

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
TOWNS & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB- COMMITTEE
Committee Room 3B - Town Hall
23 November 2017 (7.30 - 9.30 pm)**

Present:

Councillors Lawrence Webb (Chairman), Linda Hawthorn (Vice-Chair),
Frederick Thompson, Jody Ganly, Carol Smith, June Alexander and Ray Best

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Steven Kelly, Robby Misir
and Michael Deon Burton

44 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No interest was declared at the meeting.

45 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the inclusion in the minutes that the direct cost of the Market House Project was £228,314.

These costs related to design fees, ground investigation and surveys. The work undertaken on surveys and groundwork would help to inform on any future work on the market.

The council would be unable to claim any of these costs back from the GLA as the GLA grant was to be for capital expenditure and as there would be no capital asset (the Market House) the GLA withdrew the offer of grant funding and would not contribute to any of the feasibility costs.

46 PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 2

The report before Members set out the quarter two corporate performance data as selected by the Sub-Committee.

The report identified the indicators that were rated as Red (not so well) and also detailed the corrective action that were required in order to indicate the action the Council was taking to address under performance.

The Assistant Director of Policy, Performance and Community reported on five performance indicators. It was noted that three had been assigned an on track / off track status. All three were currently rated Red (off track).

The Sub-Committee noted that the following three indicators were off target however, three of the five indicators were showing an improving direction of travel against quarter one.

- Stage 1 complaints closed in 15 days (cumulative); 84% against a target of 95%.
- Stage 2 complaints closed within 20 days (cumulative); 94.4% against a target of 95%.
- Housing repairs completed within target (cumulative); 92% against a target of 96%.

The Sub-Committee noted that improvements were required within Housing Repairs, as performance was below target for repairs completed within the target timescale, with 12,140 repairs in time against a total of 13,195 repairs (92%), but an improvement was noted compared to the same period last year (89.68%).

A service improvement plan had been put in place with the responsive repairs maintenance contractor. The action plan was being monitored and scrutinised at regular review meetings in addition to the normal contractual and partnership meetings.

The number of stage one complaints closed within timescale within Housing was below target, 140 out of 153 (92%) for 'Housing – other' and 71 out of 114 (62%) for 'Housing – repairs' were closed within 15 days against a target of 95%.

It was noted that the issues that contributed to the below-target performance included:

- Staffing shortages earlier in the year. Following successful recruitment, the Complaints Team was now fully staffed and performance was improving, with results for September showing that 100% were closed within target.
- The complaints process in Housing Services was under review. ICT issues and a potential office move had temporarily delayed the co-location of contractor complaints staff with the council complaints officers, which would improve response times and the quality of complaint responses.

The Sub-Committee was informed that improvements were required within Planning and Building Control and Public Protection, as the 95% target was not achieved as a result of one out of six stage 2 responses being off target while within Public Protection, one out of two stage 2 responses had been off target.

The Sub-Committee noted the performance update.

47 PARKS AND OPEN SPACES - PRESENTATION

The Council's Parks Development Manager gave the Sub-Committee a presentation on the Council's parks and open spaces.

The presentation outlined that the Council managed 100 parks and open spaces including 4 country parks and also detailed the works carried out managing the parks, including the management of maintenance, parks ranger service and parks management and a formal inspection system.

The Sub-Committee were informed that officers were also tasked with capital project management and external funding applications, which formed part of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.

In total, the Council maintained and managed 41 play areas including 26 recreation/fitness areas.

The Council also managed 27 allotments including liaising with allotment societies, the management of Public Right of Ways, including liaising with ramblers and with 18 friends of parks groups.

The Sub-Committee noted that the team also dealt with the management of Green Flag applications and that the Council currently had 13 parks that held Green Flag status.

Officers advised that they dealt with event and activities management, management of leases and licences and the management of sports pitch hire.

Marketing of the parks and open spaces was carried out using social media, the website, brochures and press releases. Members were informed that a Friends group forum was recently organised to assist with marketing events in parks.

Going forward, officers informed the Sub-Committee that a further Green Flag application had been made for Langtons Gardens and the retention of existing parks.

It was also indicated that the service would continue to apply for London in Bloom in the Best Borough category.

Officers would continue to work with private companies that wanted to invest in the parks and help the service to be more commercial in order to generate income.

Officers continued to research through the London Parks Benchmarking Group and Parks for London, to source ideas for additional income generation.

Improved publicity of the parks and open spaces would continue with new brochures, web pages and the use of the events management website “Filmapp” which allowed filmmakers to book to use parks or open spaces when filming.

Improved parks condition and safety inspections were been carried out using the “Commontime” software that was currently used by Housing Services.

The Sub-Committee was informed that parks maintenance was carried out by an in-house team which made more financial sense than using outside contractors.

Members were informed that arrangements were in place to carry out bio diversity surveys in the country parks to ascertain exact numbers of wildlife and insects.

The Sub-Committee noted the presentation and thanked the Parks Development Manager for attending.

Chairman