

London Borough of Islington

Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 8 March 2018

Non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 8 March 2018 at 7.30 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** Greening (Chair), Jeapes (Vice-Chair), Chowdhury,
O'Sullivan, Gallagher, Heather, Williamson, Smith and
Champion
Also Present: **Councillors:** Hull and Comer Schwartz

Councillor Richard Greening in the Chair

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)

Councillors Klute, Doolan, Russell and O'Halloran.

2 DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)

None

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)

None

4 TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)
RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 January 2018 be confirmed and the Chair be authorised to sign them

5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Item 5)

None

6 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 6)

The Chair outlined the procedure for Public questions and filming and recording of meetings

7 CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 7)

The Chair informed the Committee that this was his last meeting of the Committee, as he would be retiring from the Council in May.

The Chair added that in regard to the Thames Water Flooding scrutiny that the Committee had carried out he had had discussions with Councillor Webbe, the relevant Executive Member, and she had stated that she wished to attend a future meeting of the Committee to update them on her discussions with Thames Water and that this would take place in the next municipal year.

Members of the Committee thanked Councillor Greening for his service to the Council and the Committee and it was proposed by Councillor Heather and duly seconded and it was –

RESOLVED:

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That a vote of thanks be accorded to the Chair, Councillor Greening and the Vice Chair, Councillor Jeapes, for the services rendered by them to the Committee during the current municipal year

8 **EXECUTIVE MEMBER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - PRESENTATION (Item 8)**

Councillor Kaya Comer Schwartz, Executive Member Community Development, was present and made a presentation to the Committee, a copy of which is interleaved.

During consideration of the report the following main points were made –

- The areas of responsibility focuses on building strong, cohesive and resilient communities, supporting local organisations and residents to engage in their community and help each other. Specific areas of responsibility are – VCS including VCS Grants, Advice, Islington Community Chest, Community/Resident engagement, including community development and building resilience, Arts and Culture, Licensing, Equalities and Community Cohesion, Refugees and Migrants (no recourse to public funds team), and ward partnerships and local initiatives
- Councillor Comer Schwartz outlined the events she had attended that day for International Womens Day
- Local VCS organisations are key partners, helping the Council achieve its ambitions and priorities for Islington. Collectively the sector makes a contribution to every one of the Council's seven priority outcomes
- The Council is committed to using its role to support an independent, vibrant, and dynamic VCS and recognise that the sector has reach beyond Council services and respond in ways the Council cannot
- The VCS grants programme provides £2.68 million pa in core grant funding to 50 organisations that have been identified as being of strategic importance to the Council and the borough. In 2017 Islington VCS also brought in £11m from external funders to deliver services that benefit the local community
- Advice funding ensures that residents can access independent and impartial advice to improve household income, tackle indebtedness and sustain tenancies. There is £1.14m pa core grants for independent advice and support, Citizens Advice Islington, Islington Law Centre, Islington People's Rights, Help on Your Doorstep, and the Islington BAMER Advice Alliance
- Islington Community Chest builds community resilience by empowering local people and communities to do things to help each other, local people and their community. It provides £200k pa for grants to small community organisations to deliver projects that improve quality of life for Islington residents and that unlock giving. To date 35 organisations have received grants of between £400 and £5000
- A borough wide volunteering delivery plan with BIG Alliance, VAI and the Council's corporate volunteering programme and there has been resident engagement with communities on estates
- VCS resident and engagement – future focus and key challenges include – development of a joint Communities strategy bringing the VCS and Community Development Team together and establishing the new Homes and Communities offer for local residents. There is to be a full review of Community Centres in the borough, ensuring that the HRA community centre portfolio is used to its full social and economic value. Working with Islington Advice Alliance to develop a community response to the impact of Universal Credit on residents
- It was noted that Islington had been unsuccessful in their bid to be London Borough of Culture 2019 but Arts and Culture activities have a crucial role to play in engaging residents and bringing people together

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- Achievements and successes include Crossing the Threshold – Arts on Estates, Music Strategy, Community Festivals Fund and Islington Film Service
- Development of the Islington Pledge and cultural enrichment includes a commitment from cultural organisations on enrichment activity in 3 initial areas – offering free cultural enrichment experiences to develop 11 by 11 offer that ensures that all children and young people in Islington schools attend 11 outstanding cultural activities by the end of Year 11. Delivering world of work discussions in local school assemblies and classes. Opening up learning resources to strengthen cultural education activities in and outside schools. The Islington Pledge programme structure is now in development, with new enrichment activity anticipated to begin in autumn 2018
- Licensing – the late night levy Operation Night Safe is funded by the businesses selling alcohol after midnight and provides 2 Police Officers to lead on and manage the night time economy, night time visits and response, problems solving and dealing with problematic premises, street based patrols by Parkguard Thursday to Sunday 10pm to 7am, helping vulnerable people, the patrol also includes a medic, and back up is provided to businesses paying the levy
- There are a number of projects and activities taking place and a study has shown that the cumulative impact policy has been effective, and there had been numerous examples of diversifying the night time economy
- In response to a question it was stated that VCS organisation had to lever in funds apart from the core annual grant, and that work is taking place with the Procurement team to look at how best social value can be recognised in the awarding of contracts

The Chair thanked Councillor Comer-Schwartz for her presentation

9 **CRIME STATISTICS (Item 9)**

Nick Davies, Chief Superintendent Islington Police, and Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance, Performance and Community Safety were present during discussion of this item.

