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London Borough of Islington

Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 14 March 2016

Non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee held at on 14 March 2016 at 7.30 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** O'Halloran (Vice-Chair), Comer-Schwartz, Court, Ismail, Kay, Russell, Andrews, Chowdhury, Hamitouche and Jeapes
Also Present: **Councillors:** Hull and Calouri

Councillor Una O'Halloran (Vice Chair) in the Chair

- 212** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)**
Councillor Doolan, Gallagher, Klute, O'Sullivan, Convery and Ismail for lateness
- 213** **DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)**
Councillor Hamitouche stated that she was substituting for Councillor Doolan
- 214** **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)**
None
- 215** **TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)**
RESOLVED:
That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 February 2016 be confirmed as a correct record of the proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them
- 216** **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Item 5)**
None
- 217** **PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 6)**
The Chair outlined the procedure for Public questions and the filming and recording of meetings
- 218** **CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 7)**
The Chair reminded Members that a visit would be taking place to see the Integrated Gangs Team, in connection with the Knife Crime, Mobile Phone theft scrutiny review on Friday 18 March at 11a.m. at Tolpuddle Street Police station and Members were invited to attend
- 219** **YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE/KNIFE CRIME SCRUTINY REVIEW (Item 8)**
Councillor Joe Calouri, Executive Member Children and Families was present for discussion of this item.

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

- It is important to ensure that early intervention measures are put in place to assist in preventing the cycle of criminal activity and the Council had approved an extra £0.5m in the budget for this

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- The relationship with the Police and young people is still a problem and the loss of community policing made this more difficult
- The poor inspection report on the YOS had highlighted that the co-location of the Police with the service had been a problem and the lack of access to Police computer records is still an issue that needs to be addressed and the Council were raising through the appropriate channels
- A new restorative justice worker has just been appointed and a Gangs Protocol established and work is taking place on alternative provision
- There is a need to listen more to young people and understand their concerns
- Reference was made to the morale of staff in the YOS team and it was stated that this is a challenge and there had been a significant turnover of staff and a new Head of Service is now in place and stronger management and changes to case management should improve the situation
- The view was expressed that Members should take the opportunity to visit the Youth Offending service to meet and support the staff in the extremely difficult work that they carry out
- The Gangs Protocol is an attempt to take a more holistic view in relation to protecting the Public and there is a need to communicate more effectively with parents about the risks to their children and of offending behaviour
- In relation to schools there needed to be more recognition of the problems of gangs and criminality and that every school should visit the Ben Kinsella exhibition to raise awareness
- There were discussions taking place with the Youth Council who were keen to raise awareness of the issues of gang culture and to ensure young people are listened to about their concerns
- In response to a question about whether the voluntary sector could play an increased role it was stated that it was felt that this could be the case in regard to universal youth services and the additional £0.5m monies approved by the Council would be used by voluntary sector providers and the challenge is for them to be more flexible and work in co-operation
- A Member expressed concern that despite a number of initiatives it did not appear that progress is being made and there is no clear overriding strategy for action
- Reference was made to the fact that the case management described in the report was lacking and that staff needed proper support and training to resolve this
- A Member stated that the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee had looked at alternative provision and intervention and early help and had made recommendations in this regard. It was added that the Youth Offending service would be recommended for scrutiny in the next municipal year
- The Executive Member stated that Camden had an effective Youth Offending service and that it would be useful to work with boroughs such as this to look at the types of interventions used
- The view was expressed that now the Borough Commander is on the management board this would focus attention on the issues and there needs to be an effective partnership, however the complexity of the lives of some of the individuals involved in crime is significant and the YOS has to deal with this and made it more difficult to encourage them away from criminality
- There is a need to be open and frank about the challenges to schools, parents and the wider Public
- In response to a question it was stated that of the 3 murders of young people in the borough only one was known to the Youth Offending service
- The Youth Offending service had exit strategies for young people who were known to them and transition arrangements with the Probation service for those young people turning 18

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- Reference was made to the fact that if a child is excluded from school there will be a full family referral which will 'flag up' concerns and enable early interventions to be put in place to hopefully impact on future offending
- It was stated that whilst the number of young people coming into the YOS was slightly falling the complexity of the young people was increasing
- In response to a question it was stated that training is taking place for staff particularly in relation to case management and team building exercises were taking place with staff and feedback from staff was that the new management had made improvements
- Reference was made to the fact that memorial services should include other deaths of young people and not just commemorate those that are victims of knife crime and it was stated that work is taking place with one of the families whose son was the victim of a vehicle death
- The Executive Member stated that he had recently met with the Youth Council and that they felt that some young people felt that they could trust their school Police officers there is concern about trust with the Police
- The view was expressed that schools needed to be persuaded to be more open about highlighting certain things such as the dangers of gangs in organised assemblies and inviting former gang members to talk to young people
- In response to a question about the role of the Community Safety Unit it was stated that whilst the CSU is not a frontline service it did provide support and share information and did analysis work. In addition it had assisted in the setting up of the Integrated Gangs team and looked to add value. The CSU also worked with the YOS with co-ordination with the Police and provided information to them and worked with the MAGPI and on Domestic Violence and ASB and did training and policy work
- Concern was expressed that given the interwoven nature of youth offending and the drug trade there is a need to tackle this and the grooming of young people
- The Executive Member indicated that he had been in discussions that given the cross border nature of crime Trident should be more involved but he had been informed that Trident had more important priorities across London
- A Member stated that it is not always the case that young people who offend come from chaotic families and sometimes children of respectable families offended
- A Member expressed the view that the theft of mobile phones, the drug trade, moped theft and youth violence were all connected and the Police should take more effective action
- The Chair stated that if there were any further questions these could be taken up following the meeting with the Executive Member

The Chair thanked Councillor Calouri for attending

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QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT (Item 9)

Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance and Performance was present together with Lela Kogbara, Assistant Chief Executive Strategy and Community Partnerships.

