

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

21 November 2016

Executive Member Questions

The Committee is invited to question the Executive Member on his work and the work of the Committee.

The procedure for Executive Member questions is set out overleaf.

Any questions that the Committee or members of the public may have should be submitted in advance to jonathan.moore@islington.gov.uk no later than Tuesday 15th November.

Executive Member Update

- Good news for our Schools this month as COLA-I were the sixth best school in London and the 15th in the County for pupil progress; and Highbury Fields got a rating of Outstanding from Ofsted. Our data also shows that not one single school in Islington can be considered to 'coasting' using the Government's measures of attainment and progress.
- Having launched our local 'Our Schools Our Say' campaign and petition against the Government's Education Bill we are delighted that Ministers have dropped the Bill. It's a victory for common sense but it wouldn't have been possible without the campaigning and lobbying that took place, so thanks to all who attended the public meeting and signed the petition, and spoke about this with local residents on the doorstep.
- Despite the threat of forced academisation being lifted, the Government's Free School programme is still an expensive and disruptive distraction. The DfE have paid £33M for the Ladbroke House site and the Meller Trust are proposing to run a school with a 'technical film and media' specialism. We have written to Ministers voicing our disapproval and arguing that the building should be used as key worker housing for Islington teachers, who are at present priced out of the Borough.
- Raids took place in the Mayville Estate targeting organised drug dealing. The police had 32 suspects – they arrested 29 and 27 pleaded guilty. Pleasingly the police arrested a couple of older suspects which shows some positive movement on disrupting those older men who manipulate and groom youths for involvement in crime. In the resulting vacuum there has been a worrying spate of violence in recent weeks. We are putting pressure on the police to increase the quality and frequency of SNT activity and draw resources from the Met and joint working with Hackney to tackle the older organisers of gang activity. There is also a work programme at community level with buy in from residents.
- I am still very concerned about 'County Lines' drug dealing, in which children as young as 11 are sent to remote parts of the country to deal drugs for the benefit of older Gangmasters in London. EC1 Gang are particularly active in this regard. We are exerting pressure at London level to make sure that Sadiq Khan's new policing plan recognises the risks to young people in Islington as well as other larger Boroughs, and that the Met target the older organisers of these networks using anti-slavery legislation rather than just arresting the young people caught up in it.

Procedure for Executive Member Questions at Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

- (a) Elected members and members of the public may ask the Executive Member for Children and Families questions on any matter in relation to the executive portfolio or the work of the committee.
- (b) The intention of the session is to complement and enhance the work of the committee. The Executive Member may submit written information in advance of the meeting to advise of his recent work and other topical and timely matters of relevance. The session is not intended to replace or replicate the questions sessions held at each ordinary meeting of the Council.
- (c) Questions should be submitted in writing to the committee clerk no later than three clear working days in advance of the meeting. Such questions will be notified to the Executive Member which may facilitate a more detailed answer at the meeting. Details of how questions should be submitted will be detailed on the agenda for the meeting.
- (d) Questioners should provide their name to enable this to be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. The minutes of the meeting will include a summary of the question and the response.
- (e) The Chair may permit questions to be asked at the meeting without notice.
- (f) The time set aside for questions shall be no longer than 15 minutes.
- (g) No individual may ask more than two questions at each meeting.
- (h) Where there is more than one question on any particular subject or closely related subjects, the Executive Member may give a joint reply to the questions.
- (i) The committee clerk shall have power to edit or amend written questions to make them concise but without affecting the substance, following consultation with the questioner.
- (j) An answer may take the form of:
 - A direct oral answer;
 - Where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
 - Where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner within 5 working days provided the questioner has given contact details.
- (k) Priority shall normally be given to questions notified in advance.
- (l) The Chair may permit supplementary questions to be asked. Supplementary questions must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- (m) A question may be rejected by the committee clerk, or the Chair at the meeting, if it:
 - does not relate to the executive portfolio or the work of the committee;
 - is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
 - is substantially the same as a question asked to the Executive Member at any meeting within the last six months;
 - requests the disclosure of information which is confidential or exempt; or
 - names, or clearly identifies, a member of staff or any other individual.