



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday 2 February 2022 at 7.00 pm
Committee Room B-06, Lambeth Town Hall, London SW2 1RW

Members Present: Councillor Liz Atkins (Chair), Councillor Mary Atkins (Vice-Chair), Councillor Jonathan Bartley, Councillor Stephen Donnelly, Councillor Joshua Lindsey (Vice-Chair), Councillor Irfan Mohammed and Councillor Martin Tiedemann

Apologies: Councillor Tim Briggs and Councillor Marianna Masters

1 Declaration of Pecuniary Interests

With regard to the Skills and Employment Strategy, Councillor Mary Atkins declared that she was a member of the Strategic Skills Board, but that this did not amount to a pecuniary interest.

Councillor Joshua Lindsey declared in relation to the Skills and Employment Strategy that his employer, Transport for London, had a skills academy in the borough.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2022 be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

3 Events Scrutiny Commission Action Plan Update

Councillor Mary Atkins, Chair of the Commission and Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, introduced the report, stating that the Commission had concluded two years earlier and this was the final update. The recommendations had a significant impact on officers, Councillors and residents, including Friends' Groups, in terms of the way parks were used and how groups related to each other. She thanked officers for their positive reception to the Commission and its recommendations.

The Committee then heard from witnesses.

The Chair read a statement from Councillor Nigel Haselden, Commission Member, raising the following points:

- One of the key aims of the Commission was to strengthen existing practices and policies, and many of the recommendations had been accepted. The action plan set a framework for maximising the benefits from events.
- A major part of the evidence base for the Commission was the day-long stakeholders' summit, which brought different groups together to discuss their concerns around the use of parks for events in a constructive manner.

- Parks for London had recently judged Lambeth to have the best green spaces of all 32 London boroughs, and this was a credit to the work of the Commission and officers.

Councillor Linda Bray then addressed the Committee, stating the following:

- Many residents near Clapham Common had concerns about the damage to the Common caused by events and the potential enclosure of the events site for weeks at a time.
- She questioned how much local businesses benefited from events.
- There were concerns that the use of Clapham Common for events could be contrary to legislation.

Officers then provided the following information in response to questions from Members:

- The action plan formed the framework for events in parks and would be used as events returned to normal in 2022. Some recommendations, such as those around disability access, applied to parks generally and were not specific to events.
- There was an ongoing process regarding the need for Secretary of State approval for Temporary Event structures on Clapham and Streatham Commons. Officers had a good relationship with the Planning Inspectorate, with a planning consultant on board to support the 2022 application. The Planning inspectorate had indicated that if consent was granted for 2022, it could be possible to submit multiple-year applications for 2023 onwards.
- While park usage remained high in 2021, it had decreased from the significantly higher levels seen during the lockdowns of 2020, and there was no evidence of a long-term change in the way residents used parks.
- 2022 would be the first year of using the framework and audit process, and officers would work with event organisers on-site to monitor adherence to the framework. Outcomes would be monitored after events, and if there were failings, officers would explore the most effective ways of ensuring targets would be met in future years.
- The safety of park users was not part of the Commission's focus, but was included in the Events Strategy. As part of a wider area of work on safer spaces, officers had undertaken a review of safety of public places, including parks. Funding for lighting and CCTV on Clapham Common and Rush Common had been secured as a result of this review.
- The Events team had worked with Licensing to ensure a condition was now required for ingress and egress plans, and for security staff to be trained on the safety of women and young people. Stewards were required for large events.
- There had been limited opportunities for job opportunities linked to events in 2020 and 2021, but efforts were in place to improve this in 2022 and beyond. There was a programme for young people in the local area to gain work experience at events held in Brockwell Park, with Lambeth Made and Elevate finding suitable candidates. There was a focus on jobs associated with events more widely, not just on-site, such as with promoters and organisers. This programme would be a pilot in 2022, with the aim of increasing the offer in future

years.

Members of the Committee thanked officers and Commission Members for their efforts, both during the Commission and in building on the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee welcomes the response to the Commission report and the action plan.
2. That job opportunities relating to events be maximised, particularly in disadvantaged areas such as Tulse Hill.
3. That the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on events continue to be reviewed, and that the appropriateness of the framework be considered.
4. That the Committee requests that the Council prioritise personal safety in parks, both during events and normal use, in light of the murder of Sarah Everard and continuing youth violence.
5. That the Council listens and engages with key stakeholders to minimise and mitigate against potential negative impacts from events.

4 Work Programme

Members suggested the following areas for potential future scrutiny:

- A holistic item on the Council's work in addressing the cost of living crisis, particularly for the borough's most vulnerable residents, including fuel poverty, fare rises, National Insurance increases and evictions. This should also include the work between the Council and other bodies such as credit unions, private sector landlords, central government (particularly the DWP).
- A review/update of the waste and leisure contracts after they had been in place for one year.
- Registrars, following reports of people being unable to book ceremonies.

Members requested data on evictions in order to assess the effectiveness of the Council's policies and strategies.

RESOLVED: That, subject to the comments above, the work programme and action log (Appendix 1) be noted.

5 Skills and Employment Strategy - One Year On

The Chair expressed concern at the absence of Cllr Jacqui Dyer, the Cabinet member responsible for employment and skills, and in her absence that neither of the co-Directors for Sustainable Growth & Opportunity were present

Alison May, Assistant Director, Skills and Employment, introduced the report, stating that:

- The Strategy was published in November 2020, formed part of the Economic Resilience Strategy, and aimed to address both the impact of Covid-19 and the

long-term economic challenges facing the borough.

- There were multiple sources of funding for Skills and Employment, with significant amounts of Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) being used this year.
- The long-term challenges of the Strategy included maximising opportunities and addressing inequalities in the labour market.

