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London Borough of Islington

Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 25 June 2018

Non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee held at on 25 June 2018 at 7.30 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** O'Halloran (Chair), Gallagher (Vice-Chair), O'Sullivan, Heather, Gantly, Chapman, Bell-Bradford, Khurana, Jeapes, Wayne, Spall and Woodbyrne
Also Present: **Councillors:** Hull, Calouri and Watts

Councillor Una O'Halloran in the Chair

- 14 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)**
 Councillors Champion and Chowdhury
- 15 **DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)**
 None
- 16 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)**
 None
- 17 **MEMBERSHIP, TERMS OF REFERENCE ETC. (Item 4)**
 RESOLVED:
 That the report be noted
- 18 **TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 5)**
 RESOLVED:
 That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 March 2018 be confirmed and the Chair be authorised to sign them
- 19 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Item 6)**
 None
- 20 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 7)**
 The Chair outlined the procedure for Public questions and filming and recording at meetings
- 21 **CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 8)**
 None
- 22 **NEW SCRUTINY TOPICS APPROVAL - VERBAL (Item 9)**
 Members were informed that the Review Committees were still to formalise their topics and that these should be reported for formal approval to the next meeting of the Committee, however initial work should commence following the Review Committee's approval of such topics

Members considered the topics for scrutiny for PPS for the current municipal year, and it was –

RESOLVED:

That the Committee consider the following topics for scrutiny in 2018/19- Service Delivery and Engagement and Universal Credit (mini review)

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PRESENTATION LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - EXECUTIVE PRIORITIES 2018/19 - VERBAL (Item 10)

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Richard Watts, was present and outlined the Executive key priorities for the forthcoming year.

During consideration the following main points were made –

- The Leader stated that he felt that the electorate were satisfied with the Council, given that it had been re-elected with the biggest share of the vote since 1974. However, the Council were not complacent and had a number of key priorities
- The Council aimed to provide more affordable housing more speedily
- The Council also wished to address the social problems faced by residents of the borough, such as substance misuse, domestic violence, mental health and link in with the work of the Integrated Gangs Team, as many of these issues are interlinked
- The Council faces huge challenges as a result of Government budget reductions, and Council services need to be arranged to suit residents
- The demographics of the borough were changing, and there were now more people working in the borough than live in it. Young people tend to feel alienated and work needs to take place to ensure the massive economic opportunities provided in the borough, are shared with young people and there is more work to be done on skills training, advice and instilling confidence in young people
- The Council, in the face of Government funding reductions, needs to carry on providing good services, and a resident's survey will shortly be taking place to gauge residents views
- In response to a question it was stated that a report on the implementation of the IT contract across the 3 boroughs would be going to the Executive shortly and this could be forwarded on to the PPS Committee
- Reference was made to the fact that it should be easier for residents who have multiple needs to be able to access services, rather than the 'silo' working that often exists and that this is being looked at. In addition, the Council worked with a number of partners and that there is a need to co-ordinate services with them more effectively, given that no area of the Public sector has not suffered funding reductions and no one organisation can provide the services required
- In response to a question regarding early intervention, it was stated that there were challenges, as many services were directly not under the control of the Council. The Council are endeavouring to protect core universal services, and it was stated that other areas, such as CAMHS, are not under the Council's control and this is one of the reasons why more effective partnership working needs to be developed, so that different parts of the public sector work collaboratively so that funding is not wasted and can be reinvested in services

RESOLVED:

That the report being submitted to the Executive on the IT contract be forwarded to the Committee for consideration

The Chair thanked the Leader for his presentation

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THAMES WATER - UPDATE ON FLOODING SCRUTINY - VERBAL (Item 11)

Tim McMahon, Thames Water was present and gave an update to the Committee.

