

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Monday 11 November 2019 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G01A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Wingfield (Chair)
Councillor Jane Salmon (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Humaira Ali
Councillor Peter Babudu
Councillor Gavin Edwards
Councillor Eleanor Kerslake (Reserve)
Councillor Alice Macdonald
Councillor Jason Ochere
Councillor Victoria Olisa
Councillor Leanne Werner
Martin Brecknell (Co-opted Member)

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Victoria Mills
Councillor Kieron Williams
Councillor Andy Simmons

OFFICER SUPPORT: Norman Coombe – Head of Corporate Team, Legal
Shelley Burke – Head of Overview and Scrutiny
Fitzroy Williams – Scrutiny Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Victor Chamberlain and Anood Al-Samerai. Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor Helen Dennis, who had recently given birth to a baby girl. The chair expressed congratulations on behalf of the committee.

2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

There were none.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meetings held on 15 July 2019 and 9 October 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND BREXIT - INTERVIEW

Councillor Victoria Mills introduced her portfolio area and answered questions from committee members. The committee discussed:

- The development and implementation of the council's budget
- The general fund
- The housing revenue account
- The capital programme
- Delivering value for money across our high quality services
- Performance management across the council
- Licensing and trading standards

The committee thanked the cabinet member for attending the meeting and answering their questions.

6. BOROUGH COMMANDER (FIRE BRIGADE) - INTERVIEW

The Chair introduced the Fire Brigade Borough Commander (Mr Philip Morton) and invited the him to do a brief introduction.

The Borough Commander gave an overview of his role and reported on the performance of the present structure.

The Committee asked questions about the performance of the Fire Brigade and the priority of resources.

7. KINGSWOOD ESTATE - EXTERNAL WALL INSULATION PROPOSALS

The committee discussed the proposals for external wall insulation on the Kingswood estate, this item had been requested by ward councillors in view of residents' concern about the cost and effectiveness of the proposed solution to problems with dampness throughout the estate.

The committee heard from Councillor Andy Simmons, ward member, and the senior housing officer leading the project. Some concerns about costs to leaseholders had been allayed following legal advice which clarified that the external wall insulation would not be

chargeable to leaseholders. However there continued to be doubt among some residents that the proposed insulation is the correct solution.

The Kingswood Estate TRA:

- raised issues with the proposed external wall insulation (EWI) cladding work on their blocks
- asked that cabinet examine the report submitted by the contractor in respect of what the deputation feel were exaggerated levels of damp
- requested that a due diligence be carried out on the material of the EWI with specific concerns about the health implications of this material on all residents
- requested for an estate wide open ballot concerning EWI cladding and for residents to be given some say in the matter
- requested that an alternative solution to the claimed damp issues should be considered and that consultation is carried out with residents.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet be recommended to instruct officers to commission a detailed technical report into the impact that external wall insulation will have on issues of damp and heat loss in properties on the Kingswood Estate, to be carried out by an external, industry recognised expert.

8. BRANDON ESTATE - BRIEFING

The committee discussed issues on the Brandon Estate, the session had been requested by ward councillors in view of their concerns about some aspects of the council's response to 3 murders on the estate.

The committee heard from ward councillors, tenants and residents association (T&RA) chairs, cabinet member Councillor Evelyn Akoto and senior council officers. The particular areas of concern were the delay in decision making around installing CCTV cameras, slowness of progress in establishing a young people's hub at the Jack Hobbs Club, the nature of the council's engagement with residents, heating outages and the system of compensation for outages.

The Brandon Estate TRA raised queries on:

- New Homes on Brandon Estate, which sites, dates, when 2020-2025 who are they for, council tenants on waiting list, social housing market rents.
- Hidden homes, report on the walkabout done December 2019, done on the Brandon Estate Services Charges for Major works for Phase 2 and 3.
- Confirmation of works, when will leaseholders be served Section 20 notices, costs.
- Services Charges for the year, why was there an increase, no explanation?

RESOLVED:

1. That a core group of councillors, officers and residents meets regularly to review progress against the issues. This group should undertake a holistic review to ensure that all the strands of work in hand meet residents' needs. The group should work transparently by publishing documents such as action plans with RAG rating and minutes of its meetings.
2. That a clear timetable is set out and delivered for full access to the Jack Hobbs Club by April 2020
3. That the housing scrutiny commission's review of district heating networks should include Brandon as one of its case studies. This should include the question of how compensation for heating outages is paid – i.e. whether it can be credited to bank accounts instead of rent/service charge accounts.
4. That an investigation be undertaken into the amount of time it took to implement the new CCTV, and that a report arising from the investigation be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

9. WORK PROGRAMME

There was no discussion on the work programme.

The meeting ended at 10.30 pm

CHAIR:

DATED: