

Report to Council

Date of meeting: 6 November 2012

Subject: Overview and Scrutiny report to Council – October 2012

Contact for further information: Councillor R Morgan



Recommendation:

That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report from September 2012 to the present be noted.

Report

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 16 October 2012

1. At our meeting on Tuesday, 16 October we had Peter Tollington and Michael Graves both from London Underground Limited (LUL) who came to talk to our Committee and answer questions from members. We also had in attendance Ms Gallagher from the Disability Involvement and Engagement Group who had a question about access at Epping Station and also 13 members from the Youth Council who had prepared their own questions for the London Underground officers.
2. We noted that LUL's preparation and work for the Olympic Games paid off and the summer had proved to be a successful and enjoyable period for LUL. The improvements they had made to the trains and the increase in capacity at Stratford Station had been well received.
3. We had received a lot of questions from members in advance and were able to pass them on to Mr Tollington before he came to the meeting so that he could prepare answers.
4. Finally, we urged them to complete their response to our local plan and the issues and options consultation if they had not done so already.
5. We next considered the Cabinet Agenda for 22 October 2012 and our committee members wanted the following comments brought to the Cabinet's attention:
 - They thought that the guaranteed investment (sports and leisure management) was an excellent idea and should be supported as it would bring a good return on our capital;
 - The new Essex County Traveller Unit would be very useful in dealing with travellers and they urged the Council to join this as soon as it could;
 - They were concerned that there was no evidence given in the planning appeal compensation budget report to enable agreement of the £90,000 asked for; And finally they noted that
 - The Welfare Reform Mitigation Action Plan and the Localisation of Council Tax Support was crucial for the council.

6. We next considered three Constitution and Member Services Standing Panel reports. The first report was amending the terms of reference for the Staff Appeals Panel, deleting all appeals by staff except those involving dismissal. This was agreed and was referred to this Council meeting for agreement.

7. The second was a report on the review of the Council's Petitions Scheme and we agreed the minor amendments recommended and asked that the current Overview and Scrutiny Review Task and Finish Panel be asked to further consider this.

8. The third report was on the electronic delivery of agenda and other information. This report noted Counsel's advice on the Council's current distribution procedures and that wholly electronic notifications would not be lawful and that Council members may not lawfully opt out of hard copy deliveries.

9. The report also asked that the Cabinet be asked to approve DDF bids for:

1. A sum of £4,000 for 2013-14 to fund the installation of electrical outlet sockets in the Council Chamber; and
2. A sum of £1,000 for 2013-14 to continue funding the Mod. Gov App for a further year and to facilitate research by the Council on the use to continue the Mod. Gov App on a permanent basis.

We agreed the recommendations made and commended the DDF bids to the Cabinet.

10. Lastly we received a report on Wireless broadband within the EFDC area. We noted that a company called Buzcom set up separate wireless broadband links in the EFDC area which would enable householders to sign up with them and access their wireless broadband. We also asked that we get someone from BT and Virgin Media to come to a future meeting so that we could quiz them on the future of broadband in our area.