

Decisions of the Community Leadership and Libraries Committee

7 February 2023

Members Present:-

Councillor Sara Conway (Chair)
Councillor Gill Sargeant (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Zahra Beg	Councillor Lachhya Gurung
Councillor Dean Cohen	Councillor Simon Radford
Councillor Shuey Gordon	Councillor Danny Rich
Councillor Jennifer Grocock	Councillor Ella Rose
Councillor Kamal Gurung	

Also in attendance

Apologies for Absence

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

It was agreed that a list of CCTV units would be supplied to Committee members as agreed.

Details of the Business Plan would be provided as part of the Policy & Resources papers which are being taken to the February meeting.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS (IF ANY)

None.

3. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS (IF ANY)

Cllr Conway declared a non-pecuniary interest – that she is a Trustee of the Jewish Volunteering Network, a trustee at Sebby's Corner and a Council appointed trustee at the Arts Depot.

Cllr Rich declared a non-pecuniary interest – that he is a Youth Magistrate in South West London.

Cllr Rose declared a non-pecuniary interest – that she is a member of the London Jewish Forum.

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS (IF ANY)

None.

6. MEMBERS' ITEMS (IF ANY)

None.

7. REGISTRATION AND NATIONALITY SERVICE UPDATE

Barry May, Assistant Director of Resident Experience and Digital and Michaela Fitzpatrick, Registrations Service Manager presented the report and noted that previously the service had been reported at this Committee in 2020. The report focused on performance and demand over the period of time of covid and highlights the recovery period also. Birth registration backlogs and Home Office backlogs for citizenship ceremonies and noted that in the last 12 months the team are now on track with the backlogs from the pandemic. There is also capacity now in the service to perform the registrations needed and carry out the statutory obligations the service provides as within the year 2023/24 the GRO will actively start monitoring KPI performance against national indicators.

Comparably against London the service is doing well with a current focus on chasing up outstanding birth registrations from babies that were born during the pandemic or still outstanding, outside of the statutory 42 days.

The report also highlighted some statutory and legislative duties that have either been introduced, or will be introduced soon, showing the potential impact this could have on residents and the service the team provides.

Cllr Rich commented on the speed of burial for some communities within Barnet, notably the Jewish community and the Muslim community for religious significance and asked about the relationship with the new medical examiners and how any delays may be prevented in the future. Ms Fitzpatrick advised that the team are currently working with the medical examiners on the new roll out and the communications they will be putting out prior to the statutory roll out in April, and they will be mirroring Barnet's on call out of hours service, which is currently 9 – 11pm on weekends and bank holidays. Ms Fitzpatrick noted that the previous Saturday the out of hours service had been piloted and the medical examiners had ensured community surgeries and doctors are on board and aware of how the processes operate with no huge delays being seen in the issuing of paperwork relating to deaths.

Cllr Cohen gave his personal thanks to the team, in particular those who go the extra mile in assisting families in difficult times in terms of registration especially faith groups within the borough and being flexible in that regard. He also expressed thanks on behalf of the residents of Golders Green. Cllr Conway endorsed this also.

Cllr Gordon also expressed his thanks to the team on behalf of residents in Edgware, noting the good experiences he has had with them at such sensitive times.

Cllr Sargeant congratulated the team on the new opportunities at Hendon Town Hall and looks forward to the report going forward with new business.

RESOLVED that all of the Committee members:

- 1. Noted service performance, and updates contained within the report on the recovery of performance since the pandemic**
- 2. Noted the statutory and legislative changes that have had an impact on service provision and the people engaging with the service**

8. COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND LIBRARIES FORECAST FINANCIAL OUTTURN AT MONTH 9 (DECEMBER 2022)

Nick Stylianou, Head of Finance presented the report to the Committee noting that at month 9 the forecast revenue financial outturn on the General Fund is:

- Forecast underspend of £0.168m and a favourable movement of £0.229m since month 4
- There are no reserves to be drawn down this financial year

Additional grant is shown in Family Services and Community Safety which wasn't planned for the beginning of the financial year which has led to a substantial part of the underspend.

Additional increased agency costs related to sector issues around recruitment of social care staff. This is in line with wider council pressures on procuring staff amidst supply chain scarcity of skilled labour. This is also affecting other services within the organisation, notably Legal.

