

**Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 8 December 2014**

Non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee held at on 8 December 2014 at 7.30 pm.

**Present:**           **Councillors:**       Shaikh (Vice-Chair), Doolan, O'Sullivan, O'Halloran,  
Parker, Russell, Court, Gill, Kay and Gallagher (Chair)  
**Also Present:**       **Councillors:**       Hull and Poyser

**Councillor Troy Gallagher in the Chair**

- 45**        **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)**  
Councillor Gantly. Councillor Court submitted his apologies for lateness. Councillor Gill stated that he would need to leave the meeting early.
- 46**        **DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)**  
None
- 47**        **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)**  
None
- 48**        **TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)**  
**RESOLVED:**  
That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 November 2014 be confirmed and the Chair be authorised to sign them
- 49**        **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Item 5)**  
None
- 50**        **CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 6)**  
Changes to Dates of Meetings
- The Chair stated that in order to give the Committee more time to scrutinise the Budget 2014/15 in detail and submit observations to the Executive a meeting of the Committee would now be held on 22 January and the original meeting scheduled to consider the Budget on 24 February would be cancelled.
- The Chair added that the meeting to consider witness evidence and draft recommendations on the Income Generation scrutiny would be held on 6 January and that the remaining business from the cancelled meeting on 24 February would be moved to the scheduled meeting on 2 March.
- 51**        **PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 7)**  
The Chair outlined the procedure for Public questions and for filming and recording of Public meetings
- 52**        **REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEMBER FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE (Item 8)**

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Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance and Performance, was present at the meeting and outlined the report.

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

- The Council employed over 5000 staff and had a £1 billion gross annual budget
- There were discussions taking place about sharing Digital Services with other boroughs and there was a Digital ‘sounding board’ established for Members
- It was important that if services were digitised that residents were able to access computers and this was done recognising the needs of residents
- There needed to be a more joined up approach on property maximisation and to maximise income for the Council in view of Government spending reductions
- Islington had hosted the first gay UK wedding
- Led the London Living Wage campaign in Islington, and become the first accredited LLW local authority in the UK, and secured the LLW for all 100% of its staff and 98% of contractors, including home care and Councillor Greening had used the £1 billion pension fund to lobby FTSE 100 companies to pay the LLW to their staff and contractors as well
- In response to a question it was stated that with regard to Digital Services and whether wi-fi could be provided on every Council estate and repairs could be digitised, Councillor Hull stated that there was a need to look at user experience and there was now a person employed to look at how digital services could be developed and to ensure that no departmental barriers were put in place to prevent digitisation. It was stated that in relation to digitising the repairs service discussions were taking place and the Director of Environment and Regeneration would discuss progress with Councillor O’Sullivan
- In terms of providing wi-fi on estates Councillor Hull stated that wi-fi coverage was generally good on estates and when this was provided there was a generally low take up and there were plans to increase wi-fi access on street furniture to boost increase access. In addition Libraries could be utilised more and the possibility of providing access in community centres was mentioned
- In response to a question as to as to whether the Bunhill Heat and Power scheme could be expanded Councillor Hull thanked Bunhill Ward Councillors for their work on this and that Bunhill Phase 2 was under consideration. In addition he added that a scheme at the Sobell Leisure Centre to provide a service to Harvist Estate, the Emirates and London Metropolitan University were under consideration to ascertain its feasibility and other areas in the borough were being looked at
- It was stated that whilst it was unlikely there would be additional monies from the European Social Fund for additional heat and power schemes, however there may be monies available from the Mayor of London
- Whilst there was food poverty in Islington there was good ethically sourced food in Islington and the Food Bank was one of the Mayors Charities

The Chair thanked Councillor Hull for his presentation

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### **PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2 - (Item 10)**

Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance and Performance was present and outlined the report.

