

Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 11 May 2015

Non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 11 May 2015 at 7.30 pm.

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

Councillor Troy Gallagher in the Chair

104 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)

None

105 DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)

None

106 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)

None

107 TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2 March 2015 be confirmed and the Chair be authorised to sign them

108 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Item 5)

None

109 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 6)

The Chair outlined the procedures for Public questions and filming at the meeting

110 CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 7)

The Chair stated that Councillor Doolan would be submitting a verbal response to the Termination Payments report in the exempt part of the agenda.

The Chair added that PPS would be formally approving scrutiny topics at the PPS meeting on 1 June but one proposal for consideration would be a scrutiny on tax avoidance by consultants employed by the Council.

The Chair stated that following agreement of the scrutiny topics he would arrange for a SID to be prepared by officers.

Report of Chair of Health and Care Scrutiny Committee

The Chair reported on the work of the Committee and made the following main points –

- There was a need to be vigilant in scrutinising the Care element of the Committee's functions, given the recent examples in Rotherham and North Staffordshire and

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- there had been a recent case in his ward of a care home where he had had to liaise between residents and the care home providers to provide a satisfactory outcome
- The Committee has completed a scrutiny on GP Appointments, which will shortly be submitted to the Executive for consideration
 - The Committee had received a presentation in relation to Public Health and noted that a large proportion of the budget was spent on sexual health services, however it is difficult to reduce this as it is patient led
 - The Committee had regular performance reports from NHS Trusts and input in addition from the Lead/Chair Governor to enable a different perspective to be given to that of the officers of the Trust
 - The Chair stated that he still represented the Council on the JOSHC, which comprises the L.B.Barnet, Enfield, Haringey, Camden and Haringey
 - The Committee still continues to monitor the situation at the Whittington Hospital, however he was concerned at the recent announcement of a funding gap that was not previously apparent
 - In addition the Care Act may present financial difficulties, given the ageing population however officers were optimistic that these costs could be managed
 - The Committee were currently carrying out a scrutiny into Patient Feedback and it was hoped to make recommendations at the next meeting
 - The 111/Out of Hours service is currently being recommissioned and the Committee are receiving progress reports on this and have received a submission from the Keep the NHS Public campaign that wish the service to be led and run by a team of Islington GP's, however Islington GP's did not seem to be willing to bid for this service

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SCRUTINY REVIEW BEST TEAM - WITNESS EVIDENCE - VERBAL (Item 8)

Lela Kogbara, Assistant Chief Executive, Strategy and Community Partnerships was present and introduced two witnesses who gave evidence to the Committee about their recent assistance from the BEST team in finding employment.

Nicky Freeling, Business Engagement and Employment Support Manager also gave evidence to the Committee.

During consideration of the witness evidence the following main points were made –

- The witnesses stated that they had both received excellent support from the BEST team in assisting them in finding employment and one now had a positive apprenticeship performance. The other witness stated that initially he had been employed on a zero hours contract however he now had a full time job with a contract and the whole experience had been good
- In response to a question as to whether the Council could improve the process it was stated that in future the Council could look to building stronger relationships with employers who work on Council schemes
- The witnesses stated that they had been treated well by their employers and that they had received appropriate training opportunities
- It was stated that all contractors should be paying the LLW by 01/04/2015
- Previously the BEST team did not have a client facing role and focused on finding employers without a known client base.
- The BEST team had placed a number of lone parents with SUBWAY
- There had been 787 residents placed in sustained employment and 534 of these were under 24. 78% of these were unemployed for a year or less

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- The Council has now established an iWork team which would be more client facing and also deal with employers
- One of the recommendations of the Employment Commission is to get the long term unemployed into sustained employment and this was now a focus for the new service
- Whilst 10% of the total figure that had gained employment were disabled there was a need to increase this, 46% of those found employment were from the BME
- In response to a question it was stated that the 'new service' would be better at preventing people 'falling through the cracks'
- Reference was made to the fact that the Council were now employing and training apprentices in order that they can, after a year, move onto businesses and links were being made with employers so that they would employ them after the first year
- Work is being undertaken with the City of London to ensure that apprenticeships are meaningful
- The view was expressed that schools should be discussing and planning apprenticeship opportunities with young people
- In response to a question it was stated that courses were being run for the over 50's and that a number of employers, such as B&Q and Asda were seeing the benefits and looking to recruit older people and discussions were taking place in this regard
- Work is also going on in schools so that young people are aware that employers were looking for motivated people
- The Chair stated that young people had informed him of the bad experiences that they had had dealing with JCP, and enquired whether the Council could have referred to the BEST team. It was stated that there was an issue of capacity to deal with cases that would be referred, the JCP team had 133 staff whereas the Council team only had 15 staff and there were 24000 unemployed residents
- In response to a question it was stated that discussions were taking place to see if some of the functions of the JCP could be linked with the iWork team and disability would have an increased focus in the future
- It was stated that given the large number of construction projects in the borough there should be opportunities for apprenticeships and work placements, especially for women, given the shortage of females in the construction industry
- Concern was expressed that the employment being found is low skilled and low paid and enquired whether this was in fact the case and whether any higher paid jobs were available. It was stated that initially there had been a focus on low level entry jobs but where there is S106 monies available there is an opportunity to create more jobs across the salary range and the job brokerage will now be more suited to matching people with particular jobs
- Tailored work is also being undertaken with the PRU to identify job opportunities
- It was noted that over 50% of lone parents had not been in work for over 2 years and Members requested that the average age of these parents be circulated
- Members were informed that the recommendations of the Employment Commission set out a clear strategy to assist residents who needed help most and that a partnership approach is being developed to assist those who need it most

