

Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 11 February 2016

Non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee held at on 11 February 2016 at 7.30 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** Gallagher (Chair), O'Halloran (Vice-Chair), Comer-Schwartz, Doolan, Ismail, Kay, O'Sullivan, Russell, Andrews, Chowdhury, Wayne and Jeapes
Also Present: **Councillors:** Hull and Convery

Councillor Troy Gallagher in the Chair

- 200** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)**
Councillors O'Halloran, Court and Klute. Councillor Kay for lateness.
- 201** **DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)**
Councillor Wayne stated that he was substituting for Councillor O'Halloran
- 202** **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)**
None
- 203** **TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)**
RESOLVED:
That, subject to the addition of the word 'the' and the deletion of the word 'he', the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 January 2016 be confirmed as a correct record of the proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them
- 204** **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Item 5)**
The Executive Member Finance and Performance stated that the final settlement from the Government had now been received and that this did not differ from the provisional settlement announced. He added however that additional monies had been given to Conservative shire Councils
- 205** **PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 6)**
The Chair outlined the procedures for filming and recording of meetings and also the procedure for Public questions
- 206** **CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 7)**
The Chair informed Members that a meeting had been arranged to visit the Integrated Gangs Team at Tolpuddle Street in relation to Knife Crime scrutiny review on 19 February 2016 at 10.30 a.m. and all Members were welcome to attend
- 207** **KNIFE CRIME, MOBILE PHONE THEFT ETC. SCRUTINY REVIEW - WITNESS EVIDENCE (Item 8)**
Members welcomed Ross Adams, Chance UK and Shareen Connolly, Safer London Aspire and some young people taking part in the scheme, to the meeting.

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

Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 11 February 2016

- Safer London Aspire is a mentoring project for 11-18 year old young people at risk of involvement in ASB, offending and gangs
- Members were informed of the activities that the mentors took part in with the young children and the scheme tried to ensure that mentors chosen to work with children had similar interests
- Mentors met with children regularly and at present there were 27 active mentors and 52 on the database. In future they were looking to identify more categories of mentors and interviews after application took place and assessments and if these were successful mentors would then attend a 3 day intensive training course and then final suitability is assessed
- In response to a question it was stated that the scheme did have sufficient applications for mentors and that most of the children referred tended to come through referrals from Families First, youth offending etc.
- Safer Aspire stated that ideally they would like to extend the service to more young people and to recruit more mentors and train them more intensely
- The view was expressed that it was felt that there is a need for more early intervention and more input from schools
- In response to a question it was stated that mentors were allowed £20 per week to spend on activities per child, however it is often difficult to get children into sporting clubs. There is currently MOPAC funding for early intervention for 11-17 year olds
- The MOPAC funding was initially for a 2 year period and this has been extended for a further 2 years until 2017, however following this funding is uncertain but there is a commitment for it to continue in some form. Councillor Convery stated that in his discussions with MOPAC about youth crime in the borough he felt that funding would continue and the monies would be concentrated on youth crime and Domestic Violence
- The young children present stated that they felt additional funding would be beneficial given the cost of activities. Members stated that they wished the children success in the scheme and in future
- Chance UK provides an early intervention programme for 5-11 year olds through intensive mentoring and family support
- Referrals mostly came from the child's school and would be in relation to concerns about mental health, hyperactivity, peer pressure etc. and work would be carried out with the child and the family and there were high instances of parents who suffered from depression and anxiety, from Domestic Violence etc.
- The results of Chance UK were consistently good and 85%-95% of children when graduating from the service had improved behaviour and 75% had improved social care and relationships with their families
- Chance UK services were able to be externally evaluated
- Members expressed the view that Chance UK did excellent work and that the work helped to improve families lives and that it would be useful if some anonymised case studies could be circulated to Members
- In response to a question as to whether it was felt that there had been an increase in poverty and this was a factor, it was stated that in the previous year families were being affected by the welfare changes
- It was stated that the approach had changed over recent years from telling someone how they were going to be helped to a more targeted approach to assist the child/family concerned as to what would assist them the best in accessing appropriate services
- In response to a questions as to whether the Council could do more to offer more continuing support for families at the end of the programme it was stated that there is a need to plan expectations and Chance UK looked at the activities and legacy

that could be put in place to continue progress, such as sports and social clubs, school activities, out of school activities and small scale projects

- In response to a question as to what the Council could do to continue the work that Chance UK had done once it had finished and if it continued to monitor progress, Chance UK stated that they linked in with Families First to give them information as to possible sources of funding to access and that in terms of Council initiatives there were bits of funding across London that could be accessed in order to assist based on the needs of the child
- It was stated that one of the recommendations of the Children's Services scrutiny committee on a scrutiny review that they carried out in relation to Early Help made a recommendation relating to funding and that this could be looked at
- A Member expressed the view that the lack of playspace in the borough was a problem and Chance UK stated that this is challenging and that often facilities outside the vicinity needed to be accessed
- Chance UK stated that it is important to build trust with the children and assess their coping skills and if there is an immediate risk to the child and get them access to help. However, it is often difficult to get parents to access a GP and counselling but there is an ongoing dialogue with parents about how things were progressing
- In response to a question as to whether children were tracked to see if they achieved academically or went to University after interventions by Chance UK it was stated that it is too expensive for Chance UK to be able to do this, however it is felt that there is more collectively that could be done to assess how families were progressing but there is evidence to show that following intervention children were re-engaging with school and education
- The view was expressed that the Council needed to look to discuss with schools and its Leisure Services provider the use of facilities and get them to assist in enabling organisations such as Chance UK and young people to access facilities outside school hours at a low cost
- In response to a question as to whether the tracking of outcomes is feasible it was stated that this would involve a great deal of resources but this could be subject of further discussion, as if outcomes could be shown to have improved an economic case could be made for early intervention and work of this nature. Councillor Convery expressed the view that even if it is shown that there is a saving to the Government from these schemes it is not guaranteed that the monies saved would be reimbursed to Councils
- Reference was made to the recent visit to the PRU and that Members had been informed that the cohort of young people admitted had changed and there were more girls going to the PRU
- Chance UK stated that they now had a girls programme, which involved 10 Islington and 10 Hackney girls, however this programme is still being developed and needed to be developed. The programme also deals with child sexual exploitation and Chance UK stated that schools were a good place to start to develop a good picture of the child and the family

The Chair thanked Chance UK and Safer Aspire London and the young people for attending and that they would welcome any views on the scrutiny recommendations when they were prepared.

The Chair also thanked Councillor Convery for attending

Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 11 February 2016

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

- Islington has seen a reduction of 4% in serious youth violence this year and also reductions in first time entrants to the criminal justice system which shows that more young people are being diverted away from crime
- The introduction of Operation Attrition and Operation Omega had had a marked reduction on phone crime and other linked offences, such as the theft of two wheeled vehicles. However, towards the end of the year, a number of known young offenders were released from custody and despite active offender management, there has been a significant rise again in theft snatch levels, particularly during December 2015. These crimes have been committed by moped riders and by young people on pedal cycles
- There is also a focus on adults who are recruiting young people into the community although there is a great deal of work still to be done in relation to this
- Youth violence, robbery and knife crime have all seen continued reductions and in the second half of 2015 the number of knife related critical incidents has almost halved
- The forming of the Integrated Gangs Team is now almost fully staffed with significant contribution from Children's Services to support safeguarding and work around child sexual exploitation
- There is a focus on known individuals and case management of a relatively small number of individuals and cross border work with Camden. It was noted that the gangs in Islington and Camden were of a different nature to those in Haringey and Hackney
- Reference was made to the recent report of the Youth Offending service and it was stated that it had indicated a problem with the Police involvement but that Councillor Calouri would be attending the next meeting of the Committee to discuss the report, however there were good working relationships with Police in areas such as licensing and the Community Safety Unit. In addition, the Police were addressing the concerns outlined in the Youth Offending service report
- In response to a question it was stated that there were a number of extremely young offenders and it is important to target these and it may take 3/4 years before the measures being taken are reflected in reductions in criminality and there is a need to stop criminal behaviour before it becomes prolific
- It was stated that only 5/6 criminal behaviour orders were issued last year and these were linked to gang activity and serious criminality
- Community engagement is taking place and youth crime and community engagement are the primary themes of the Islington Crime summit on 5 March
- It was noted that a number of young offenders came from extremely damaged families and it is important to deal with these underlying problems as well as enforcement action being taken
- A Member expressed the view that the gentrification of the borough and social widening of wealth may have contributed to the increase in crime. It was stated that the lack of family cohesion and disaffection, as well as the lucrative financial aspect of drug dealing also is a contributory factor
- It was also stated that with the reductions in Police and Council budgets it would be increasingly difficult to reduce criminality

- In response to a question it was stated that once gang leaders were imprisoned it often results in power 'grab' and gangs in Islington tended to be less hierarchical and more chaotic
- In relation to a question it was stated that where there is well evidenced criminality by the Police the CPS would prosecute, however on a number of occasions there is

no further action taken and the Borough Commander is keen to ensure that in such cases this evidence is left on file to improve intelligence

- A Member referred to the fact that when Committee Members had met the Margate Task Force they had expressed the view that the Integrated Gangs Team worked better in Margate as a result of being located in a Council building rather than a Police station. Councillor Convery responded that the Margate Task Force were undertaking a slightly different role to Islington but as the situation evolved the siting of the team could be considered if there is a need

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and that Councillors Calouri and Convery attend the next meeting of the Committee to discuss the Youth Offending service report

209

REPORT OF PROCUREMENT BOARD (Item 10)

Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance and Performance was present, together with Steve Key, the Service Director Finance.

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

- The Executive Member stated that he encouraged Trade Unions to notify him of instances if they felt contractors or sub-contractors were not paying the LLW
- It was noted that the threshold in the Procurement rules that triggers the requirement for competitive tenders has been raised. In addition it is being looked at as to whether the threshold could be set higher for certain procurements so that voluntary organisations could benefit from a 'light touch' approach where it may be possible to reduce the tender burden on certain services within this categorisation
- In relation to paragraph 3.4 it was noted that the issue of social value in housing contracts had been raised as an issue and that the issue of sub-contractors needed to be clarified. It was stated that there were social value champions on the Procurement Board and that the issue of payment of LLW to sub-contractors could be clarified in terms of the relevant legislation. It was stated that information could be supplied detailing some of the instances of where challenges had been made by the Procurement Board
- In relation to local suppliers reference was made to how many of LBI's suppliers were based in the borough and it was stated that this information would be provided to Members
- In response to a question it was stated that data on the use of LBI consultants, as opposed to agency staff, in the past few years be provided to Members together with the strategy to reduce this by 2020
- Reference was made as to whether when commissioners drew up packages of work this is co-ordinated to draw together similar schemes and it was stated that this is being looked at
- In response to a question it was stated that the Resident Impact Assessment was not relevant on this particular report, however these are included in each individual procurement report and that an example could be provided to Members
- It was stated that with regard to domiciliary care that all staff now received the LLW and that they were paid for travelling time and the Council were leading the way on social care provision resulting in a more content and stable workforce
- Reference was made to the tendering for capital works and that the Leaseholders Association often complained that the procurement process was based on a schedule of rates and following the tender award there was often an uplift and the Service Director Finance stated that he would investigate and let Members know details thereon

Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 11 February 2016

- A Member enquired whether services could consider in house provision before procuring services and it was stated that whilst this is not always possible, managers would always review the best way of delivering a service before they considered a procurement process
- In response to a question as to how many of the contractors were local it was stated that this was difficult to ascertain as companies may not have head offices based in Islington but be nationwide or vice versa, or a contractor may use sub-contractors, who were/were not local
- In response to a question it was stated that there is now an overall picture of which voluntary sector organisations are funded across the Council
- A Member enquired as to how many organisations had attended the workshops referred to in paragraph 3.9 of the report, and how many had successfully bid for Islington contracts and it was stated that this information could be supplied to Members

RESOLVED:

- (a) That information be provided to Members of the Committee –

Instances of where the Procurement Board has challenged procurement exercises on the basis of social value

How many local suppliers are based in the borough

The data on the use of LBI consultants in the past few years be provided, together with the strategy to reduce this to 2020

Examples of RIA's that have been carried out in relation to recent procurement exercises

Information on possible uplifts in schedule of rates in housing contracts following a procurement exercise and any reasons therefore

Information as to how many organisations had attended the workshops referred to in paragraph 3.9 of the report and how many had successfully bid for Islington contracts

- (b) That the report be noted

The Chair thanked Councillor Hull and Steve Key for attending

210 WELFARE REFORMS UPDATE (Item 11)

Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance and Performance was present together with Ian Adams, Director of Financial Operations and Customer Service.

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

- Members welcomed the retention of the residents support team
- Reference was made to paragraph 4.1 of the report and that this outlined the main issues although some changes proposed had been rejected by the House of Lords
- The benefit cap introduction has now been delayed to October 2016 and until July 2017 in Islington and additional funding had been allocated to London and Islington's Discretionary Housing payment allocation had risen from £1m to £1.1m
- In response to a question it was stated that the shared accommodation changes came into force in 2018 and would be applied to the public sector in addition to the private sector. Councillor O'Sullivan requested that he be informed of any possible exemptions to the changes

Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 11 February 2016

- The view was expressed that more elderly people will be subject to the benefit due to the increase in the retirement age and that if people are made redundant it is more difficult for them to get back into work
- Reference was made to the fact that some of the changes would make it punitive for certain people to return to work
- Islington was one of the trial DWP areas for the testing of Universal Credit (USDL) and the results of this had been submitted to Government and it had shown that people could be supported back into work and none of the people on the trial had been subject to DWP sanction. It was stated that a briefing on the USDL trial could be sent to Members
- In response to a question it was stated that the projected date for the transition to Universal Credit was now 2018/19
- Concern was expressed that with the introduction of personal budgeting and the fact that residents may run up rent arrears particularly if on a low income

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and that Members be provided with a briefing on the USDL trial

The Chair thanked Councillor Hull and Ian Adams for attending

211 MONITORING REPORT (Item)

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

The meeting ended at 10.30 p.m.

CHAIR