

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday 7 May 2020 at 5.00 pm (Virtual Meeting).

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Wingfield (Chair)
Councillor Jane Salmon (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Humaira Ali
Councillor Peter Babudu
Councillor Victor Chamberlain
Councillor Helen Dennis
Councillor Gavin Edwards
Councillor Alice Macdonald
Councillor Jason Ochere
Councillor Victoria Olisa
Councillor Leanne Werner

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Peter John
Councillor Rebecca Lury
Councillor Evelyn Akoto
Councillor Jasmine Ali
Councillor Stephanie Cryan
Councillor Richard Livingstone
Councillor Victoria Mills
Councillor Leo Pollak
Councillor Johnson Situ
Councillor Kieron Williams

OFFICER SUPPORT: Norman Coombe, Head of Corporate Team, Legal Services
Everton Roberts, Head of Overview and Scrutiny (Acting)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Eleanor Kelly, Chief Executive and apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Peter John.

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

The chair agreed to accept the following late item:

Item 4 – Council Response to Covid 19 Pandemic.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

4. COUNCIL RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Caroline Bruce, Strategic Director of Environment and Leisure introduced the report. The strategic director highlighted the impact the Covid-19 pandemic was having on Southwark residents, the disproportionate health impact on BAME communities, and the significant ongoing and long term economic impact - there had been a great increase in people seeking financial support.

The strategic director reported on the council's response to the pandemic through its Borough Emergency Control Centre, with Gold and Silver arrangements put in place fairly quickly to manage and co-ordinate the emergency response.

Throughout the pandemic the council had maintained core levels of service with more than 80% of staff being available at all times. There had ben challenges and complexities but the council had been in a very good position throughout.

The committee also heard from David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director of Children's and Adults Services, who highlighted the work being undertaken between departments to support victims of domestic violence, and the service of the community hubs. Over 20 staff had been redeployed to support activity across the council. There had also been partnership working with the NHS and other partners.

The committee also heard from Michael Scorer, Strategic Director of Housing and Modernisation who updated the meeting on the work of the seven core community hubs which, amongst other things were providing hot meals for the homeless and vulnerable, and communicating and listening to people who felt isolated. The committee also received information on the response to homelessness, helping homeless people off the street and working with people who have no recourse to public funds who were waiting for their status to be settled.

The committee then heard from Duncan Whitfield, Strategic Director of Finance and Governance who reported on the financial situation and the changing position on government funding.

The committee also heard from cabinet members, Stephen Douglass, Director of Communities and Jin Lim, Consultant in Public Health.

Following questions and discussion the committee deferred consideration of recommendations to cabinet, to the overview and scrutiny committee meeting scheduled for 12 May 2020.

The meeting ended at 8.48pm

CHAIR:

DATED: