

Public Document Pack

London Borough of Islington

Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 26 January 2017

Non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee held at on 26 January 2017 at 7.00 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** Greening (Chair), Jeapes (Vice-Chair), Russell, Wayne,
Heather and Champion
Also **Councillors:** Hull
Present:

Councillor Richard Greening in the Chair

300 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)

Councillors Doolan, O'Halloran, Chowdury, O'Sullivan , Klute, Debono and Councillor Calouri – Executive Member Children, Young People and Families

301 DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)

None

302 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)

None

303 TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)

A copy of the draft minutes of the meeting of 18 January 2017 were laid round for consideration of Members.

The Chair stated that they would confirm these at the next meeting once Members had had time to consider them.

304 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Item 5)

None

305 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 6)

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

306 CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 7)

Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 26 January 2017

The Chair referred to the Flooding Scrutiny review and that the public meeting with residents and businesses would take place on 1 February at the Business Design Centre and all Members were welcome to attend. The Chair stated that he had been invited to Chair this meeting.

The Chair also outlined the proposals for visits and meetings connected with the scrutiny

307 **BUDGET 2017/18 (Item 8)**

Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member for Finance, Performance and Community Safety was present for discussion of this matter and outlined the report. Steve Key, Service Director, Finance and Resources Directorate was also present.

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

- The Committee noted the continuing severe reductions in Government funding and this has led the Council having to save over £170m of savings over the past 7 years
- It was also noted that there will be a further 17% reduction in core funding over the next 3 years which will mean further savings having to be made of £47m, including £24.1 in 2017/18
- Whilst the Government had cut the New Homes Bonus scheme funding the Council were now contributing £3m from mainstream funding to compensate for this
- The Committee welcomed the proposal to write off Council Tax arrears for Care Leavers under 2 years of age
- The Committee were informed that whilst they had increased the Social Care precept by 3%, as allowed for by the Government, this would not meet the demands of the service and that the Government should be willing to fund the social care precept properly and not pass the burden onto Local Authorities
- The Committee noted that there had been a reduction of 54 posts in the savings proposals, however 50% of these were from voluntary redundancies and there had been no compulsory redundancies
- In response to a question as to whether the Council should consider a higher Council Tax increase it was felt that there had to be a balance between what residents were comfortable with and services provided and it was felt that the rise proposed was correct
- The view was expressed that the hiring of the Assembly Hall fee could be increased for some users who are able to pay a higher cost
- The Committee were concerned at the proposed Government increases in Business Rates and the effect on businesses in the borough and Councillor Hull undertook to report back in more detail on this once proposals were clarified
- In response to a question it was stated that CIL money would be used for Highways Maintenance in 2017/18, however this would free up funding in the Council's revenue budget for other services
- Whilst the Committee welcomed the building of Council new homes and the provision of affordable housing, they expressed concern at the potential loss of future housing through Right to Buy and the lack of clarity about when capital receipts would be available

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and the comments of the Committee be forwarded to the Executive for consideration

The Chair thanked Councillor Hull and Steve Key for attending

308 **APPENDICES A TO F BUDGET REPORT EXECUTIVE 19.1.17 V3 (Item 9)**

This item was dealt with under minute 307 above

309 **UPDATE ON YOUTH CRIME INVESTMENT/UPDATE ON YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE (Item 10)**

The Director of Children's Services, Carmel Littleton was present for discussion of this item and was accompanied by Nikki Ralph and Liz Westlund who presented the report to the Committee.

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

- The investment of the additional £500k was felt to have resulted in significant improvements, despite the measures not being put in place until September/early Autumn
- The vast number of referrals made had been appropriate
- There had been training for practitioners and staff which was contributing to improved performance and confidence of staff
- There are one to one and group sessions taking place
- Work is taking place to implement and evaluate specialist interventions for 20 young people at medium or high risk of sexual exploitation and/or /perpetrator of HSB
- Reference was made to the fact that the relevant PI's would show an improvement in the next quarter, following the additional investment work
- It was noted that in the past 9 months there has been substantial progress in improving the YOS performance
- The latest performance data from the Youth Justice Board has shown that three of the five PI's are improving and the service now has an amber rating which is the first time Islington has not been in the red in nearly three years
- First time entrants have been reduced and improvements had been made in binary reoffending rates, and for the first time this quarter, the use of custody has gone down
- The frequency reoffending rate and reoffences by reoffender remain up, but this is usually a corollary of a reduced cohort size
- Discussion took place on Criminal Behaviour Orders and it was noted that work is taking place on this to ensure that whilst the Public are still protected that the restrictions placed were appropriate
- In response to a question concerning work going on around FGM and child sexual exploitation it was stated that the Integrated Gangs Team was a multi-agency team that was investigating this and taking appropriate measures
- It was stated that a variety of methods, including outreach, were needed to try to get young people to engage with the services available and this included work on estates to build up relationships with young people
- There was a commitment to continued funding for the Youth Counsellor role beyond the end of this financial year
- The Committee noted that a more detailed profile of the young people most at risk was being developed and the service was providing mentoring and role models to assist young black males, in particular, who formed a disproportionate percentage of the cohort

RESOLVED:

That the report and progress to date be welcomed and noted

The Chair thanked Carmel Littleton, Nikki Ralph and Liz Westlund for attending

310 PERFORMANCE REPORT (Item 11)

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 raised –

- Reference was made to the sickness PI and that this was off target, however it was noted that a contributory factor to this may be the severe reductions that had been necessary due to Government funding reductions, and that this had impacted on pressure of work and stress levels on staff
- Discussion took place as to the number of people placed in Council apprenticeships and that this is off target. Councillor Hull stated that this was being addressed and Directorates not achieving their targets in the past would be expected to do so in future. Councillor Hull added that with the advent of the apprenticeship levy, it is important for the Council to fill apprenticeships otherwise they would suffer a reduction in income from the Government
- In response to a question Councillor Hull stated that he would provide details of apprenticeships and where they were located to Members
- It was stated that the Council were encouraging more on line transactions and were making available increased opportunities for residents to be able to do this. Details would be included in the Council Tax letter sent to residents
- In response to a question it was stated that pilot schemes had been put in place to help elderly and learning disabled to utilise online systems
- Discussion took place as to the agency staff figures and that whilst there is a commitment to reduce this further there will always be a need for some agency staff, particularly in adult social care. However improvements had been made, particularly in the area of Digital Services and work to reduce agency staff is ongoing
- The application of market supplements had been used to reduce agency some in some Directorates

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and Councillor Hull be requested to provide the information on apprenticeships, referred to above

The Chair thanked Councillor Hull for attending

311 WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17 (Item 12)

RESOLVED:

That the work programme 2016/17 be noted

The meeting ended at 9.20p.m.

CHAIR

This page is intentionally left blank