



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

Westminster Scrutiny Commission

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Westminster Scrutiny Commission** held on **Wednesday 10th July, 2019**, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

Members Present: Councillors Melvyn Caplan (Chairman), Nafsika Butler-Thalassis, Tony Devenish, Jonathan Glanz, Adam Hug and Karen Scarborough

Also Present: Councillor Nickie Aiken (Leader of the Council), Kerry Simpkin (Head of Licensing, Place and Investment Policy), Aaron Hardy (Policy and Scrutiny Manager) and Toby Howes (Senior Committee and Governance Officer).

1 MEMBERSHIP

1.1 There were no changes to the membership.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES

3.1 RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2019 be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

4 THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

4.1 Councillor Nickie Aiken, Leader of the Council, updated the Commission on current and forthcoming issues. Councillor Aiken welcomed the work being undertaken to increase diversity and inclusion in the Council. This included working in partnership with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Steering Group and the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Steering Group and the work on this was being taken forward. The progress that had been made was both attributable to officers and Members, although there was still work to be done, including narrowing the BAME pay gap. Councillor Aiken also reported that there had been an increase in the number

of Point 1 pay scale step ups, which had previously lagged behind higher pay scale points.

- 4.2 The Commission sought information on timescales in respect of the introduction of an overnight stay levy and progress in integrating the Housing Management function. Members remarked on the infrastructure and utilities work being undertaken during this year's Pride in London event and felt that this needed to be taken into consideration for next year's event. Members commented on the positive feedback that the Westminster Reporter was receiving and stated that it would be useful to receive a document detailing the indicators and formulas involved regarding the funding structure for local authorities. Members also asked if there were any timelines in place regarding the Government's Fair Funding Review. Members welcomed progress in respect of the London Living Wage (LLW) and asked whether this would be included in contract extensions and that this should also be included in the contract extensions at Beachcroft. It was also queried whether the potential implications on the Council for the Spending Review were known.
- 4.3 Members sought further information in respect of the 'Meals on Wheels' service. The introduction of a BAME Steering Group and BAME members on panels was welcomed and it was queried whether BAME representation could be applied to councillor panels. Funds obtained through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) were welcomed and it was commented that Neighbourhood CILs should have access to funds for services.
- 4.4 In reply to issues raised by the Commission, Councillor Aiken stated that she had been lobbying for an overnight stay levy for some time and Central London Forward supported such proposals. There had also been positive meetings with Government ministers on this matter and although there were no specific timescales in place at the moment, work was in progress to develop the proposals. With regard to the Housing Management function being integrated within the Council, Councillor Aiken commented that feedback received had been positive and now the transition had taken place, work needed to be undertaken in a number of areas, such as making the Major Works area more transparent. Councillor Aiken confirmed that further details of the funding formula for local authorities could be provided to the Commission. It was difficult to judge what the timelines for the Fair Funding Review would be, however the Council was still planning for the next budget to be agreed in March 2020. Similarly, it was also hard to assess what the implications of the Spending Review on the Council would be as further details from the Government were awaited.
- 4.5 Councillor Aiken concurred that consideration needed to be undertaken on infrastructure and utilities for future Pride in London events and she welcomed Ward Members flagging any issues. She added that the Mayor of London had been impressed with the clean-up that had taken place after the event. In respect of the LLW, Councillor Aiken informed the Commission that Councillor Rachael Robathan, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Regeneration, was taking a lead on this and it was expected that all future bidders for contracts would be LLW compliant. With regard to the 'Meals on Wheels' service, this was assessed and provided on an individual basis and the

planned changes should lead to improvements in this service. Councillor Aiken advised that it would not be practical to ensure proportional BAME representation on councillor panels because of the composition of councillors.

4.6 **ACTION:**

- Details of the formulas and indicators of “need” in respect of the funding structure for local authorities to be provided (Action for: Kerry Simpkin, Head of Licensing, Place and Investment Policy).

5 **ENGAGEMENT WITH PARTNERS**

5.1 Kerry Simpkin (Head of Licensing, Place and Investment Policy) presented the report and he emphasised that one of the main challenges was working within the finite resources available. Consideration needed to be given as to what areas to prioritise engagement in to help deliver City for All and to whether there should also be engagement with other partners that the Council currently did not liaise with.

5.2 The Commission emphasised the importance of focusing discussions on funding to the Government’s Treasury Department as they ultimately dictated financial resources. In respect of the NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), it was important to identify the decision makers and to start discussions with them first, rather than approaching different groups through a hierarchy. A mapping chart identifying key people in partner organisations would also be beneficial. Members commented on proposals to merge the current eight North West London CCGs into one CCG and this would lead to more work being undertaken as to identifying the key people to approach. It was also important to ensure there was no duplication of engagement activities.

5.3 In reply to the issues raised, Kerry Simpkin acknowledged the need to focus discussions on financial resources with the Treasury Department and in identifying key individuals within the CCGs and this would need to be revisited when the eight North West London CCGs merged into one. A mapping exercise identifying people and functions with partner organisations was also being undertaken.

5.4 The Commission requested an update on the new approach to engagement with partners in six months’ time.

5.5 **ACTIONS:**

1. Review of new approach to engaging with partners to be provided to the Commission in six months’ time (Action for: Kerry Simpkin, Head of Licensing, Place and Investment Policy).
2. Circulate the Project Plan for Engagement with Partners (Action for: Kerry Simpkin, Head of Licensing, Place and Investment Policy).

3. Further information to be provided in respect of how the Council will engage once the merging of the eight North West London CCGs into one has been completed (Action for: Kerry Simpkin, Head of Licensing, Place and Investment Policy).

6 2019/20 WORK PROGRAMMES

- 6.1 Aaron Hardy (Policy and Scrutiny Manager) referred to the Work Programmes for the Commission and to the Policy and Scrutiny Committees and he confirmed that the next meeting of the Commission would take place on 5 December. He added that he would circulate to Policy and Scrutiny Committee members information explaining what Policy and Scrutiny Committee the portfolios and Cabinet Members report to.
- 6.2 Members commented that it would be useful if any topical issues that they may not necessarily be aware of be included in future reports. The Chairman advised that he would pass on comments about the remit of the Policy and Scrutiny Committees to the Chief Whip who will discuss this with the Minority Group Chief Whip in the normal way.
- 6.3 **RESOLVED:**
 1. That the draft work programme for the Commission as shown in appendix 1 of the report be approved.
 2. That the work programmes of the Policy and Scrutiny Committees as shown in appendices 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 be noted.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 7.1 There was no other business.

The Meeting ended at 7.21 pm.

CHAIRMAN: _____

DATE _____