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

- The report contained a set of refreshed performance indicators
- Appendix B outlined the Council’s Performance Management Framework

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- There is a monthly Performance monitoring Panel and Scrutiny Committees had responsibility for monitoring performance
- Stop and Search had resulted in a higher arrest rate than other parts of London which indicated that intelligence led stop and search was proving effective
- Serious youth violence had increased and the boiler replacement scheme was not on target
- There was a gap in the data available for temporary accommodation and downsizing and housing repairs had just come back 'in house' and there was a need to ensure data collection was robust and this was being looked at
- A Member stated that whilst a number of the Performance Indicators had improved a number had not and serious youth violence gave cause for concern. Reference was made to the fact that the Executive Member Community Safety and the Police had an action plan to address this and the Chair stated that he would discuss this with the Executive Member and provide details to Members of the Committee
- A Member expressed the view that the measurement of PFI repairs should be included as part of the Performance Indicator set and Councillor Hull stated that he would consider this
- Reference was made to complaints that had been received from young people about the careers service offered however Councillor Hull stated that he felt it was more important to focus on outcomes rather than inputs
- A Member referred to the findings of the Employment Commission and it was stated that this area was within the remit of the Policy and Performance Committee and may wish to look at this
- Councillor Hull indicated that it was unfortunate that a performance indicator for the new 'in house' repairs service was not yet in place but the IT implications were being looked at and hopefully these could be included in the next report
- In relation to a question as to the possible effect of the proposed Government changes in the Probation service it was stated that it was not anticipated that these would have a significant effect on the service
- A Member referred to the issue of dampness in properties and the health implications of this and that this should be looked at for consideration for inclusion as a Performance Indicator. Councillor Hull responded that there were difficulties with possible data collection but that he would look at possible options and report back thereon to the Committee
- A Member of the Public asked a number of questions and it was stated that if these were sent by e mail the Executive Member Finance would send detailed responses thereon

### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Chair discuss with the Executive Member Community Safety the action plan that has been formulated to combat the increase in serious youth violence in the borough and report back thereon to the Committee
- (b) That the Executive Member Finance and Performance be requested to respond to the points raised by the Member of the Public once these have been e mailed to him in more detail
- (c) That the Executive Member Finance and Performance be requested to consider the points raised above in relation to additional performance indicators to be included and report thereon to a future meeting of the Committee

The Chair thanked the Executive Member Finance and Performance for attending

**54** **FINANCIAL MONITORING (Item 9)**

Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance and Performance was present and outlined the report.

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

- There was a projected overspend of £1.2 million but it was hoped that a balanced budget could be achieved by the end of the financial year
- The Council had had to save £112 million from the budget over the previous 4 years
- There were two main reasons for the overspend – no recourse to public funds and the Council were continuing to lobby Government to fund this and the increase in temporary accommodation costs due to the Government's welfare reforms and HASS and the Executive Member Housing had an action plan in place to address the overspend, although some of this needed Pan London co-ordination
- The contingency for the current year had been spent on the commitment to the LLW including Home Care staff
- In response to a question it was stated that the Council had reserves of approximately just over 5% which is the level that CIPFA recommend as being prudent
- In response to a question it was stated that HRA variances budget figures could be supplied to Councillor O'Sullivan
- In response to a question it was stated that one of the reasons for the underspend in Children's Services was that there had been less take up on 2 year old places than envisaged

**RESOLVED:**

(a) That the report be noted

(b) That the Director of Finance provide details of the HRA budget variance figures to Councillor O'Sullivan

**55** **HR UPDATE - USE OF AGENCY STAFF (Item 11)**

Debra Norman, Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and HR and Shane Lynch, Head of Shared Services were present for discussion of this matter.

Bram Kainth, representing Environment and Regeneration, Matt West and Simon Gaclynski Housing and Adult Social Services were also present to respond to questions as to the reasons for these areas being the highest agency staff spending areas.

During consideration of this item the following main points were made –

- The annual spend on agency staff was nearly £24 million and the highest spending department was Housing and Adult Social Services
- Housing and Adult Social Services was however the only area where spend had reduced apart from a slight reduction in spend in Housing and Adult Social Services
- The average percentage of agency staff employed compared to the Council's workforce was 14.6% (13.7% FTE), whereas the London Council's average was 12.4%
- LBI agency spend was the 4<sup>th</sup>. highest in London
- The percentage of agency staff declaring a disability is 1.1%, compared to 6.7% for directly employed staff, however this could be due to under reporting as agency staff may feel they may not be employed if they declared their disability