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

- It was noted that there had been reductions in the number of children in alternative provision
- There had been an increase in the number of leisure visits and fewer late transfers to care and Islington were amongst the top 10 healthy schools boroughs
- There is a need to increase the number of disabled persons although improvements had been made in the number of BME staff in higher graded posts
- Partners repair times were still not satisfactory

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- In response to a question as to children missing in care it was stated that a previous report from the Director of Children's Services had looked at this in detail and that the data around children missing in care is looked at in detail at the Corporate Parenting Board
- With regard to youth offending there had been previous problems with Police involvement, however there is now co-location of services. There is a need to listen to young people in connection with their relationship with the Police and stop and search to get local communities to support the Police
- The view was expressed that with the reductions and further proposed reductions by the Mayor in funding for Safer Neighbourhood Policing it is likely that resources would be further stretched
- In response to a question it was stated that whilst GCSE results were below target they were above target nationally as London outperforms the national results figure
- Reference was made to the attrition rate in hate crime and that there is a lack of confidence in victims coming forward and that this should be an area of challenge when the Borough Commander comes to PPS in November to discuss the Annual Crime and Disorder report
- Measures had been taken by the Council to address hate crime and work is being undertaken with a focus on information for the learning disabled and work with the Hate Crime Forum and the Mosque to raise awareness. In addition, the Police are setting up a scrutiny process to enable the community to challenge them
- In relation to a question on homelessness it was stated that there were some people on the housing waiting list who had no realistic prospect of being rehoused and that demand in a borough in Islington will always be more than that which could be supplied. However the Council did have an ambitious programme of new builds and were trying to increase this wherever possible
- The view was expressed that there needed to be a positive message given to the Police that they should take all issues of hate crime seriously and that the recent fire bomb incident at the Finsbury Park mosque needed to be investigated fully in order to reassure the community that such acts are taken extremely seriously
- In response to a question as to the number of BME staff in the top 5% of grades it was stated that information on age/gender and ethnicity of these staff be provided to the Committee
- In response to a question on recycling it was stated that measures were being looked and that with regard to missed collections , whilst the performance is slightly down on last year, this is mainly due to vehicle maintenance issues involving the ageing fleet, however the fleet renewal is being looked at
- It was stated that the Executive Member Economic and Community Development is looking at measures that could be taken to address the fall in the number of library visits
- In response to a question as to the number of residents assisted into sustained employment it was stated that a system is now in place for tracking new entrants and that whilst this will not be 100% effective it will assist in providing more information about whether those assisted have remained in sustained employment
- In response to a question as to whether there has been an increase in the number of residents on ESA/incapacity benefit it was stated that the Council did support residents to challenge decisions and where possible encourage them back into work

RESOLVED:

That Members be provided with information requested above in relation to staff in the top 5% grades within the Council

221 **FINANCIAL UPDATE (Item 10)**

Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance and Performance and Steve Key, Director Service Finance were present for discussion of this item.

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

- There is a £3.5m projected overspend which would be met from the contingency reserve
- Concern was expressed at the overspends in Environment and Regeneration and that this is currently £2.9m. Councillor Hull stated that this was due to an overestimate of possible savings and income generation measures, however this is addressed in the 2016/17 budget recently approved. There are savings however being achieved on the procurement of gas and electricity
- In response to a question it was stated that it is important that Members supported income generation proposals and that other departments, not just Environment and Regeneration, considered income generation measures
- It was stated that in regard to the fall in income of building control this is due to the 'cherry picking' of certain work by private companies leaving the Council with more difficult work. There is also work going on to see if services could be sold to neighbouring boroughs
- Councillor Hull stated that changes in the Chancellor's budget may affect the Council and that he would provide a briefing to Members following the Budget proposals
- A Member of the public referred to the underspend in certain Education budgets and it was stated that if he mailed his question then these queries would be responded to

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and that Councillor Hull provide a briefing to Members on the implications of the Chancellor of the Exchequer budget proposals on the Council

222 **TAX AVOIDANCE SCRUTINY REVIEW - DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS (Item 11)**

The draft recommendations of the Committee were laid round as a matter of urgency given the need for their approval before the end of the municipal year.

The Chair stated that if Members had any comments they should be sent to the Head of Democratic Services prior to the next meeting for consideration.

RESOLVED:

That the draft recommendations be approved and the final report be submitted to the Committee at the next meeting for approval

223 **TEMPORARY TO PERMANENT STAFF (Item 12)**

Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance and Performance was present for this item and David Daniels, Assistant Director Environment and Commercial Law was also present.

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

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- It was stated that a report on the Parking data breach would be submitted to the Audit Committee in May

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

224 MONITORING REPORT (Item G)

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

The meeting ended at 10.00 p.m.

CHAIR