

**Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 22 January 2015**

Non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee held at on 22 January 2015 at 7.30 pm.

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

**Councillor Troy Gallagher in the Chair**

- 73        **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)**  
          Councillor Osh Gantly, Martin Klute and Kaya Comer Schwartz
- 74        **DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)**  
          None
- 75        **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)**  
          None
- 76        **TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)**  
          **RESOLVED:**  
          That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 06 January 2015 be confirmed as a correct record of the proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them
- 77        **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Item 5)**  
          None
- 78        **PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 6)**  
          The Chair outlined the procedure for dealing with Members questions and filming and recording at meetings
- 79        **CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 7)**  
          The Chair stated that due to the number of agenda items due to come to forthcoming meetings there was a need to convene an additional meeting of the Committee in February or March and a date would be notified to Members in the near future
- 80        **BUDGET REPORT TO EXECUTIVE ON 15-01-15 (Item 8)**  
          Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance and Performance, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Richard Watts and Mike Curtis, Director of Finance and Property Services, were present and outlined the Budget report.

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

- It was noted that Council funding from the Government had reduced BY £100m since 2010, which equated to the loss of £1000 per household in the borough
- The Council had to make savings of £37m in 2015/16 and Islington had suffered the ninth largest reduction in Government funding in the country

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- Despite this the Committee noted that GCSE results had improved significantly, 1800 new affordable homes had been built in the borough, services to those with moderate needs had been maintained, and that there had been a fall in youth unemployment
- Noted that it was proposed to raise the Council Tax by 1.99%, which equated to a 40p per week increase in Band D Council Tax band. Islington Council Tax, despite this moderate increase, would still be lower than the London average and those of neighbouring inner London Boroughs
- The Committee welcomed that the LLW was now paid to 98% of all Council and its contractors staff
- Whilst it was noted that regretfully, because of the Budget reductions 211 posts were being deleted, 50% of these were either vacant posts or staff wishing to take voluntary redundancy. £1m had also been saved in reductions to senior management
- The Committee welcomed that front line services such as Libraries, Children's Centres etc. had been retained
- The Committee noted that there was likely to be further reductions in Local Government spending in future years that would result in funding reducing to levels not seen since the introduction of the NHS
- The Committee congratulated the Executive, and in particular the Executive Member Finance and Performance, on the Budget proposals that retained services for the most vulnerable at a time of severe Government funding reductions
- It was noted that the 'roadshows' to discuss the Budget had taken place with residents and that they had not previously understood the extent of the Budget reductions that the Council faced and were likely to face in future years. Residents spoke highly of services that they were in receipt of
- It was felt that there was a need to develop a strategy to lobby the Government about the effects of future funding reductions in Local Government
- It was noted that there had been concern expressed over the proposal to impose a diesel charge, however the Council felt that this was an appropriate measure environmentally, given the evidence of the dangers of diesel pollution on health
- The Committee welcomed the provision in the budget for the continuation of the Resident Support scheme, given that the Government had made no Local Welfare provision from 2015/16
- The Committee noted that this had been part funded by reducing the number of refuse collection vehicles required by moving towards a communal kitchen waste and green waste removal service

### **RESOLVED:**

That the above comments be forwarded to the Executive for consideration

The Committee thanked Councillors Hull and Watts and the Director of Finance and Property Services for attending

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### **INCOME GENERATION (Item 9)**

Kevin O'Leary, Director of Environment and Regeneration, was present and outlined the report to the Committee.

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

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- The Chair stated that the income generation proposals for savings in the medium and longer term would be considered by the Committee on 2 March for approval and submission to the Executive

### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the contents of the report be noted and note the parallel PV Task and Finish Group and Community Energy Scrutiny review that are taking place
- (b) That the Executive Member Finance and Performance include a capital bid of £1,103,794 (and associated revenue costs), to fund the investment and additional income of £135,995 in the Budget Proposals 2015/16 report to the Executive on 12 February 2015 to reflect the income anticipated from the activities outlined in the report

The meeting ended at 8.00p.m.

**CHAIR**