Community Safety is forecasting a net nil variance at month 9. This includes the increased budget for CCTV, related to the revenue cost of leasing the BT/Openreach lines is underspending by £0.250m in-year. This is offset by an underachievement of Fixed Penalty Income in-year, due to delayed recruitment, training, and purchasing equipment. This has resulted in expected revenue only being generated from December 2022 onwards. Income is expected to return to target levels from 2023/24.

It is currently forecasted that all £0.084m of savings will be achieved from the Registrations service, with the view that income from future years is expected to recover through improvements to facilities at Hendon Town Hall and increased marketing which are expected to increase income generation from Marriage services going forward into next year.

Mr Stylianou highlighted one potential risk being the changes to legislation in Marriage services whereby couples are required to register with their Local Authority, even if they hold private marriage services. Central Government are considering changing legislation to remove this requirement, which would reduce demand for this service.

He continued that Central Government are also currently discussing withdrawing or reducing the prevent grant which funds council officers. This would potentially mean additional council budget is required to maintain officer posts.

Cllr Rich asked in relation to the Prevent funding and the assumption that the team will not be able to carry out this work going forward due to the funding being withdrawn. Maggie Higton Brown commented that when the Home Office confirm the position and set out the new model the team will still need to carry this work out as the work of Prevent is a statutory duty so we will then assess the impact on the borough then. Declan Khan noted that a package will be put in place however the service will be redefined, and further details will be given when known.

Cllr Grocock asked about reserves in the report as there was no figure included. Mr Stylianou commented that there are not any that we are currently drawing down on.

Cllr Grocock asked in relation to agency staff in section 2.2 of the report. Mr Stylianou agreed to circulate the detailed breakdown to all members after the Committee meeting for their information.

Cllr Grocock also asked for an addition in section 1.6 in the report and for this to include civil ceremonies and not just weddings

Cllr Grocock queried the dates in section 3.3.3 of the report and Cllr Conway confirmed that the costs cover the financial year for 2023/24. Cllr Grocock also asked about costs relating to the governance arrangements around fibre connections. Mr Khan commented that this would be covered within the CCTV Full Business Case report at Item 12 within the agenda pack.

Cllr Beg asked about the risks as set out in section 2.12.1 and the impact that this change in the law could have. Mr May informed that the main risk is that it will change where people can get married, however this could also be seen as an opportunity. The government commissioned this review, however this was mentioned as a risk as we may lose weddings at Hendon Town Hall but an opportunity in the Borough as people can get married in different settings, for example local parks and other faith and community halls. Approximately 20-30% of people who register to get married at the Town Hall with the remaining number of people marrying at other legal buildings.

RESOLVED that all the Committee members:

- 1. Noted the current forecast financial outturn for 2022/23;**
- 2. Noted the projected use of reserves.**

9. CIVIC AND COMMUNITY EVENTS POLICY

Will Cooper, Deputy Head of Strategy & Jennifer Powell, Community Events Officer presented the report via PowerPoint and took the Committee through the community events programme that is scheduled for the year 2023/24 which forms part of the new focus on engaging with residents, empowering communities, and celebrating the culture of the borough.

Funding for events will be spread out across the year to ensure there is enough funding for main times of celebration and will be focused on events that celebrate cultural or faith festivals and awareness days linked to cultural identity.

Funding has been allocated from the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) to support community engagement where within this there is a budget to fund community events with community groups being able to make a bid for a community event at any time and a small diverse panel will meet to assess each that are received that reflect the communities celebrating the specific events

Cllr Cohen asked in relation to the budget and if there is a minimum or maximum amount for grants. Ms Powell commented that the usual maximum amount of grant is £1000 per grantee however in exceptional circumstances this could be raised. She continued that the total amount allocated in the budget for grants is £120k.

Cllr Cohen asked about cross diverse panels that make decisions on the grant funding applications, if the panel meets during a certain period and how long is the lead in time before that grants need to be submitted to when the panel convenes to make a decision. Mr Cooper commented that the team would expect community groups to be bidding throughout certain times of the year and would expect to have a representative of the relevant faith group on the decision-making panel.

