

London Borough of Islington

Executive - 24 October 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 24 October 2024 at 7.00 pm.

Present: **Councillors** Kaya Comer-Schwartz, Diarmaid Ward, Santiago Bell-Bradford, Rowena Champion, Una O'Halloran, Michelline Safi-Ngongo and Flora Williamson

Councillor: Ernestas Jegorovas-Armstrong

Councillor Kaya Comer-Schwartz in the Chair

276 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Received from Councillors Sheila Chapman and John Woolf.

277 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

278 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the non-exempt minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2024 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

279 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE UPDATE: Q1 2024/25 (APRIL - JUNE 2024)

RESOLVED:

(a) To note the progress and performance of the Islington Together Delivery Plan for 2024-2026 and performance issues, as detailed in the appendix to the report of the Executive Member for Finance and Performance.

(b) To note letter from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman on the recent annual review of complaints performance.

Reasons for the decision – Progress was reported to Executive on a quarterly basis to ensure oversight and accountability, challenges and opportunities. Performance was also monitored quarterly internally through Departmental Management Teams and externally through the respective Scrutiny Committees.

There was a legal duty to share the Ombudsman's letter with the Council's Executive.

Other options considered – The Delivery Plan metrics were intended to monitor the difference that the Delivery Plan actions were making, which covered the whole Council.

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

280 **RESIDENT EXPERIENCE TRANSFORMATION : PHASE 3 BUSINESS CASE**

RESOLVED:

(a) To note the business case for Phase 3 of the programme and the projected benefits from the investment in this programme of work, as detailed in the report of the Executive Member for Finance and Performance.

(b) To note the Council's approach to resourcing the programme, in particular the use of permanent resourcing to reduce the investment needed.

(c) To note that Phase 3 of the programme would deliver £2.775m in net savings over four years, with a total payback period for Phases 1, 2 and 3 of 5.24 years.

(d) To approve the allocation of £4.411m to fund Phase 3 of the Resident Experience Programme, to be drawn down over 3 years commencing quarter 3 of 2024/25.

(e) To note ongoing expenditure from 25/26 onwards of up to £0.539m would be required for licensing and support of new technical solutions and that approval of these costs would be requested via a separate growth bid.

Reasons for the decision – The programme was integral to achieving the Council's "Together 2030" plan goals, aimed at fostering a greener, healthier, and fairer Borough. It supported all five missions.

Other options considered – Three options were considered for the next phase of the programme, comprising the Council's front door services to residents.

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

281 **REPORT OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: THE CHILDREN'S WORKFORCE SCRUTINY REVIEW**

In the absence of Councillor Sheila Chapman, who had been the chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee at the time that this scrutiny review was being conducted, the report was introduced by Councillor Kaya Comer-Schwartz.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the report of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee on "The Children's Workforce Scrutiny Review" be noted.

2. That the Executive Member's response be reported to a future meeting of the Executive, including having due regard to any relevant implications of the Committee's recommendations.

Reasons for the decision – The overall aim of the review was to explore the ways in which the Council could accelerate how it attracted, grew and sustained an agile and responsive workforce which was increasingly confident, in sufficient numbers, to make a difference to the lives of children, young people and families in the Borough.

Other options considered – the full range of children's services was scrutinised by the Committee.

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

282 **ISLINGTON SANCTUARY GRANT PROGRAMME - 1029175**

In the absence of the Executive Member for Equalities, Communities and Inclusion, the report was introduced by Councillor Kaya Comer-Schwartz.

RESOLVED:

- (a) To utilise government asylum dispersal and refugee resettlement grant funding to deliver a £500,000 Sanctuary Grant Programme for local projects who supported refugees, migrants and residents seeking asylum in the Borough.
- (b) To endorse the establishment of a Council-led project team to ensure due diligence for the delivery of this major grants programme and adherence to government resettlement and asylum dispersal funding requirements.
- (c) To approve an innovative participatory grant making approach, with ‘experts by experience’ shaping the delivery of the Sanctuary Grant Programme through a well-supported and informed Sanctuary Grants Community Panel.

Reasons for the decision – The Sanctuary Grant Programme would be used to establish a £500,000 fund for local projects which supported refugees, migrants and residents seeking asylum in the Borough. A Council-led project team would ensure due diligence was applied in assessing, awarding and monitoring grants and to replicate the success of other Voluntary and Community Sector programmes already operated by the Council. The purpose of the Sanctuary Grant Programme was to find new and innovative ways to help organisations in Islington to support refugee and migrants and to encourage connectivity between new and existing communities.

Other options considered – Officers considered whether to utilise a grant-funding, rather than commissioned-based approach. It was considered that grant-funding would attract new ideas from different organisations on how they might help achieve connected and thriving communities which promoted integration and social cohesion. All options were as detailed in the report.

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

283 **REPORT OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: NEW BUILD HOMES SCRUTINY REVIEW**

RESOLVED:

- (a) To note the report of the Housing Scrutiny Committee on “New Build Homes: The performance to date and meeting future challenges”.
- (b) To note that the Executive Member’s response would be reported to a future meeting of the Executive, including having due regard to any relevant implications of the Committee’s recommendations.

Reasons for the decision – In light of the Council’s aim to build as much housing as possible in the Borough, the purpose of the review was to understand Islington’s historic performance in comparison with other Local Authority developers and understand how the new build programme intended to adapt or mitigate against future challenges, such as lack of land supply, high development costs and the fluctuating current and future economic climate

Other options considered – the Housing Scrutiny Committee considered a wide range of options, all as detailed in the report.

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

284 **PROCUREMENT STRATEGY FOR COMMUNAL HEATING**

RESOLVED:

(a) To approve the procurement strategy to procure and award contracts for the maintenance and repair of housing mechanical systems, as set out in the report of the Executive Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods.

(b) To delegate authority to award the contracts to the Acting Corporate Director of Homes and Neighbourhoods, following consultation with the Executive Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods.

Reasons for the decision – The current communal heating and ventilation maintenance contract was due to expire on 18 May 2025. Feedback from residents had highlighted a need to identify improvements and greater resilience in this contract. The proposal was to procure two maintenance contracts for the north and south of the borough, consistent with the current domestic gas safety, to include low carbon works and a separate communal ventilation maintenance contract. It was anticipated that the new contracts would bring improved resilience and high levels of customer satisfaction.

Other options considered – Four options were considered, as detailed in the report.

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none.

285 **COMMUNAL HEATING SERVICE STANDARD**

RESOLVED:

(a) To agree the adoption of the proposed heating service standard set out in paragraph 3.8 and appendix A of the report of the Executive Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods, with effect from October 2024.

(b) To confirm the process for increasing the update of tenant charges from 9th December 2024, as detailed in the report.

(c) To seek delegated authority for the Acting Corporate Director of Homes and Neighbourhoods to make changes to the heating service from time to time, following consultation with the Executive Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods, and following consultation with residents.

Reasons for the decision – A modest increase to service provision had been approved, now that energy costs had reduced, even though the energy market remained much more volatile and difficult to predict than in the preceding ten years. The proposed increase in service was designed to support greater system reliability, a modest improvement in the level of thermal comfort offered in the middle of the day during the heating season, whilst keeping costs affordable for residents.

Other options considered – Two options were considered, both as detailed in the report.

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

286 **PROCUREMENT STRATEGY FOR TESTING, REPAIRS, SERVICING WORKS FOR DOOR ENTRY, ACCESS CONTROL, VEHICLE ACCESS BARRIERS, AND SECURITY SHUTTER SYSTEMS**

RESOLVED:

(a) To approve the procurement strategy for testing, repairs, servicing works for door entry, access control, vehicle access barriers, and security shutter systems, as detailed in the report of the Executive Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods.

(b) To delegate authority to award the contract to the Acting Corporate Director of Homes and Neighbourhoods, after consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Neighbourhoods, following completion of the tender process.

Reasons for the decision – The procurement of the contract was essential for several reasons. It ensured access for operatives and contractors to carry out necessary works, facilitated emergency services access, maintained uninterrupted care services for vulnerable residents, enhanced community safety through security measures, and fulfilled statutory health and safety obligations through proactive maintenance, ultimately ensuring the safety, security, and well-being of residents and the wider community.

Other options considered – Six options were considered, all as detailed in the report.

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

287 **ADULT SOCIAL CARE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY**

RESOLVED:

(a) To endorse the “Adult Social Care Accommodation Strategy 2024-2034”, appended to the report of the Executive Member for Health and Social Care.

(b) To deliver the commitments and work with partners to fulfil the commitments in the Strategy.

(c) To note that the Strategy linked to, and aligned with, the Council’s Strategic Asset Management Plan

Reasons for the decision – The Accommodation Strategy’s vision was for Islington residents to live healthy, fulfilling, and independent lives in a safe place they called home. The Council would support residents with care needs to remain as independent as possible in their own homes. Where this was no longer possible, the Council aimed to support residents in bespoke, high-quality accommodation-based care services, as close to home as possible, helping to maintain links with their communities and support networks.

Other options considered – A wide range of options were considered, all as detailed in the report. The development of the Strategy was led by Adult Social Care Strategic Commissioning and Investment Team, with coproduction with residents.

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

288 **HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND 6 DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY**

RESOLVED:

(a) To agree the distribution of the household support fund 6, as outlined in the report of the Executive Member for Finance and Performance.

(b) To note that the previously agreed funding of holiday free school meals would be distributed from October 2024 half term, through to Easter 2025.

Reasons for the decision – The objective of the HSF6 was to provide crisis support to vulnerable households in most need with the cost of essentials. Authorities were expected to offer support throughout the duration of the HSF6 period and were required to develop delivery plans to reflect this.

Other options considered – a range of options had been considered through data analysis of the cohorts the Council intended to support, all as detailed in the report.

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

289 **POLICY FOR THE USE OF VACANT PREMISES MANAGERS' AND CARETAKER HOUSES**

RESOLVED:

(a) To approve the policy for vacant school premises manager's and other caretaker's houses, as detailed in the appendix to the report of the Executive Member for Finance and Performance.

(b) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Community Wealth Building, following consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and Performance, for key decisions made in line with the policy.

(c) To note that any decisions and proposals relating to vacant houses taken in line with this policy would be subject to the approval of separate business case proposals, detailed implementation plans, and communication and engagement with impacted schools.

Reasons for the decision – The policy sought to ensure that all schools with vacant houses were treated consistently and fairly. In addition, the policy had been framed to ensure that all land and buildings within the education estate were used to provide benefit to Children's Services and to schools directly.

Other options considered – Four options in total were considered, all as detailed in the report

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

290 **UPDATE ON CARE UK RESIDENTIAL HOMES CONTRACT**

RESOLVED:

To note the contents of the non-exempt report of the Executive Member for Finance and Performance on non-exempt aspects of the steps that were being taken to resolve a contractual matter with CARE UK.

291 **REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: ACTIVE TRAVEL SCRUTINY REVIEW**

RESOLVED:

(a) To receive the report of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee entitled "Active Travel Scrutiny Review"

(b) To note that the Executive Member's response would be reported to a future meeting of the Executive, including having due regard to any relevant implications of the Committee's recommendations.

Reasons for the decision – The overall aim of the scrutiny review was to consider how the Council was working and could work to take the lead on supporting and enabling people to change to active travel, developing initiatives to widen the uptake of active travel and identifying ways to support residents and businesses to achieve both health benefits and financial resilience through active travel.

Other options considered – a wide range of options was considered, all as detailed in the report

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

292 **PROCUREMENT STRATEGY AND CONTRACT AWARD FOR EXTERNAL LEGAL ADVICE FROM BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS**

RESOLVED:

(a) To approve the procurement strategy to utilise the LBLA Barristers Framework Agreement and LBLA Solicitors Framework Agreement and subsequent contract awards from 1 January 2024 until 31 December 2026 (36 months), with an option to extend for a further 12 months to 31 December 2027, as detailed in the report of the Executive Member for Finance and Performance.

(b) To note the extensive range of social value benefits which LBLA members could access through its frameworks in support of the Council's resident and community initiatives.

Reasons for the decision – The framework agreements would continue to provide cost effective service delivery and resilience to support the Council's Legal Services Team within the requirements for value for money and social value benefits.

Other options considered – as detailed in the report

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

VOTE OF THANKS – COUNCILLOR KAYA COMER-SCHWARTZ, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Councillor Ward congratulated Councillor Comer-Schwartz who was to be appointed as Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime in the Mayor of London's Office and proposed a formal vote of thanks to her. He thanked her for her tireless work on behalf of the residents of Islington and wished her well for the future.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor O'Halloran.

RESOLVED: accordingly.

293 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded during discussion of the remaining items on the agenda, in view of their confidential nature, in accordance with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

<u>Agenda item</u>	<u>Category of exemption under Schedule 12A of the LGA 1972</u>
Exempt minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2024	Exemption 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
Update on Care UK contract arrangements - exempt appendix	Exemption 6: information relating to a proposal to give a statutory notice