MINUTES

CITY OF WESTMINSTER

CHILDREN & COMMUNITY SERVICES
POLICY & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
31 MARCH 2014
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Children & Community Services Policy & Scrutiny Committee** held on Monday 31 March 2014 at Westminster City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6QP.

Members Present: Councillors Ian Adams (Chairman), Sheila D'Souza, Nick Evans, Jonathan Glanz, Barbara Grahame, Papya Qureshi and Robert Rigby.

Co-opted Members: Annalisa Saba, Louise McCulough, Smita Bora and Jane Sowerby.

Also present: Councillor Steve Summers (Cabinet Member for The Community).

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Iain Bott, Councillor Lee Rowley, Brenda Morrison and Aki Turan.

1. MEMBERSHIP

1.1 It was noted that Councillor Iain Bott, Councillor Lee Rowley, Brenda Morrison and Aki Turan had sent apologises as they were unable to attend the meeting.

1.2 The Chairman welcomed Councillor Steve Summers (Cabinet Member for The Community) to the meeting.

1.3 The Chairman advised that Councillor Danny Chalkley would not be attending the meeting. Any questions that Members had regarding his portfolio would be placed on the Committee's Action Tracker.

1.4 The Chairman welcomed Mike Stevens, Managing Director of Vision Critical, Glen Ocsko, Community Involvement and Innovation Manager from Sutton Council and Roberta Fusco, Locality Lead Officer, Environment and Neighbourhoods from Sutton Council who would be taking part in the Community Engagement item, to the meeting.

1.5 The Chairman advised that it was Annalisa Saba's last meeting as she was standing down as a Parent Governor at Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee School. The

Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked her for all her support and valuable contributions over the year.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

2.1 Councillor Sheila D'Souza declared in respect of Item 6 that her husband was the Vice-Chairman of the St Marylebone Society.

2.2 No further declarations of interests in respect of items to be discussed were made, other than those noted in the circulated schedule.

3. MINUTES AND ACTION TRACKER

3.1 Minutes

3.1.1 **Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2014 were approved for signature by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

3.2 Action Tracker

3.2.1 The Committee requested an update on whether the Active Westminster Map could be delivered sooner than the end of April and that the Adults, Health and Community Protection Policy and Scrutiny Committee consider the methods and accuracy of GP information provided to Councillors and the Community.

3.2.2 That the Action Tracker be noted.

4. REPORT FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHIILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

4.1 The Committee received a written update from the Cabinet Member which covered current and forthcoming issues in his Portfolio.

5. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION: CABINET MEMBER FOR THE COMMUNITY

5.1 The Committee received an update from the Cabinet Member who responded to questions relating to relating to the demographics of people attending Westminster's Sport Centres, the new Library Management System for Tri-Borough, the utilisation of the Sayers Croft Centre by organisations and schools and the various skills and qualifications that could be obtained through volunteering.

6.   REVIEW OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

6.1   The Committee received a report on how the Council currently engages with its communities and the value this has for both the Council and its residents. The Committee considered future options on how to improve Community Engagement and how Members could facilitate Community Engagement within their Wards.

6.2   The Committee welcomed the following expert witnesses to the meeting:

- **Mike Stevens, Managing Director, of Vision Critical.** Mike spoke about his experience of building successful online communities around the globe which created a platform of useful information about individuals and families. He discussed the different types of online communities which included sites that allowed people to discuss a topic of interest with one another and sites that requested people to complete questionnaires and surveys about a product or current/forthcoming events.

- **Glen Ocsko, Community Involvement and Innovation Manager, from Sutton Council.** Glen shared his public, private and voluntary experience in community engagement and consultation. He outlined his achievements which included delivery of large scale strategic engagement programmes and events, engaging with high-level stakeholders across sectors to create shared visions and progress work programmes and significantly progressing the digital agendas of organisations.

- **Roberta Fusco, Locality Lead Officer, from Sutton Council.** Roberta gave a short presentation outlining the management of Sutton's Local Committees. She emphasised the importance of encouraging residents to take ownership of the meetings, the local Amenity Societies being involved and the location of the meetings.

6.3   The following key themes emerged from the Committee's discussion:

- the role and benefits of Community Engagement to the Council.
- the value of using social media to reach different communities and age groups.
- the importance of continuing face to face engagement such as the Area Forums.
- the value of developing online communities using the new Council website.
- the value of the voluntary sector becoming involved in Community Engagement.
- the appointment of a formal Area Forum Membership.
- the importance of planning engagement activities against the backdrop of reduced funding.
- the importance of developing clear outcome based criteria for measuring the success of Community Engagement.

6.4   The Chairman thanked everyone for contributing to the discussion

6.5   The Committee concluded by making the following draft recommendations, which will be formally reported to the Cabinet Member for The Community when finalised for consideration for developing his Community Engagement Strategy:

1. That the Council works to create a greater culture of engagement that values both the journey and destination.

2. That the Council develops a 'social media policy' to drive greater community engagement, with a clear outcome based criteria for measuring success.

3. That the use of online communities of interest be explored and how the new council website can facilitate this.

4. That the type and scale of engagement activities be proportionate to the activity and/or event.

5. That the limitations of engagement methods be clearly understood, including but not limited to time technology, language (interpretation) and cost.

6. That the use of Sutton Onboard be explored as a potential bottom up open source platform.

7. That the Voluntary and Community Sector be more closely involved in community engagement activities such as Area Forums.

8. That formal community Committee Membership and the potential for engagement ambassadors be explored.

9. That engagement activity seeks to achieve more active rather than passive involvement.

10. That engagement activities be planned against the backdrop of reduced funding (e.g., through the use of area needs profiles).

7.   A REVIEW AND THE FUTURE OF THE WARD BUDGET PROGRAMME

7.1   The Committee received a report reviewing the Ward Budget Programme whilst giving Members the opportunity to give a steer for the future use of the ward budget funds during the next electoral cycle.

7.2   The Committee heard that of the dedicated £3.76m total available for wards from 2010-2014, £3.48m had been allocated at the end of 31 March 2014, which equated to 92% and that 780 projects had been funded since April 2010 of which 240 projects had been funded in 2013/14. The Committee heard that the Ward Budget Programme was well established and had enabled Members to provide a

range of benefits and facilities to organisations within their wards.

7.3   The Committee discussed the following issues:

- the need to widely promote and publicise the programme across Westminster.
- the monitoring of projects to ensure value for money.
- the application process.
- the variety of different projects which had been funded throughout Westminster.
- the allocation of Ward budget funding to be driven locally.
- the Council receiving recognition for its contribution in funding projects by requesting that the organisations use a specific logo and/or badge.

7.4   The Chairman thanked everyone for contributing to the discussion.

7.5   The Committee noted the work being carried out and considered that the Ward Budget Programme played an important part in enabling Ward Members to fund the smaller community projects in their wards which actually made a big difference to their local communities.

8.   COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

8.1   The Committee considered its Work Programme for 2014/2015 and noted that discussions were currently underway to hold two Children Services Policy and Scrutiny Committees on a tri-borough basis per year, with the first meeting to be held in the autumn and hosted by Westminster.

8.2   The Committee agreed that the next meeting on 18 June would focus on Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disabilities.

9.   REPORTS OF ANY URGENT SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

9.1   **Resolved:** The Committee noted that there was nothing to report.

10.   ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1   The Committee heard that a number of Members had attended a site visit at the Churchill Garden Children Centre and that a site visit to the Portman Early Childhood Centre had been organised for Friday 4 April.

11.   TERMINATION OF MEETING

11.1   The meeting ended at 21.15.

CHAIRMAN _____   DATE _____