the Scrutiny Commission highlighted the need for clarity on which boroughs could be called upon to deal with specific issues.
- 5.4 Concern had been expressed that the commitment of the City Council's resources to Grenfell could have caused difficulties if another incident had occurred. The Commission highlighted the need to establish a structure for succession in command and control in London, when responding to emergencies.
- 5.5 The Commission noted that the Armed Forces and Emergency Services had not been acknowledged in the overview of emergency planning arrangements; and agreed that the review should have included the need to deal with humanitarian aspects such as trauma and mental health issues. The Deputy Chief Executive recognised the potential impact events could have on the emergency services and Council staff, and confirmed that the report would be updated.
- 5.6 The Commission commented on the recent false alarm in Oxford Street, and on the need for effective communication plans. Members noted that the police aimed to communicate quickly, but accurately, and recognised the need for businesses to have their own evacuation plans. The Commission also discussed the impact and effectiveness of safety barriers during terrorist incidents.

5.7 Members agreed that an annual review of the Emergency Plan should become a standing item on the Commission's Work Programme.

6 COMMUNITY COHESION

6.1 Ezra Wallace (Head of Corporate Policy & Strategy) presented the report of the Westminster Community Cohesion Commission, together with the plans for the next steps.

6.2 Over the past year, the Community Cohesion Commission had undertaken a four-tiered, evidence-based approach to inform the City Council's understanding of cohesion in Westminster. Information had been obtained through:

- Reviewing national policy, literature and developments, including talking to experts and evaluating the Government's position and response following major disturbances.
- Analysing data obtained from local surveys, to gauge how residents felt about living in Westminster and how far communities were gelling together at a rudimentary level.
- Benchmarking best practise with neighbouring authorities.
- Extensive active engagement with Westminster's residents, stakeholders and local groups, which included over 25 events and online public consultation.

6.3 Following the gathering of evidence, the findings and recommendations had been collated into a report that had been launched at a summit on 29 November. The next steps would be to work with the community over the next 6 months and develop a Community Action Plan to take forward the recommendations. The Scrutiny Commission noted that the Action Plan would be launched at the My Westminster Day next summer.

6.4 Members discussed the findings of the report, and the methodology that had been used, and noted that the Community Cohesion Commission had welcomed the opportunity to have open and honest discussions with so many people. In general, people had been proud to be a part of Westminster, particularly with regard to its diversity, cultural heritage, economy, and excellent schools. There were, however, some significant challenges to community cohesion which concerned housing, income inequalities, and how the City Council engaged with different parts of the community.

6.5 It had been acknowledged that community cohesion was not an optional luxury for Westminster, and that a cohesive community was a vital foundation for a successful and strong City. It had also been clear that community cohesion was everybody's responsibility, with leadership coming from all levels in Westminster starting from the Leader, and continuing from Ward Councillors to faith leaders, community organisations, residents, businesses and visitors.

- 6.6 To ensure that Westminster was a City for All, the report had made three recommendations, which suggested that the City Council needed to:
- Foster and encourage opportunities for meaningful interactions between people of different backgrounds, and do more to ensure that harder to reach groups had easy access to information and services.
 - Make sure that everybody felt safe and had a stake in the City; with fair access to education, employment, public services and use of community facilities including decent and affordable homes. The City Council also needed to work with businesses and voluntary and community groups, to develop a joint approach to connect with the community and deliver activities to strengthen cohesion.
 - Enable and encourage the sharing of values; such as pride of place, looking out for each other, and sharing community spaces. Members acknowledged that the City Council wanted to respond to the findings with ambition and pace, and it was hoped that Westminster's partners would also work to implement them.
- 6.7 The Scrutiny Commission confirmed that it would be willing to take a role in scrutinising the proposed Action Plan; and to discuss how it would fit in with other programmes and how progress could be measured. An update on progress in the Action Plan would be discussed at the next meeting in March 2018.

7 2017/18 WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER

- 7.1 Aaron Hardy (Policy & Scrutiny Manager) presented the current Work Programme for the Commission, and invited Members to consider the scope of items to be presented to the next meeting on 22 March 2018.
- 7.2 It was agreed that the meeting on 22 March 2018 would focus on the West End Partnership and the Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) bid; and Community Cohesion.
- 7.3 Members agreed that a Chief Executive from a partner Borough would be invited to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Commission.

The Meeting ended at 8.30pm.

CHAIRMAN: _____

DATE _____