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London Borough of Islington

Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 20 December 2016

Non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee held at on 20 December 2016 at 7.00 pm.

Present:	Councillors:	Greening (Chair), Jeapes (Vice-Chair), Klute, O'Halloran, A Perry, Russell, Wayne, Heather Champion and Gantly
Also Present:	Councillor	Sharon Patrick – L.B. Hackney

Councillor Richard Greening in the Chair

283 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)

Councillors Doolan, Chowdhury and Webbe (EM Environment and Transport) and O'Halloran for lateness

284 DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)

None

285 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)

None

286 TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 November 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and the Chair be authorised to sign them

287 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Item 5)

Annual Crime and Disorder Report

It was stated that there were still a number of outstanding responses from the Borough Commander on issues raised at the last meeting and that these would be circulated as soon as they are available

288 CHAIR'S REPORT - RECENT FLOODING INCIDENTS (Item 7)

Recent Flooding Incidents – Upper Street and Stoke Newington

Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 20 December 2016

The Chair stated that, in view of the recent flooding incident in Upper Street due to a burst water main, and as this was the third major incident in the area in the last 20 years, that he felt that the Committee should be updated on the current situation and also consider undertaking a mini scrutiny investigation into this issue.

The Chair stated that he had also invited L.B.Hackney to be present that evening to consider taking part in a joint scrutiny due to the similarities in the flooding incidents in Upper Street and Stoke Newington.

Councillor Sharon Patrick, Chair of the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission was present together with Tom Thorne, Scrutiny Officer and Andrew Cunningham, Head of Street Scene at L.B.Hackney.

The Chair added that he had also invited Martin Holland, the appropriate officer from Environment and Regeneration Department to brief the Committee on the current position initially, prior to formal approval of the scrutiny review initiation document. Kevin O'Leary, Director of Environment and Regeneration and Jan Hart, Assistant Director of Environment and Regeneration were also present.

The Chair stated that he had prepared a scrutiny initiation document for the scrutiny review for consideration by Members that evening and a copy was laid round for Members consideration. (Copy interleaved).

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

- There had been a number of flooding incidents, due to burst pipes, in the London area recently, in Islington, Hackney, Streatham and Lewisham
- There was a need for co-ordination between the boroughs affected in order to exchange information and identify any common problems/solutions
- The view was expressed that it would be beneficial to have a joint meeting with Thames Water and TfL on 18 January to consider their response and views as to the recent floods in Islington and Hackney. In addition, it would be helpful for TfL to comment on the impact of closure of the roads concerned and whether it was felt that the larger lorries using these roads could have contributed to the burst pipes
- Those present congratulated Council officers on their response to the floods
- Concern was expressed at the fact that it had taken some time in order for Thames Water to respond to the initial report of the burst pipe and that this was an area for Thames Water to respond to
- A number of businesses present expressed concern that their insurance companies had made it very difficult for them to pursue claims and that this was adding to the stress. In addition many businesses had not been able to reopen yet
- The view was expressed that the issue of insurance and compensation should be raised with Thames Water, especially with regard to uninsured losses and whether the Council could play any role in this. Thames Water had admitted liability for the incident
- It was stated that the Council Emergency Planning team had responded quickly to the incident in Upper Street. The incident had originally been picked up by CCTV at 5.00a.m. and the emergency action plan was in place by 5.45a.m. and a control room set up. A rest centre had been opened at the Business Design Centre for residents/businesses. Thames Water had been on site reasonably early and had taken responsibility from about 8.30a.m. and there had been 88 properties affected in total and 8 residents had had to be moved into temporary accommodation, which had been organised by Thames Water. The Fire Brigade had also been on site

- The Council had been responsible for clearing up the debris from the site and Thames Water had paid the cost of doing so
- Upper Street had been able to be re-opened within 36 hours of the incident
- Thames Water had subsequently had a number of contractors on site and extra resources had been put in place until properties had been secured, with Thames Water being available on site at the Business Design Centre until 19 December
- There is now a facility at 222 Upper Street for residents and businesses to report concerns and receive advice
- Reference was made to the need for Hackney and Islington to hold a joint session with Thames Water and TfL and then pursue their own individual investigations with residents/businesses and the response of emergency service to the floods
- Concern was expressed that the recent floods in Islington and Hackney were in close proximity to other burst pipes that had flooded in both these areas over the past few years and that Thames Water should be asked to explain this and their strategy for dealing with this. In addition, documentary evidence should be provided on their emergency plan, Corporate Plan and Pressure Management Strategy and also their internal review reports on the recent flooding incidents
- It was stated that Islington officers met with Thames Water on a regular basis and it was noted that there had been a reduction in water pressure to one bar as Thames Water thought that this would reduce leakage
- The view was expressed that witness evidence should be taken from some of the insurance companies concerned with claims for residents/businesses, however it was felt that the Council could not get involved in individual claims but may be able to act as liaison with Thames Water for claims of uninsured loss
- Concern was expressed that some of the security staff provided by Thames Water to protect shops had been seen asleep and that Thames Water should be asked to respond to this when attending the Committee and to ensure businesses are secured and in operation again as soon as possible
- In response to a question it was stated that there had also been a burst pipe in Upper Street in a similar area in 2005 and that subsequently there had been a further burst due to an unsatisfactory repair. The pipe is a high pressure water main and whilst it is hoped that this has now been repaired satisfactorily Council officers, as Upper Street, is a TfL road, had not been invited to the subsequent meeting with Thames Water on this issue
- Members were informed that Thames Water were arranging a public meeting in January with residents and businesses in the area and wished to be informed of the date of this meeting in order that they could attend

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the SID be agreed, subject to the revisions outlined above, and the revised version be circulated to Members
- (b) That a joint meeting with L.B.Hackney take place on 18 January and Thames Water and TfL be invited to attend
- (c) That the additional documentary evidence referred to above be provided from Thames Water for the meeting on 18 January
- (d) That Members be informed of the details of the public meeting being convened by Thames Water in January with residents and businesses

The Chair thanked officers and Councillor Patrick for attending

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

290 BEST SCRUTINY REVIEW - 12 MONTH PROGRESS REPORT (Item 8)

Nicky Freeling, Business Engagement and Employment Support Manager, was present and outlined the report.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council activity over the past year (Section 4 of the report) and progress against the scrutiny recommendations (Section 5 and Appendix C) be noted
- (b) That further progress with regard to young people will be reported under the ongoing review of Children's Services currently underway and information also be provided on adult employment progress

291 USE OF AGENCY STAFF (Item 9)

RESOLVED:

That the information in the report be noted and the Committee continue to receive 6 month progress reports

The meeting ended at 9.15p.m.

CHAIR