During consideration the following main points were made –

- A clear policy is now in place in relation to compensation payments, and Thames Water has instituted a new for old policy for residents affected
- Customer response has also improved and there have been no customer complaints in relation to the 2 most recent bursts
- In relation to response times to burst mains, whilst recognising the valves were difficult to close down and had to be done manually, there have been improvements made and the response time had improved from 2 hours to 1 hour 9 minutes
- Training was taking place to skill up staff to be able to meet a response time of 1 hour
- There has been increased investment and Upper Street has now been completed and there is technology in place to identify leaks. 33% of the network is now monitored, however resources are directed in areas where there is likely to be major consequence if a burst occurs
- In terms of compensation with regard to the Upper Street flood, the majority of cases have now been settled, however there were still a few outstanding
- In response to a statement that there should be increased investment in pipe replacement, rather than giving shareholder profits, it was stated that dividend pay outs had averaged 3% to shareholders, however there had been no dividend paid in the last 2 years. There had been increased levels of investment, and there is a need to be more efficient and understand the network better so that Thames Water can perform more satisfactorily
- The Panel noted the commitment from Thames Water to report back to the Committee at a future date with regard to progress on training of staff in relation to response to major bursts

RESOLVED:

That Thames Water report back to a future meeting of the Committee on progress of training of staff, as referred to above

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CRIME STATISTICS (Item 12)

Nick Davies, Islington Police, Curtis Ashton, Head of Targeted Support and Youth Offending Service and Keith Stanger, Service Manager Community Safety and Crime Reduction were present for discussion of this item.

Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance, Performance and Community Safety and Councillor Joe Calouri, Executive Member Children, Young People and Families were also present.

A presentation was made to the Committee, during which the following main points were made –

- It was noted that there had been some improvement in the reduction of moped crime, (a 60% plus reduction in moped enabled crime since January 2018), and there had been a reduction of 100 crimes, there was no room for complacency, and the borough still had unacceptably high levels of moped enabled crime
- There had been an increase in moped crime generally across the London area
- Violent crime has also shown increases
- Serious youth violence has also increased, and knife crime amongst the under 25's is concerning
- However, some progress has been made and there has been a continued reduction in knife crime injury victims under 25, by 13.3%, compared to the MPS increase of 1.7%
- There has been a 20% reduction in first time entrants to the criminal justice system and a reduction in young people receiving custodial sentences

- There has also been a very positive OFSTED focused visit on work with vulnerable adolescents
- Challenges/Future work include – a reduction in the increase in robbery offences, reducing the level of youth violence and serious youth violence, knife possession is likely to lead to an increase in stop and search, and the reduction in Police resources
- Future work/opportunities – Youth Offending Service inspection June onwards, and improving interventions to ensure that these meet the needs of the dynamic cohort offenders and offending trends, and the Spark Project on prolific offending supporting partnership ownership of understanding factors that can lead to prolific offending and making earlier interventions
- A number of initiatives have taken place with regard to violence against women and girls, however there were challenges
- ASB – There has been a decrease in repeat callers and new Police ASB warnings will now also include Camden. Emerging problems included large groups of moped delivery drivers causing ASB at a variety of sites, and utilising extra resources to tackle increasing street population issues. The Safe Havens project has been relaunched and all suitable Council buildings will be registered, with others to follow soon after
- The view was expressed that the Committee would not wish to see homeless people targeted specifically in relation to ASB
- With regard to hate crime over 300 organisations had now signed the Islington Hate Crime Pledge and a relationship with TfL has been developed to share Hate Crime Intelligence. A number of events had taken place on the anniversary of the Finsbury Park terrorist attack. Other initiatives in relation to Hate Crime are also taking place
- In response to a question it was stated that there was a better relationship and information sharing with Pentonville Prison, than previously
- In response to a question, it was stated that most drug related offences are as a result of detective searches, and that most serious drug offences are linked to social background and violent behaviour
- A Member enquired as to the rise in hate crime, and that increases seem to be worse than in many other areas of London. Councillor Hull responded that the rise in faith crime could be in respect of the Finsbury Park terror attack, but there is a need to look at other types of hate crime, such as homophobic and transgender hate crime
- It was noted that Police resources had fallen by over 300 officers and this impacted on the ability to fight crime
- In response to a statement from a Member, that he felt that the lack of youth provision often contributed to youth crime, it was stated that the Council had maintained a lot of youth provision, whereas this has been greatly reduced elsewhere in London. However, the Council could not provide youth provision on every estate, as the necessary funding was not available
- Most young people who commit serious offences come from troubled backgrounds and have witnessed domestic violence, or had difficult family environments. It is essential to engage with this relatively small group of young people
- Violence against Women and Girls – Work is taking place on this and a new service is due to start in September to trial a new approach to working with families affected by DVA
- Reference was made to the difficulty in getting through to emergency numbers on occasions, and that this was unsatisfactory. Nick Davies stated that he was aware that there had been some problems, but he would look into this
- Members expressed the view that more publicity should be given to areas of success in crime reduction, in order that residents were aware that crimes were

being tackled and criminals arrested. In addition, a Member stated that he felt that more should be done in schools to warn children of the dangers of knives