During discussion the following main points were made –

- It was stated that the areas of most concern were still moped theft, theft from the person and theft snatch, all of which had increased over the previous year
- It was noted that more dedicated resources were being employed in the borough to catching organised criminals behind these types of crimes, and that this is welcomed
- Work was also taking place with the Courts with regard to appropriate sentencing and there are a number of initiatives taking place with young people such as the youth violence protection kit, and with families
- The youth custody rate had reduced to its lowest level since 2010
- The integrated gangs team approach was being expanded
- Moped theft was a problem not just in Islington but had spread across London, and the Police were working hard to tackle it, together with knife crime
- The Police now had a motorcycle team in the borough who could pursue criminals on mopeds and some noticeable arrests had recently been made
- It was reported that snatch theft had significantly reduced recently and was now at the lowest level for the past 18/24 months
- Discussion took place as to ASB and that for repeat callers a multi-agency approach is being looked at
- A Member enquired how many motorcycle pursuits had been carried out this year compared to last year and the Chief Superintendent stated that he would provide these figures to the Committee

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- The view was expressed that more could be done to reassure the Public of the measures that the Police were taking and that improvements were taking place. The Chief Superintendent stated that the Police did use Twitter and next door to communicate and that when perpetrators are sent to Court for crimes this will be publicised. Councillor Hull added that together with the Police he had held discussions with local residents in Junction Road about local crime in the area and a walkabout in Canonbury ward to engage local residents
- In response to a question it was stated that with regard to non-attendance at schools, it was stated that in cases of non-attendance by pupils, work took place with families and support given, as the Council had a legal responsibility to provide education for children
- With regard to young adults, 18 years and over, this was a more complex situation as the probation work had been allocated to a private company by the Government
- Members were informed that the Council had an integrated offender management approach and details of this could be sent to Members of the Committee

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Chief Superintendent be requested to supply details of the numbers of moped pursuits undertaken to date this year, in comparison to last year
- (b) That details of the integrated offender management programme be circulated to Members of the Committee

The Chair thanked Councillor Hull, and Nick Davies for attending

10

PERFORMANCE UPDATE - QUARTER 3 (Item 10)

Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance, Performance and Community Safety was present for discussion of this item.

During consideration of the report the following main points were made –

- Levels of sickness absence were still a cause of concern, however measures were in place to address this and it is anticipated the appointment of new Occupational Health Adviser would be beneficial
- Digital transactions had increased and are improved on last year
- It is pleasing to note that there are no problems with the gender pay gap figures that had to be produced for the Government, although BME progression is an area that still needs to be addressed
- The Committee were pleased to note that agency staff had reduced and that this was in part it was felt to the Committee maintaining scrutiny of this issue
- A Member referred to KPI H1 – the number of affordable new council and housing association homes built and that this was off target. The view was expressed that the number of new Council homes should be separated from Housing Associations and that there also should be a net figure given as Housing Associations were also selling off properties as well as building them
- The view was also expressed that there was no figure given for relets at social rent and given that the underoccupancy programme had been going on for some time, it was felt that this would 'plateau' out eventually
- The view was also expressed that there was no data provided for Partners and that the figures for rent arrears for Partners properties are 2.7%, whereas the Council is only 2.2%
- In response to a question it was stated that there had been no adjustment to the projected income from the trampoline park at the Sobell as there had been a

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cautious income target set originally and that the scheme is proving very successful. However, the situation is being monitored

RESOLVED:

That the Executive Member Finance, Performance and Community Safety be requested to consider the above points relating to Housing PI's and whether adjustments can be made in future to reflect the comments made above

11 ICO - 12 MONTH UPDATE (Item 11)

Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance, Performance and Community Safety was present for discussion of this item. Kevin O'Leary, Director of Environment and Regeneration was also present.

During consideration of the report the following main points were made –

- It was noted that the majority of income came from the sale of memorials and the commercial waste function, however it was hoped that areas such as Pest Control would provide further additional income from residential customers and industrial units. It was stated that the service should be offered to Housing Associations
- It was noted that when considering the Business Plan, there may need to be funding set aside for a Business support post
- It was noted that it would be useful to have more information on the costs of running individual services included in the next report

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report and progress made by iCO in 2017/18 be noted
- (b) That a further update be received by the Committee in 12 months time

12 FINANCIAL MONITORING - UPDATE (Item 12)

Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance, Performance and Community Safety was present for discussion of this item. Steve Key, Service Director Finance – Corporate Resources was also present

During consideration of the report the following main points were made –

- The view was expressed that given that these were month 9 figures and that is was nearly year end it would be more advantageous to receive the report at an earlier stage, if necessary before it goes to the Executive, since it was a monitoring report, rather than a decision report
- It was noted that whilst the Council had set a balanced budget for 2018/19 the financial situation for all Local Authorities, even Conservative Authorities, was extremely challenging, due to Central Government reductions, and that the Council would need to find an additional £50m over the next 3 years
- In response to a question Councillor Hull stated that the GLA were lobbying Government in relation to funding
- It was stated that the Council would be adopting an outcome based budget approach in future years given the scale of the reductions necessary

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and the Director of Corporate Resources be requested to consider Financial Monitoring reports being submitted to PPS at an earlier stage

- 13** **REPORT OF PROCUREMENT BOARD (Item 13)**
Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance, Performance and Community Safety was present for discussion of this item.

During consideration of the report the following main points were made –

- The view was expressed that procurement conditions should include the provision for sub-contractors to be paid within 30 days, given the impact of the failure of Carillion on small sub-contractors
- It was also stated that consideration could be given to try to extend in the contract specification, the payment of the Living Wage to all staff involved in the supply chain where contracts are awarded
- A Member referred to the recent collapse of Carillion and that a risk evaluation should be looked at in the procurement process where companies were bidding for work with a similar business model

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and the Procurement Board be requested to consider the matters raised above

The meeting ended at 9.55p.m.

CHAIR