

London Borough of Islington

Executive - 14 October 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD - Islington Town Hall on 14 October 2021 at 7.00 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** Comer-Schwartz, Champion, Gill, Lukes, Ngongo, O'Halloran, Shaikh, Turan and Ward

Also Present: **Councillor:** Russell

Councillor Kaya Comer-Schwartz in the Chair

831 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

832 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

833 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 September 2020 be agreed as a correct record and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

834 NON RECENT CHILD ABUSE SUPPORT PAYMENT SCHEME

The Leader introduced the item by making the following statement:

Tonight's meeting includes a report about Non-Recent Child Abuse in Islington's children's homes. Abuse of children in Islington's children's homes was the worst chapter in the council's history. Children, placed in our care, were subjected to terrible abuse which has had a deeply traumatic effect on their lives.

As Leader of Islington Council, I again want to say we are deeply sorry for the council's past failure to protect vulnerable children in our care. I offer this heartfelt apology to everyone who suffered abuse, and who continues to suffer because of it. We know that nothing can make amends for the trauma caused, but it is our responsibility as a council to try to address past failings, and to offer support.

Tonight's report recommends that the Executive approves a Support Payment Scheme for people who suffered abuse in the council's

children's homes from 1966-1995. The scheme will enable abuse survivors to receive a financial support payment of £10,000, without having to bring a civil compensation claim, and more quickly than having to go through the trauma of the lengthy civil compensation process.

Payments will be made through a process that is as straightforward and quick to access as possible, and that minimises the need to re-live past trauma, or the risk of further trauma or harm. Survivors or care-experienced people who suffered abuse, whether they make an application or receive a payment under the scheme or not, will of course still be able to bring a civil compensation claim.

The scheme will form part of the council's wider support for survivors which offers trauma counselling, specialist advice, support and assistance for care, housing, appropriate welfare benefits, access to further education and suitable employment, and support to access care records. I'm sure the Executive will strongly support this recommendation.

I'd like to thank all the survivors and care-experienced adults affected by abuse and the organisations supporting them who made very valuable contributions to our consultation on the proposed scheme earlier this year. Thanks to their responses, we have made a significant number of changes to the proposed scheme, including increasing the payment from £8,000 to £10,000, and expanding the categories of abuse.

Islington Council today is a very different organisation, and protecting children from harm is our top priority. But we rightly remain deeply sorry and ashamed of the failings of the past.

The Leader advised that written questions had been received in relation to this item and responded as follows:

I have received a questions relating to how the support payment scheme will work in practice. In the report, we have outlined that there will be a range of support for those applying for payments under this scheme including an independent advocacy service. There will be further details about how the scheme works in practice in due course.

I have also received a question relating to civil compensation and criminal investigations. The Council is committed to supporting victims and survivors, provides a number of support services and will assist any police investigations or prosecutions in any appropriate way that it can. It is not, however, in a position to offer any form of scheme or process beyond the support payment scheme that it is currently working to set up. The Council does not have insurance 'money' as such, but rather

insurance cover that may respond to civil compensation claims arising out of non-recent abuse. Whilst the Council will continue to support victims or survivors who bring such claims in any way that it can, and in this sense work with them, it will be the party against which such claims are brought and cannot, therefore, work jointly with them within the actual claim process.

I have received a number of questions not related to the support payment scheme but about support for survivors. We will continue to meet with Islington survivors and care-experienced adults so that the support that has been, or may need to be, in place for them including our general services across the council are trauma-informed. Their voices and lived experiences will be central to shaping support that empowers them to live their lives.

We have also received questions in relation to people who will be outside of the scope of the proposed scheme. The dates are based on the management of those care homes, but we can look at this further and if anyone wants to contact me on this matter they should feel free to do so.

We have also been asked questions about how the payment scheme will be publicised and how it will have the furthest reach possible. We want to publicise this as widely as possible and we will work with relevant groups to ensure that happens. We will also set aside an appropriate budget to ensure that the scheme is publicised as widely as possible.

A council officer read out a statement submitted on behalf of the Islington Survivors Network. The full statement is appended to the end of this document.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the consultation undertaken on the proposed Support Payment Scheme (SPS) and the responses received from consultees (Appendix A of the report) be noted;
- b) That the final SPS (Appendix C1 of the report) and final Scheme Terms and Conditions (Appendix C2 of the report) be approved;
- c) That the arrangements for implementation of the SPS (paragraph 4.1 of the report) and the proposals for the appointment of the Independent Service Provider and members of the Independent Review Panel (paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 of the report) be noted;
- d) That the Corporate Director of Resources, following consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to make any further changes to the

SPS and Scheme Terms and Conditions considered necessary as a result of the responses from the council's insurers.

- e) That the Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Resources be authorised to take all necessary action to implement the approved SPS; and
- f) It be noted that update reports on the operation of the SPS will be submitted to future meetings of the Executive.

Reasons for decision – to provide financial support for eligible survivors / victims of non-recent abuse suffered when in the council's children's homes. Other options considered – as detailed in the report, the scheme was subject to consultation

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

835 MONTHLY BUDGET MONITOR, INCLUDING FUNDING ALLOCATIONS AND ADJUSTMENTS TO THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME (QUARTER 5 2021/22)

RESOLVED:

- a) That the forecast 2021/22 General Fund budget variance and summary update on the deliverability of agreed budget savings (Section 3, Tables 1-2 and Appendices 1-2 of the report) be noted;
- b) That the forecast in-year budget variance on the Housing Revenue Account (Section 4 of the report) be noted;
- c) That the 2021/22 capital expenditure forecast of £169.082m be noted; and it be noted that a review of the profiling of the capital programme is currently underway (Section 5, Table 4 and Appendix 3 of the report);
- d) That it be noted that £0.119m has been added to the 2021/22 capital programme for additional works on the Bunhill 2 Project, following approval by the Executive (Paragraph 5.4 of the report).

Reasons for decision – to ensure the financial resilience of the council

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

836

CONTRACT AWARD FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION AT STACEY STREET

RESOLVED:

- a) That the contract award for the Stacey Street 'Somewhere Safe to Stay' Hub be awarded to Single Homeless Project (SHP) for 24 months from an estimated start date of November/December 2021 with the option to extend up to a further 24 months subject to satisfactory performance, for the reasons outlined in this report, be agreed.
- b) That authority to award the contract for refurbishment of the property be delegated to the Corporate Director of Homes and Neighbourhoods.
- c) Reasons for decision – to let the contract to a suitable provider to ensure that Stacey Street is a success.

Other options considered – as detailed in the report, other options included insourcing or use of a framework agreement
Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

837

THE GLA/MHCLG ROUGH SLEEPING ACCOMMODATION ALLOCATION OF FUNDING PROGRAMME 2021-2024

RESOLVED:

- a) That the borrowing of £15 million within the Housing Revenue Account to supplement this funding provided by the Greater London Authority and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to enable the council to purchase 60 one bedroom properties be approved;
- b) That the capital funding totalling £4.2 million allocated to Islington Council through the programme be noted; and to commence the purchase 60 one bedroom former ex Right to Buy properties in Islington to accommodate former rough sleepers with a connection to Islington be approved;
- c) That revenue funding totalling £1,871,940, and the provision of this support service within the 60 properties purchased for people who slept rough in Islington, be noted;
- d) That the budget increases as outlined in paragraph 4.1.3 of the report be approved.

Reasons for decision – to assist the council's commitment of eliminating rough sleeping in Islington.

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

838 **CONTRACT AWARD FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH ACCOMMODATION PATHWAY**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the award of contracts for the Mental Health Accommodation Pathway Services be approved as outlined in the report;
- b) That the table outlining contracts to be awarded, broken down by lot and provider, be noted.

Reasons for decision – to enable people currently placed in expensive out of area residential care placements to return to borough

Other options considered – other options included re-procure services in their current form, in-house delivery, and re-procure with another borough

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

839 **COMMUNITY MUNICIPAL INVESTMENT**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the launch of a Community Municipal Investment (CMI) with Abundance Investment be agreed;
- b) That the timeline, including the launch of the CMI at the “Islington Together: Let’s talk about a greener future” festival before COP26, be noted.
- c) That the plan to launch an initial CMI for £1.0m with a 5 year maturity at a rate which will match or undercut PWLB borrowing rates be noted.
- d) That the plan to use proceeds to part-fund a package of approved programmes that contribute to a net reduction in carbon emissions in the Borough be noted (paragraph 4.15 of the report); and the Corporate Director of Environment be authorised to amend the schedule of projects following consultation with the Executive Member.

Reasons for decision – to engage with residents to support the net zero carbon

strategy and part-fund the latest approved capital programme for 2021/22 to 2023/24.

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

840 **PROCUREMENT STRATEGY FOR HIGHWAYS CONTRACT**

RESOLVED:

- a) That the procurement strategy for Highway Works be approved as outlined in the report at paragraph 3.4, with Option 5, a mixture external delivery through a competitive tender and a greater retention of work being delivered by the in-house resource, being the recommended procurement strategy;
- b) That authority to award the contract be delegated to the Corporate Director of Environment in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Transport.

Reasons for decision – to appoint a suitable contractor through a contract that reflects Islington’s needs and priorities

Other options considered – other options included partnering with another borough, entering into a call-off contract from an existing framework agreement, a competitive tender exercise, and insourcing.

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

841 **PEOPLE FRIENDLY STREETS PROGRAMME UPDATE**

Councillor Champion introduced the report, summarising the progress of the People Friendly Streets programme and explaining the proposed changes to delivery, including granting limited exemptions to Islington Blue Badge holders.

A question was received from Councillor Russell, querying how different aspects of the programme would be implemented, and welcoming the progress made.

A deputation was submitted by a local resident, Mr A Martin. This focused on the impacts of the People Friendly Streets programme on residents with disabilities.

A number of questions were received from members of the public. These related to the impacts on residents with disabilities, the extent of public consultation, the impacts on local businesses and wider impacts on the borough’s transport network.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the continuation of the people-friendly streets programme be agreed as outlined in the Executive report of 18 June 2020 and amended by the report submitted, including: a) School Streets; b) low traffic neighbourhoods (including the new area of people-friendly pavements); c) cycleways and d) the borough-wide lorry control scheme;

- b) That the delegation of authority to the Corporate Director of Environment, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Transport, to continue the implementation of the people-friendly streets programme through specific schemes, be confirmed;
- c) That the initiation and approach to delivery of School Streets at schools on main roads be agreed, as set out in the report at paragraph 3.2.4;
- d) That the changes in delivery of low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) in the people-friendly streets programme, as set out in the report from paragraphs 3.3.47 to 3.3.68, be noted;
- e) That the proposed trial approach to granting limited exemptions to Islington Blue Badge holders in the low traffic neighbourhoods as set out in the report, from paragraphs 3.3.62 to 3.3.68, be agreed;
- f) That the updated timescales for the future delivery of the people-friendly streets programme set out in the report, at paragraphs 3.2.3 (School Streets), 3.3.21 (low traffic neighbourhoods) and 3.4.3 (cycleways) be noted;
- g) That the approach to the delivery of cycleways in Islington be agreed; and the public consultation arrangements for those cycleways as set out in this report at paragraph 3.4 be noted.

Reasons for decision – to renew the commitment to the PFS programme going forward as set out in the report of June 2020, and with the amendments proposed by the report

Other options considered – as detailed in the report

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

842 **NON RECENT CHILD ABUSE SUPPORT PAYMENT SCHEME - EXEMPT APPENDIX**

Noted.

843 **CONTRACT AWARD FOR THE MENTAL HEALTH ACCOMMODATION PATHWAY - EXEMPT APPENDIX**

Noted.

844 **APPENDIX: STATEMENT FROM ISLINGTON SURVIVORS NETWORK**

Islington Survivors Network welcome this opportunity to respond tonight to the proposed Support Payment Scheme for Survivors of Non-recent Child Abuse.

Firstly, we thank all the survivors in our network for waiting so long since hopes were raised for a financial scheme back in 2017. We know how difficult that long wait has been. Secondly, we thank over 100 survivors who provided evidence so that ISN could produce a comprehensive response to the council consultation which has contributed so much to the scheme being presented by the council tonight. We acknowledge that the Council has made some important changes to their first proposal although not all our responses were agreed.

It has been a long journey for us since the Executive meeting in September 2017 when many survivors spoke one by one of their very personal experiences of abuse when they were children in Islington's care system. In response we received an apology & admission of council culpability from Richard Watts (then council leader) when he acknowledged "*it was the darkest chapter in Islington council's history*" and gave a "*full commitment to addressing past failings*". Sadly, since this time 8 Islington survivors have died without justice.

Since 2014, ISN have established and co-produced with the council the Islington Non-recent Abuse Team Support Service and the Trauma Service which are highly valued by many of us.

ISN are committed to campaigning for the interests of all survivors including those who are excluded from this Scheme such as those who were in Islington Council foster placements. We also reassure survivors that we will advocate for them, when they apply for the payment, drawing on our extensive research, knowledge and expertise. Importantly, alongside the council, we will campaign for the DWP to decide that receipt of the payment will not affect entitlement to or the amount of any UK benefits. It would be devastating for many ISN survivors if the DWP refused to make this dispensation.

ISN broadly welcome this Support Payment Scheme and look forward to contributing our knowledge to the process of implementation during the following months. However, there is still much work to be done to make sure that eligible survivors receive this payment as intended by the council objectives of being straightforward, quick to access & avoiding risk of further trauma.