OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1 July 2020

**Title:** Scrutiny Review – Ambition 2020 and its Early Impact

**Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Report</th>
<th>For Comment</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wards Affected:</strong> None</td>
<td><strong>Key Decision:</strong> No</td>
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**Summary**

On 9 October 2019, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) agreed to undertake an in-depth scrutiny review on Ambition 2020 and its early impact (minute 20 refers).

At the 3 June OSC meeting, a first formal draft of the report to arise from this review was presented (minute 55 refers). As there was a limitation on the amount of time remaining to discuss the draft report at the meeting, the Chair asked Members to send any comments to herself and officers within a given deadline. The comments received have been addressed as far as possible, given the timescale involved, and attached is the proposed final version of the report to arise from the review.

**Recommendation(s)**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to agree the report attached at Appendix 1 as the final version of the report to arise from the scrutiny review on Ambition 2020.

**Reason(s)**

It is good practice to publish the proposed final version of reports to arise from scrutiny reports to allow members of the public to track progress of scrutiny reviews.

1. **Introduction and Background**

1.1 On 9 October 2019, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC), having received a scoping report, agreed to undertake an in-depth scrutiny review on Ambition 2020 and its early impact (minute 20 refers).

2. **Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Review**

2.1 The Committee agreed the following Terms of Reference for the review:

   i. **Key Line of Enquiry 1:** How well established is the governance of the Council’s new wholly-owned companies, to ensure they play their role in delivering the borough’s ambition and expected financial returns?
ii. Key Line of Enquiry 2: How much impact has the new Council approach had on the improvement in customer service standards, and what are the plans to continue this improvement with the return of Elevate services to the Council?

iii. Key Line of Enquiry 3: How well are the new arrangements of the Council managing demand for the Council’s statutory services across homelessness, adults’ and children’s social care?

iv. Key Line of Enquiry 4: How well is the Council’s new approach fostering a sustainable place where people want to live?

3. The Report

3.1 The proposed final version of the report is provided at Appendix 1 to this report. It details the sessions OSC Members took part in to address the four Key Lines of Enquiry above and makes 24 recommendations.

4. Next Steps

4.1 Should the report be agreed, it will be submitted to the relevant decision makers, in accordance with the Constitution. If the recommendations are accepted, relevant officers will be asked to draw up an Action Plan describing how the recommendations will be implemented which will be shared with the OSC.

4.2 Approximately six months after the finalisation of the report, a monitoring report explaining the progress of the implementation of the recommendations will be presented to the OSC.

5. Legal Implications

Implications completed by Dr Paul Field, Senior Governance Lawyer

5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is a committee established under Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000, as amended by the Localism Act 2011. A key role for the Committee is the review and scrutinise the performance of the Council, other public bodies and partner organisations in the area, invite them to address the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and prepare reports about their initiatives and performance.

5.2 As set out in the body of this report, as the Ambition 2020 Agenda is wide reaching a decision has been made to focus on four areas (key lines of inquiry). In terms of the specific legal implications:

5.2.1 KLoE 1: Recommendations 1 and 2 proposes smaller, local companies be encouraged to bid for more work with the Council and its companies and business plans for the Council’s companies be made publicly available (excluding any sensitive commercial information) to allow residents to understand how the companies are aiming to meet their objectives. Both recommendations have no specific legal implications and are essentially about communications and building economic growth in the Borough.

5.2.2 KLoE 2: that following the return of Elevate, contact centre staff receive additional training in dealing with all vulnerable groups (including young people in care and care leavers). This recommendation is reasonable and would be part in any event
of the Council’s commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty as required under the Equality Act 2010.

5.2.3 KLoE 3: These recommendations relate to further acquisition of data to better understand the pattern of families moving in and out, and around the Borough to establish how this is affecting demand for services; the other recommendations are also dependent on data to inform a reasonable response to dealing with a problem of local authorities who may place families in the Borough but do not comply with the requirement to inform the Council that they had done so and finally for data to assist in Children’s Care & Support. These recommendations have no specific legal implications.

5.2.4 KLoE 4 - Housing: These seek to promote greater awareness of developments and accommodation mixes. These will need to comply with the Council’s Development Plan. The need for better communication with the community regarding housing options has been identified and the potential to support tenants in terms of references are reasonable.

5.2.5 KLoE 4 - Environment and Sustainability: These considerations will fit within the Council’s Development Plan and the proposal greater communications with the community on the need for environmental consideration and sustainable practice will be key and as part of the Council’s proper functions have no specific legal implications in themselves.

6. Financial Implications

Implications completed by: Katherine Heffernan, Group Manager – Service Finance

6.1 This report is the first formal draft of the Scrutiny Review of the Ambition 2020 programme. The review makes a number of recommendations to be considered by the Cabinet. Before the recommendations can be accepted and implemented it will be necessary to identify any funding and staffing resources required.

6.2 Many of the recommendations have relatively small financial implications and are likely to able to be delivered within existing resources - for example recs 2, 3, 8, 10 and 23, which concern sharing of information already held by the Council.

6.3 Other recommendations such as 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13 and 24 will require some investment of officer or member time. This may well be found within existing resources but may require prioritisation against other activities. The provision of landlord references (rec 15) will also require officer time; if there are significant numbers of such requests this may need the creation of additional posts. This should be funded from within the HRA.

6.4 The recommendations under KLoE4 around the issue of shared ownership, larger family homes and the Help to Buy scheme may all have significant resource implications and further feasibility work is required before these can be fully implemented.

6.5 This is also the case for recommendations under KLoE5.
Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report: None.

List of appendices:

- Appendix 1: Scrutiny Review Report – Ambition 2020 and its Early Impact