The Chair thanked Nicky Freeling, Lela Kogbara and the two witnesses for attending

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PROGRESS REPORT - BLACKLISTING SCRUTINY REVIEW (Item 9)

Andy Nutter, Service Director Property and Procurement and Peter Horlock, Head of Strategic Procurement were present and outlined the report.

Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance and Performance, was also present for discussion of this item.

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

- It was stated the good work carried out by the Committee and officers was now being adopted by other Local Authorities
- Members enquired whether the recommendation to London Councils and the Minister for Local Government had been actioned
- Members also enquired with regard to self-cleansing whether anyone had been unable to declare that they had not been blacklisted and therefore needed to go through the self-cleansing test

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and that that responses on the above points raised by Members be circulated to Members of the Committee

113 REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEMBER EMPLOYMENT - PRESENTATION -VERBAL (Item 11)

Councillor Asima Shaikh, Executive Member for Economic and Community Development was present and made a presentation to the Committee, a copy of which is interleaved.

Lela Kogbara, Assistant Chief Executive Strategy and Community Partnerships was also present.

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

- Noted that the Employment Commission set out the need to transform employment support to target it at those who need it most and provide long term support as demonstrated by the iWork model of employment support
- This will be achieved by stronger partnerships to transform the relationship with JCP and redesign the services so it is better targeted, system redesign, development of commissioning standards and delivering shared measures of success
- The iWork team refers both to the Council's internal employment service, and an umbrella approach to employment support which puts the client at the centre and uses coaching to encourage self-discovery. It is a multi-disciplinary team including JCP, Housing, Income Maximisation, Children's Services and Islington Working for Parents. It is planned that this will expand into a 'hub and spoke' model to spread the values to the voluntary sector
- The USDL pilot started in September 2014 for a year and trials a triage approach at 222 Upper Street allowing people to get easy access to employment services and referring people for employment support
- Islington is now working on a new sub regional ESA pilot, Working Capital. This will support 4000 people over 5 years in 8 Central London Boroughs. This project is aimed at those on ESA who been through the Work Programme and not moved into employment and will take the multi-disciplinary approach of the iWork model
- The Council has also developed and Employer Engagement Strategy to better define its role in encouraging employers to get involved
- The Council has recently recruited 33 new apprentices and is expanding its employee volunteering programme to link it more closely with the employment agenda
- The Council has a target to halve youth unemployment to less than 1000 by the end of 2015 and there are a number of areas, such as re-engaging in providing leadership and oversight in careers education, strengthening links between schools and employers and improving careers education and guidance

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- It was noted that Islington is closing the gap on residents on out of work benefits compared to London/England however the number still remains too high and there was a need to reduce this number by a further 5000 to meet the London rate of 9.4%
- Specialist support is being provided to those people with learning disabilities
- 20% of Islington residents of working age have skills levels below level 2,(GCSE or equivalent), and 14000 of these have no qualifications – this is in contrast to research showing the proportion of jobs requiring no qualifications by 2036 will be less than 5% and 53% of jobs in London will require an ordinary or higher degree

The Chair thanked the Executive Member for Economic and Community Development for her presentation

114 **TERMINATION PAYMENTS (Item 10)**

The Assistant Chief Executive (HR and Governance) Debra Norman, was present together with the Director of Finance and Property Services, Mike Curtis was also present.

Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance and Performance was also present.

Councillor Doolan also made a submission on this item.

Following consideration of the report it was –

RESOLVED:

The Audit Committee be recommended to -

- (a) That all future payments made in relation to terminating employment for staff should identify the types of payments made to such staff, and the explanatory reasons for such payments. In addition, if payments on the grounds of efficiency, or a compensation payment/payment in lieu of notice are made, such payments should be clearly documented with the reasons therefore
- (b) That all termination payments for staff graded PO8 and above should be signed off by the Chief Executive or the Audit Committee, depending on the sum involved. The Audit Committee may wish to reconsider the current financial limits for allowing the Chief Executive to sign off payments to staff to allow more Member scrutiny of such payments made
- (c) That when considering termination/other payments to staff, consideration should be given to the pension strain that the termination will cause

The Chair thanked Councillors Doolan and Hull and also the Assistant Director (HR and Governance) for attending

115 **TERMINATION PAYMENTS (Item 12)**

This matter was dealt with under minute 114 above

The meeting ended at 10.30p.m.

CHAIR