

**Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 8 June 2023**

Non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 8 June 2023 at 7.30 pm.

**Present:**       **Councillors:**   Williamson (Chair), Convery (Vice-Chair),  
Chowdhury, Clarke, Chapman, McHugh, Ibrahim,  
Pandor, Staff and Hamdache  
**Also**           **Councillors:**   Cllr Kay  
**Present:**

**Councillor Flora Williamson in the Chair**

**106       APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item A1)**

Apologies were received from Councillors Jackson and Weekes.

**107       DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item A2)**

There were no declarations of substitute members.

**108       DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item A3)**

There were no declarations of interest.

**109       MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Item A4)**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

**110       CHAIR'S REPORT (Item A5)**

Cllr Williamson welcomed everyone to her first meeting as the Chair, noting that Committee will be receiving the Ombudsman report at the next meeting.

**111       PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item A6)**

None

**112       UPDATE FROM THE METROPOLITAN POLICE (Item B1)**

Committee received an update from Islington's Borough Commander, Chief Superintendent Andy Carter and Superintendent Jack May-Robinson, officer in charge of community policing for the Met's Central North Command on its working relationship with the local government and how it is addressing issues raised in Baroness Casey's review into the culture of the Metropolitan Police. The following issues were highlighted:

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- Executive Member for Community Safety, John Woolf stated that the Leader and himself had met with Islington Police on how to improve policing in the borough, noting that Islington remains the only borough in London to have a 10 point Action Plan, that the Police recognises the need for tangible reform and that the Council will continue to work with the Force as a critical friend.
- A number of key issues from the Casey review Report and other previous reviews include issues such as diversity of workforce, multi-agency response, live facial recognition and policing of protests.
- The Met Turnaround Plan which was published recently, represents a roadmap on the way forward and on how to make significant changes.
- The 24 recommendations from the Casey Review and the 300 other suggestions in other reviews have been accepted and that the final version of turnaround plan should be published later in the summer.
- A number of issues highlighted in the review include resources in policing, that the Met don't tackle discrimination well; that it doesn't respond well to criticism and that it doesn't have an effective operating model. Meeting was assured that the Met is not waiting until the plan is finalised but will continue to address issues raised from the review.
- Superintendent Jack May-Robinson noted that the Met recognises the need for reform and improve its policing as it understands its impact on community and it is aiming to focus on practical and tangible actions , that officers met both the Leader of the Council , Cllr Comer-Schwartz & Cllr Woolf on Monday to discuss ways of strengthening neighbourhood policing, the need to incorporate feedback, end its carousel system and put in place a longer term problems solving approach.
- It was noted that any actions in the plan need to be community focused, that it is essential for police to attend ward panels and community meetings so as to promote its professionalism.
- Meeting was assured that dealing with discrimination within the Police will be a key priority whether racism, misogyny or homophobic, as it is important that officers continue to uphold highest standards.
- It was noted that for effective community policing, it is important to engage its residents via its ward improvement plan, and that the practice of working in silos should cease. Meeting was advised that the Borough Police have dedicated two new officers to coordinate the activities around this issue.
- In relation to people concerns, raised in the Casey Review report, meeting was advised that the Police is investing in people strategy, by giving people a strong voice and empowering them to take decisions. The Police will continue to ensure officers and staff reflect Islington residents. Other issues to note is

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it will provide cultural competency for senior leadership team, improve communication, expand use of online platforms, invest in regular communications via a monthly newsletter.

- Meeting was informed of the Police's Trauma informed approach to policing, it's work with young black men mental health forum in partnership with the Council. Police will ensure public protection, continue to protect its most vulnerable residents, tackling drugs in communities, promoting diversionary activities for 8-25 year olds so as to move them away from crime and continue with undertaking high quality investigations.
- With regards to the diversity of local police officers, the meeting was informed that although there has been some improvement more could be done, that locally in terms of gender diversity, it is above the Met's average, however in terms of BAME presence although there has been an increase since May 2021 it is still notably a 1% decrease.
- On the issue of multi-agency response, meeting was advised that there is a strong partnership in Islington across the board such as with the Integrated gangs team and licensing officers.
- On the concerns about anti-social behaviour, meeting was reminded that ongoing work is positive, that both the LA and officers are working on a transformative programme on how to improve response, that weekly and monthly meetings are being held identifying hotspot. Meeting was also informed that Islington Council has a Cuckooing panel in place as a means of protecting vulnerable residents from drug dealing activities.
- With regards to the recent deployment of live facial recognition in Highbury and Islington station, meeting was advised that this was based on intelligence centrally, that it was locally coordinated and supported by local officers. Meeting was advised that a number of lessons have been learnt from the experience in particular not providing Council with the exact date of operation. In this instance only one person of interest was stopped by employing this technology.
- Meeting was advised of the new legislation regarding policing protests, that notably most of the protest have been by Just Stop Oil group, that the Police recognises the need to allow peaceful protest but also aware of its impact on the community especially when it results in serious disruption. Meeting was advised that Islington has not experienced protests that involve locking/glueing so Police powers have not been used.
- In response to a question on the number of female officers both in frontline duties and in senior positions and whether there has been a shift in culture as identified in the Casey report, the meeting was advised that about 40% are new in post so data is not available. On the police morale, meeting was

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advised that broadly speaking officers are getting on with their job, not taking criticism personally, that they are committed to doing their best.

- Welfare support is readily available for officers as it is important that employees are not desensitised as they carry out their tasks and experiencing traumatic things.
- On staff retention, Police recognises the lure for career progression leaving front line work for more specialist role.
- In response to a question on how the committee would monitor success or failure in addressing anti-misogyny actions noted in the Action Plan, the meeting was advised that at this stage the Police wouldn't want to commit to details, but would welcome members input, noting that there are plans for a local delivery board.
- A suggestion on considering KPI's to monitor of some of the actions in the plan was noted.
- On the question on whether the Police accepts the findings that MPS is institutionally racist, the Borough Commander reiterated the corporate response, that the description means different things to different people, that the Met Police recognises that due to systematic failings around leadership and culture, this has played out in terms of racism and misogyny.
- A member noted his disappointment with the Police response on not accepting in full the fact that the MPS is institutionally racist, that this does not foster trust and confidence in the police going forward.
- On the proportion of the extra 500 PCSOs to be recruited by the MPS that will be allocated to the borough, meeting was advised that at this stage no information has been provided.
- With regards to the statement to have "strongest neighbourhood policing ever" as stated in the turnaround plan the meeting was advised that this is still being developed and no detail available at this stage.
- On the 6 months in length of service of officers operating in wards, meeting was advised of plans to end the carousel system as this would promote consistency, that a 2 year tenure in neighbourhood roles is being proposed.
- In response to the lack of trust and under reporting of hate crimes among BAME communities and timescales to recruit officers, meeting was advised that recruitment fairs are being scheduled in a range of different venues, that since 2002 PCSOs recruitment has been via Met onsite, but now this has been extended to social media forums such as Spotify. Members were reminded that everyone has a role to play as a recruiter, that when policing is promoted has a career opportunity, evidence shows that people tend to

respond.

- Hate crime is on the increase for a range of reasons and worrying is the under reporting, that public should be encouraged to report to the local authority especially if they cannot report to police especially for the vulnerable.
- In response to the rise in hate crime amongst the LGBT hate community , one of highest rise across protected characteristics, the meeting was assured that it is taken seriously, that the Police currently have an SLT member on LGBT national network and are currently looking at how to deal with hate crime.
- On the increasing incidents of shoplifting and how the police responds to keeping young workers safe, meeting was informed that the Police met a good representation of shop keepers and local shop keepers during the meeting Business Crime Reduction Partnership for Angel shops. Feedback received indicates that online system was not working properly hence people chose not to report incidents.
- Meeting was informed that businesses also have a responsibility to address shoplifting, that it is notable that one of the retailers in the borough has decided to install barriers to prevent or reduce shoplifting as shoppers would need to scan their receipts at the barriers before being able to exit the shop.
- On the unrepresentative nature of safer neighbourhood forums and suggestions to reserve places for some communities, the Officer welcomed the suggestion, however reiterated the existence of ward panels and safer neighbourhood board, forums for community engagement. Police officer acknowledged that representation is key as it is related to trust and confidence, welcoming the input from young people like the Youth Mayor.
- With regards the issue of vulnerable people cuckooing and residents being told of lack of evidence by housing officers to address this issue meeting was reminded of existing policy around dealing with closure orders and evictions, that exists a joined up approach to deal with this issue by housing officers and the Police.
- Meeting was advised that Emily Thornberry MP brought the same issues to the Police's attention, reports of incidents of comings and goings in an household but unfortunately it did not meet the evidence threshold to be involved despite complaints of suspected drug ongoing activities. The Police recognises where residents are exploited, noting that procedures employed locally are recognised as national best practice, that residents should be encouraged to continue to report these incidents.
- On the recent statement that the Met Police would not be attending call outs to mental health residents, the Borough Commander reiterated the view that

the Police are not adequately trained or equipped to deal with mental issues, that appropriate agencies exist which can handle such matter better, that a recent report indicated that over a million hours of officer time was spent attending to such incidents thereby moving resources away from community policing.

- In summary, the Chair expressed her disappointment with the view of the borough commander on institutional racism, noting its corporate's stance but not in agreement with their stance. Committee notes the request for member feedback on the Action plan which will be fed through the Executive Member John Woolf. It was also noted that concerns still exist around prevailing police culture on misogyny, that the public will need reassurances that this issue is being dealt with. Committee recognises hate crime is on the increase in the community and the urgent need to address the issue of diversity of its workforce. Discussion on neighbourhood policing is to continue acknowledging the importance of community involvement and the issue around exploitation of vulnerable people should not be disregarded.

The Chair thanked both the Borough Commander, Chief Superintendent Andy Carter and Superintendent Jack May-Robinson for their updates regarding policing in the borough.

**113**

**DRAFT WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2023-26 (Item D1)**

Julie Foy, Director of Human Resources and Astrid Keogh, Head of Organisational Development updated the meeting on its Draft Workforce Strategy 2023-26 and the following points were highlighted:

- The Council's workforce strategy sets out direction of travel and the draft has had a wide engagement across the council stakeholders such as CMB, front line staff and apprentices and this is aligned to Islington Together 2030 plan.
- The Workforce strategy sets out the vision for its staff, identifies the areas to focus on over the next three-year period and it provides the Council with a number of outcomes to work towards which is to create a psychologically safe, inclusive, well managed workplace and to be an employer of choice.
- The workforce strategy sets out how the Council will support staff and managers so as to perform at their best, progress their careers and truly believe that Islington is their employer of choice.
- The 4 principles which underly the strategy are employee experience; equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion; organisational team and individual development and wellbeing and resilience.
- In terms of employee experience, Islington wants to be an employer of choice, that all staff it have the highest quality employee experience no matter where they work or where they are in their career journey with Islington Council. This will be achieved by having the best systems,

governance, and processes in place to enable staff do their job to a high standard as part of a modern, flexible, and responsive workforce. It is important that colleagues feel rewarded and are recognised for their outstanding contributions to staff and residents, that employees should be engaged and involved with the Council, have opportunities to have their voices heard and influence change.

- On Equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion, the Council aims to continue to build a diverse and inclusive culture by ensuring that there is fairness, transparency, and equity at all stages of the employee lifecycle, where staff feel valued for their individual differences and are treated fairly with dignity and respect. It is important that there prevails a culture of psychological safety, where staff have the confidence to be authentic and to express their thoughts, ideas, and challenges. This will be achieved by collaborating with colleagues from staff forums and other staff groups to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relationships between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
- In terms of organisational, team, and individual development, the strategy wants to ensure staff have equal access to development opportunities, to have the right skills, knowledge, and experience so that staff are able to progress their career. It is important that the Council has learning and development opportunities in place to help staff reach their full potential, driving high performance and delivering excellence for our residents and staff. It was also noted that processes, policies, data, and systems must all enhance the organisation's ability to perform and lead change.
- On the issue of wellbeing and resilience, it is important that staff feel supported at work, ensuring that health, safety, and wellbeing responsibilities are at the core of everything the organisation does, taking a proactive approach to providing appropriate and effective support to staff by using internal data to help guide and target staff wellbeing and resilience work.
- In response to a question on recruitment process and making it a positive experience, meeting was advised that candidate experience is important, that feedback is provided to unsuccessful candidates and encouraged to apply again. In terms of questions, we do have standardised scoring system and have developed a bank of questions, that a decision has been taken recently to move to a new system to support inclusive recruitment priorities.
- In response to providing questions in advance especially for candidates who are neuro diverse, meeting was advised questions are provided in advance as a reasonable adjustment where requested, that this is part of the Council's inclusive recruitment plan, that there is a recognition of the need for more flexibility so as to attract talent which may not be possible via the traditional way of recruitment.

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- On the vague reference to the importance of union membership in the Strategy, meeting was advised that Council has a good relationship with unions which was not the case in previous years, that union representatives have regular meetings with Chief Executive, that Council recently recruited an employee relations manager, a post which didn't previously exist and that a True Partnership agreement with union colleagues has been recently designed. Council encourages membership by inviting unions to induction day for new employees etc.
- On the lack of diversity and representation in senior management the head of Human Resources acknowledged that although Council had a target of 21.4% for the top 5%, it has been able to achieve 19.3%, noting that in the last 3 year this has increased. It was stated that this target would need to be reset.
- In terms of representation at the top of the Council leadership, it was acknowledged that there is minimal representation from BME background, more needs to be done.
- On the issue regarding staff dismissal, court payments and settlements and possible consequences for senior managers that might have been found negligent and responsible, meeting was advised that although not ideal most of the issues raised will be reported to committee either via the Annual workforce report and financial settlements via Tribunal findings will be reported to Audit Committee. Meeting was advised that negligent managers responsible for some of the tribunal findings will be dealt with appropriately.
- On the pending recruitment for the post of Corporate directors and Chief Executive to reflect workforce and borough, the head of HR acknowledged that it is a good opportunity to employ a different approach, that adverts have been placed in MJ and social media is being used to extend the reach of candidates.
- HR officers had a meeting earlier with Council's recruitment partner for the chief executive role on how to maximise its diverse shortlist taking into consideration on issues around gender and ethnicity. It was noted that in London, only 4 chief executives are from BME background, that ten years ago there was only person.
- Check-ins and staff appraisals was launched in January, 1200 managers received mandatory training which was positively received. Check ins are a new way to have performance discussions with staff and happens monthly.

The Chair thanked officers for the update on the workforce strategy .



**RESOLVED:**

Membership of the committee for the 2023/24 and Terms of Reference were agreed

**115     SELECTION OF SCRUTINY TOPIC 2023-24 (Item D3)**

**RESOLVED:**

That the topic of review for the 2023/2024 Municipal year is Multi-agency response to complex Anti-Social Behaviour.

**116     PROPOSED WORK PLAN 2023-24 (Item D4)**

**RESOLVED:**

That the work plan 2023-24 be noted

**117     MONITORING REPORT (Item D5)**

Meeting was advised that Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees will be presenting their final report and recommendations on their topics reviewed carried out in 2022/23 Municipal year.

The meeting ended at 9.35 pm

**CHAIR**