- Members were informed that work is going on in schools and the Safer Schools Team and Integrated Gangs Team had visited schools, and discussions are taking place with the Safeguarding lead at schools on this issue. The view was expressed that this work should also take place at primary level
- With regard to ASB, the new repeat callers process is now in place and calls from these cases have decreased significantly
- New Police warning notices on ASB will now include Camden Council
- Challenges include an emerging problem with large groups of moped delivery drivers which cause ASB at a variety of sites. Members requested that examples and an update on progress of dealing with this problem be brought back to the Committee at a future date
- The Safe Havens project has been relaunched and all suitable Council buildings will be registered as a Safe Haven, with others to follow soon after
- Reference was made to the fact that the Police were making more use of social media to advertise successes on crime and that the use of electronic noticeboards could be utilised more in this regard

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

The Chair thanked Councillors Hull and Calouri, Nick Davies, Curtis Ashton and Keith Stanger for attending

26

REVENUE OUTTURN 2017/18 (Item 13)

Councillor Hull, Executive Member Finance, Performance and Community Safety and Steve Key, Service Director Finance, were present for discussion of this item.

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

- There was a £3.9m end of year overspend, and this had been funded by taking £2m from contingency and £1.9m from the contingency reserve. There is a remaining £6.1m in the contingency reserve for future years
- A Member referred to the fact that the majority of the overspends were in E&R and Children's Services and that he felt that more efficiency savings could be made
- Councillor Hull stated that in relation to Children's Services that such overspends reflected the position nationally on children's social care and that funding is being built in to the base budget for future years, to safeguard against overspends in year
- Councillor Hull referred to the fact that efficiency savings were being looked at, together with major service changes and these would be considered in the 'budget challenge' meetings that will be taking place
- Discussion took place as to the over estimation of savings in certain departments that had not been achieved, and it was stated that it was felt that in future necessary steps had been taken in the budgeting process to ensure that this did not recur
- A Member expressed the view that she did not want to see any reduction in street cleaning and refuse and that a high quality service needed to be provided
- It was noted that the level of Council reserves were now 4%, rather than 5% previously, which was a reduction on previous years
- In response to a question, it was stated that the Council are taking advantage of low interest borrowing rates

- Members were informed that with regard to the Capital Programme, this was an area that the new Interim Director would be looking at, together with S106 and CIL monies
- A Member referred to Housing and Adult Social Services, page 31 of the report, and that there had been two large overspends of £3m and £2.1m and also overspends in relation to Learning Disability. She added that these overspends had been negated by two one off payments, however she enquired how the overspends would be managed in future. It was stated that the Transformation Programme that had been put in place in relation to Housing/Adult Social Care, had been an ambitious one, and savings had not been achieved as quickly as anticipated. However it was felt that these savings would ultimately be achieved

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

The Chair thanked Councillor Hull and Steve Key for attending

27 USE OF AGENCY WORKERS (Item 14)

Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member for Finance, Performance and Community Safety was present for discussion of this item. The Director of Human Resources, Liz Haynes was also present.

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

- Members welcomed the reduction in agency spend from March 2017 – March 2018, which has seen a reduction in FTE from 639 to 418
- In the past 3 years there has been a reduction of nearly £5m in agency spend
- It did need to be recognised however that there will always be a need for responsive services to employ agency staff
- A Member referred to the fact that the detailed scrutiny of the Committee on this issue, had helped to achieve this reduction in agency spend
- Councillor Hull stated that he had welcomed the scrutiny of the Committee on this issue, and that in future he wished to look at casualisation of staff and to reduce the levels of this
- Members stated that they wished to congratulate Corporate Directors, the Director of Human Resources and Councillor Hull for their work on reducing agency staff

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

The Chair thanked Councillor Hull and Liz Haynes for attending

28 QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE REPORT (Item 15)

Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance, Performance and Community Safety was present for discussion of this item.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and if Members have any questions with regard to the report they should contact the Councillor Hull thereon

29 MONITORING REPORT (Item)

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

The meeting ended at 9.30 p.m.

CHAIR

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