Cllr L Gurung mentioned that within the borough multi-cultural events have previously been held at the Multi-Cultural Centre in Hendon and suggested for this to be looked at again. Mr Cooper commented that he would encourage any community groups to participate in these types of events going forward

Cllr L Gurung also commented that there used to be a community group in Burnt Oak called 'All together Burnt Oak' which included different groups and schools who held cultural dances and had stalls from different faith groups from the Community Hospital to Montrose Park which was another good way of bringing communities together. Cllr Conway noted that the winter festival fund was a joint motion cross party at Council a few years back and is very much a joint effort. In relation to this particular event there is an issue with funding that Cllr Conway is aware of and the purpose of the new funding that has been made available is to encourage other community groups to reach out and bid for money. Mr Cooper expressed hope that now with the funding available we will be more visible and encourage more events to take place with more cross community working.

Cllr Rose noted the paper reflects upon the administrations priority to be a Borough of Fun and expressed her thanks to all officers. She also noted the importance of all communities in the borough being recognised. She also asked for the papers to be updated to include the Progress Pride flag which is currently being flown outside of the Town Hall.

RESOLVED that all the Committee members:

- 1. Approved the Civic and Community Events Policy appended**
- 2. Approved the community events programme and the approach we will take to deliver it**

- 3. A list of the faith festivals, cultural celebrations, awareness days and memorial events that the council will officially mark. Authority is delegated to the relevant Chief Officer to approve the award of grant funding as provided in the Civic and Community Events Policy.**

10. REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT AND ASYLUM SEEKER UPDATE

Will Cooper & Gemma Carmichael, Strategy Manager presented the report to the Committee which outlined an update on the ongoing work that the Council does to support the resettlement of refugees in Barnet and also outlines the Council's plans to become a Borough of Sanctuary.

Ms Carmichael noted that a motion was passed at full Council on 24th January to make Barnet a borough of Sanctuary and Cllr Conway commented that this has been introduced by the current administration, supported unanimously.

In relation to the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme and Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy, the team have, to date, supported 4 Afghan families and on the Homes for Ukraine scheme the Strategy team have overseen the welcoming of approximately 1000 guests with support from Environmental Health, Barnet Homes, HR, Children's Safeguarding, and Finance.

Ms Carmichael also updated the Committee on Asylum seekers and noted that Barnet is home to five hotels being used to accommodate asylum seekers before dispersing them into accommodation. These hotels are located across the borough and as of 18 November 2022, there were 1108 individuals across the four hotels – this is a rise from 901 the year before. 5 hotels in the borough that the home office are using with approx. 1000 asylum seekers.

Cllr Grocock asked about private rented accommodation and if there is any way accommodation outside of the borough can be looked at. She also asked about settlements and who and how those in hotels can be supported. She also asked about the plan for decommissioning the hotels that asylum seekers are currently living in. Ms Carmichael commented that the Afghan families we currently support are living in hotels outside of the borough and figures around this can be circulated to all Committee members. Mr Cooper commented that the Home Office are in charge of the decommissioning of the hotels as it is dependent on dispersal accommodation. He continued that there is a campaign across the country to buy property and once sufficient stock has been purchased the hotels will be decommissioned however this is unlikely to happen before the end of the year.

Cllr Sargeant noted the importance of Barnet now being a borough of sanctuary so it can provide a cohesive approach to what we can do. Cllr Sargeant also noted the good work the team are doing with unaccompanied children.

Cllr Beg asked if the Home Office have started the asylum seekers dispersal scheme. Ms Carmichael advised that there is not huge amounts of clarity on this as yet, similar to what has been discussed with the decommissioning of hotels. Mr Cooper informed that the team are working hard to get as much info from the Home Office as we can.

RESOLVED that all the Committee members:

- 1. Noted the report and the updates on refugees and asylum seekers in Barnet**
- 2. Approved of adopting the values of the City of Sanctuary network and the development of a Borough of Sanctuary Strategy**

11. COMMUNITY SAFETY MID-YEAR INTERIM REPORT QTR 1 AND QTR 2 2022/23 INCLUDING AN UPDATE ON THE DELIVERY OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY HUBS AND WARD WALKS

Maggie Higton Brown, Head of CCTV & Community Safety presented the report to the Committee and informed the report demonstrated the work undertaken by the Community Safety Team during the period April 2022 – September 2022 and provided the Committee with an update on the delivery of the five priorities of the Community Safety Strategy. The report also includes the implementation and review of the Community Safety Hubs and Ward Walk projects between October – December 2022 as part of the work of Community Safety Team

Cllr Cohen raised the issue of poor or no street lighting and felt it important that the Committee notes this in the form of a report as this links with the safety of residents in the borough. Cllr Cohen asked for the street lighting officer to bring a report back on street lighting to the Committee however Cllr Conway confirmed that she would liaise with the Chair of the Environment & Climate Change Committee on a way forward.