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- In response to a question it was stated that the number of redeployees was low at present and were predominantly apprentices
- In relation to proposals for an 'in house' agency it was stated that discussions were taking place with the Trade Unions however as Street Environmental Services would be the main users of the service there was a need to finalise details of the revisions to the staffing structure before proceeding
- With regard to working with other boroughs to limit the use of agency staff engaged on a limited company basis it was stated that it was difficult to get all Councils to work together
- There had been success in recruitment campaigns to replace agency staff in hard to fill areas, especially Digital Services and it was hoped that an improvement would shortly be seen in recruitment of Children's Social Workers
- In relation to paragraph 6.6 it was stated that the pay rates for children's social workers has recently rocketed by almost 30%
- In response to a question Members were informed that there were 190 vacancies in public realm and 30% of the workforce employed were agency staff which was a common figure across the industry and there was a need to ensure there could be a response to daily situations. Vacancies had been held to ensure no compulsory redundancies would be needed and it was anticipated that 75 of the agency staff would be able to be transferred into permanent positions and it was hoped in the next few years to reduce agency staff even further
- The Chair stated that once there were proposals in place on the above these should be presented to the Committee and Councillor Webbe, Executive Member for Environment should present regular updates every 6 months to the Committee on progress
- With regard to Greenspace this had been brought 'in house' and there were 35 agency staff at present and there were 20 vacancies and there were 17 seasonal workers and it was anticipated that the 20 vacancies were filled with permanent staff
  
- Simon Galczynski referred to Adult Social Care and that a large number of social worker posts were vacant as part of the transformation process and consultation was taking place with staff with a view to reducing agency spend by over £1m, In addition home care there had been no compulsory redundancies and agency spend would be reduced, however there would be a need to retain a pool of agency staff
- It was noted that the agency spend quoted in the report of £3m appeared to be at variance with HASS figures and that he would come back to the Committee with updated figures and proposed reductions in agency use following the transition period
- Discussion took place as to responsive repairs and it was stated that there should be an update to the Committee in 6 months on progress on reducing agency staff
- Members congratulated the Head of Digital Services for the excellent recruitment campaign in relation to Digital Services staff that had seen a significant reduction in the numbers of agency staff employed in that area
- In response to a question it was stated that the Head of Human Resources should provide Councillor Doolan with update figures for Environmental Services staff transferred under TUPE terms and conditions
- Following discussion it was stated that consideration should be given to anything that could be put in place to plan ahead on redundancies to match staff to posts, in order to save on redundancy costs
- It was stated that consideration should be given to discussions taking place with local universities/schools on a 'grow your own' training programme in Digital Services for school leavers/graduates

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- Reference was made to the fact that there still would be a need to retain 75 agency staff to cover even if 75 staff were recruited on permanent contracts and there would always be a need for some agency staff
- The Executive Member Finance and Performance stated that whilst encouraging progress was being made in reducing agency spend there was still a need to reduce this further as costs were still too high

### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That discussions continue to take place with the Executive Member Environment to reduce the numbers of agency staff in the department and 6 monthly updates on progress be submitted to the Committee thereon
- (b) That the Director of Housing and Adult Social Services be requested to report back to the Committee on the up to date agency spend figure in the department and the proposed reductions in agency usage following the transition period
- (c) That the Quarter 3 Performance report contain performance data on LBI housing repairs
- (d) That the Assistant Director HR and Governance provide updated figures for Environment and Regeneration Department transferred to the Council under TUPE arrangements
- (e) That the Head of Human Resources be requested to provide details of whether procedures can be put in place to plan ahead for redundancies in order to match staff to potential vacancies in order to reduce redundancy payments
- (f) That the Head of Human Resources be requested to liaise with the Head of Digital Services as to whether a 'grow your own' training programme should be developed with local universities/schools for graduates and school leavers

The Chair thanked Debra Norman, Bram Kainth, Simon Galczynski and Matt West for attending

### **56 TERMINATION PAYMENTS (Item 12)**

The Committee stated that this item would be dealt with in the confidential section of the agenda

### **57 MONITORING RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES, WORK PROGRAMME, FORWARD PLAN ETC. (Item )**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted

### **58 DISCUSSION ITEMS -IF ANY (Item )**

### **59 REPORT OF REVIEW CHAIRS (Item )**

None

### **60 OTHER BUSINESS (Item )**

None

### **61 URGENT NON EXEMPT ITEMS (Item )**

None

### **62 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS (Item )**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the Public and Press be excluded from the meetings consideration of the following item as it may involve the disclosure of exempt or confidential information within the terms of the Access to Information Rules in the Constitution

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Termination Payments – Ag. Item 13 – Not for Publication as it contains the following category of exempt information as specified in paragraphs 1,2 and 3, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

**63**      **EXEMPT ITEMS (Item )**

**64**      **TERMINATION PAYMENTS (Item 13)**

The meeting ended at 10.30p.m.

**CHAIR**