The Committee then heard from witnesses.

Grace English, co-CEO, High Trees, addressed the Committee, raising the following points:

- High Trees was a Community Development Trust based in Tulse Hill which provided a range of integrated services across welfare, children and young people, and employment and training. It had a contract with the Council worth approximately £300,000 per year to provide employment and skills support for 500 learners.
- A range of accredited and non-accredited courses were provided, including ESOL, basic IT courses and courses to support people into work.
- These courses formed a key part of engagement with residents, as people often attended a course and then accessed further support from High Trees. It would be significantly more difficult to provide such a wide range of support without the adult education offer.
- High Trees worked with other services across the community to ensure residents could access the most appropriate support.

Giovanni Dyke, who had participated in an employment programme run by Lambeth Made, then addressed the Committee, stating that:

- He had attended a summer course on e-commerce, where he created a website to sell clothes and accessories. It had taught him how to establish and run a business, which had helped him to get a job as a content creator.
- During the programme he found a part-time job, and Lambeth Made had been flexible to ensure he could fit his studies around work.
- Giovanni had found out about the programme through the Lambeth Made Instagram account.
- After the course finished, Lambeth Made continued to support him, such as by having a post-programme interview. He would recommend the programme as it had helped him progress in his desired career.

Officers and witnesses then provided the following information in response to questions from Members:

- Training providers were assessed and evaluated at least three times per year. KPIs, and data such as attendance and learner outcomes were used to ensure value for money was achieved. As well as a self-assessment from the provider, learners were also asked for feedback. The quality of teaching and learning was assessed both formally and informally, and CPD was provided for tutors and

support staff.

- The main benchmark for skills and employment programmes was the number of learners entering work, although different courses had different target cohorts, and therefore different expectations of outcomes. Many people who were furthest from employment would need more support or multiple courses before being ready to start work.
- There had been cases where funding to providers had been stopped as a result of performance reviews.
- At its most recent self-assessment, the Adult Education team had judged its performance to be 'good' rather than 'outstanding' due to pockets of weaker performance such as in-work training. This was mostly due to Covid-19 and a plan was in place to address this.
- Steps 2 Success, a programme exclusively for care leavers, was one of the best-performing programmes. Participants had to be ready to enter long-term employment, and received one-to-one support from an employment consultant that continued for six months after the end of the programme. The programme had strong links particularly with the Civil Service, with 11 participants having received job offers within the last year.
- A major reason for the worse performance in apprenticeships was the reluctance for businesses, particularly small businesses, to take on the risk of an apprenticeship at a time of significant uncertainty. Apprenticeship levy funding was being transferred to participating businesses to make apprenticeships more appealing.
- Recent migrants often first accessed ESOL courses, and would then find out about other services, such as around employment and welfare advice. Providers such as High Trees would signpost residents to other services when appropriate and had good relationships with organisations across the borough.
- The entire Employment and Skills Programme was currently being evaluated, and officers would provide the specifications of the review to Committee Members.
- The data on the employment rate of Black residents was concerning. Analysis was needed on the current programme offer and outcomes, as well as information on the sectors that employed the largest numbers of Black residents. This would be monitored by the Skills and Employment Board.
- Youth Hubs were funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), with stipulations on their operation, so the majority of referrals came from Job Centres, rather than the Council.
- The programme with Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) had been unsuccessful, and officers had worked to assess why. The programme had started in February 2020, had to be paused due to lockdown and even after resuming was affected by the uncertainty and subsequent lockdowns. The programme was currently closed, but would be remodelled with a view to relaunch in the future.
- Some industries, such as hospitality, had issues of people having unrealistic views of the types of jobs available and a perception that it was not an area with

long-term employment options.

- Officers worked with children's centres to ensure learners had access to a creche in order to enable parents to participate in programmes. The Connecting Communities programme had a budget to provide childcare for lone parents.
- All programmes had outcomes-based KPIs, including the percentage of participants entering employment. Different programmes would have different targets; the rapid response programme for people who lost their job during the pandemic would expect higher numbers of people finding jobs than an ESOL course. Officers could provide data on the percentage of participants entering employment by individual programme to the Committee.
- There was a need to strengthen links between the Employment and Skills team and schools, both mainstream and special schools. A new Careers Strategy was in development which would cover primary school through to adulthood and would complement the Skills and Employment Strategy.
- Community engagement and communications were a key focus, particularly in relation to engaging with young people. Officers used social media to publicise new programmes, as well as attending Youth Hubs, schools, and working with the Youth Offending Service.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee be provided with the full evaluation of the Skills and Employment Programme.
2. That the findings of the review of the South London BID Recruitment Service be shared with the Committee and be used to inform future, more strategic programmes.
3. That vulnerable groups, particularly Black, Asian and Multi-Ethnic people, at risk of falling out of employment be identified with a view of helping them return to work, including the aftercare provided after the end of programmes.
4. That programmes be designed with flexibility, particularly for parents and carers, such as the use of flexible hours, subsidised childcare and the consideration of a four-day week pilot.
5. That the work between schools and Employment and Skills continue, and that the Careers Strategy be shared with the Committee.
6. That social media messaging and promotion of programmes, particularly those aimed at young people, be continued and improved.
7. That the role of Youth Hubs be reviewed for their effectiveness in helping young people into work.
8. That the value for money of grants to external organisations be properly assessed, with clear benchmarks for each programme.
9. That care leavers continue to be prioritised in being prepared for work, considering the additional challenges faced.
10. That as far as possible, migrants be identified to ensure they can be well-informed of their rights and the support available in a systematic manner.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

CHAIR
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Thursday 24 March 2022

Date of Despatch: Wednesday 23 February 2022

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