Cllr Cohen also raised the ward walks and asked for clarification on the number of these taking place in each ward per year. Ms Higton Brown confirmed that two per ward, per year would take place.

Cllr Rich commented on the importance of ensuring the case studies are seen by the public via communications this would be perceived as a positive piece of work and encourage more residents to raise issues if they know they are being tackled. He also thanked officers for the comprehensive reports that come to the Committee.

Cllr Grocock asked in relation to the 32 referrals within the prevent section of the report and what ages and ideologies the 4 that were considered suitable for channel multi agency assistance. Ms Higton Brown informed that 81% of these were under 18 and 46% of these were linked to mixed or unclear/unstable ideologies.

Cllr L Gurung asked who organises the ward walks. Ms Higton Brown informed that within the project team there are officers who coordinate the walks and HUBs who arrange the administration of this.

Cllr Grocock also raised the PSPO notices around the borough and asked if they could include landline telephone numbers on to make it as easy as possible for residents to get in touch and asked if the Safe Places window stickers could be circulated to members to see. Cllr Conway informed that this piece of work has now turned into a project because of the wider reach and an update will come to the Committee at a later date for members awareness.

Cllr Gordon asked if there was a quicker way of covering more of the borough on the ward walks, for example using bikes. Ms Highton Brown commented that the walks only cover the hotspots that residents have emailed in about and this information will link into specific initiatives going forward.

RESOLVED that all the Committee members:

- 1. Noted and commented on the Community Safety Team interim report.**
- 2. Noted and commented on the progress being made against the five priorities set out in the Community Safety Strategy.**
- 3. Noted and commented on the implementation and review of the Community Safety Hubs and Ward Walks report.**

12. CCTV - FULL BUSINESS CASE

Declan Khan, Assistant Director of CAFT presented the report on behalf of Clair Green, Executive Director of Assurance.

Mr Khan informed the Committee that within the report it includes approval to proceed with the procurement of a CCTV fibre network management service, by direct award of a contract to BT Plc, justified by continuation of terms secured by competitive tender through the Fibre West procurement undertaken by LB Ealing in January 2022.

Cllr Conway expressed her thanks to all officers for their work on the report.

Cllr Grocock asked about the procurement of the CCTV and if Committee members can have sight of the documents relating to this. Adam Driscoll, Commissioning Lead, Growth advised that the procurement of this was all carried out via Ealing Council however would only send appropriate information relating to this that is not commercially sensitive.

ACTION: MR DRISCOLL

Cllr Cohen asked in recommendation 3 and what further revisions could be made to the business case without Committee members seeing it. Mr Driscoll commented it could be a number of things that need to be amended, such as additional column sites, and other elements of the programme that are linked to the technical delivery phase. Some of the technology that are used for some parts of the borough, for example parks, will not be suitable for main roads or alleyways.

Cllr Rich noted that the Committee should agree the business case in principle and allow officers and technical staff to ensure they get the best from the technology proposed and make any changes necessary for the best use of the equipment.

RESOLVED that all the Committee members:

- 1. Approved the Full Business Case (FBC) for the CCTV programme**

2. **Approved commencement of the direct procurement and award process to contract with BT Plc for the provision and management of a secure CCTV fibre network as well as the associated network equipment and services.**
3. **Approved delegated authority to the Executive Director, Assurance in consultation with the Committee Chair to approve further revisions to the Full Business Case (FBC), and for the signing of the CCTV fibre network contract.**
4. **Approved delegated authority to the Executive Director, Assurance to develop and enter into contractual arrangements relating to the installation and use of attachments to CCTV assets, where they can provide beneficial services to the council, residents or businesses within the borough.**

13. COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Cllr Grocock asked when the Corporate Plan will be brought to the Committee. Cllr Conway noted that this was on the agenda for the Policy & Resources meeting on 22nd February 2023 and then would be taken to Budget Council on 28th February 2023.

RESOLVED that all the Committee members noted the forward plan.

14. ANY ITEM(S) THE CHAIR DECIDES ARE URGENT

None.

The meeting finished at 8.43pm