

**Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 14 May 2019**

Non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee held at on 14 May 2019 at 7.30 pm.

**Present:**       **Councillors:**   Champion (Chair), Gallagher (Vice-Chair),  
O'Sullivan, Heather, Gantly, Chapman, Bell-  
Bradford and Jeapes  
**Also**           **Councillor:**   O'Halloran  
**Present:**

**Councillor Rowena Champion in the Chair**

**105**       **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item A1)**  
Councillors Chowdhury, Woodbyrne, Khondoker, Khurana and Spall

**106**       **DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item A2)**  
None

**107**       **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item A3)**  
None

**108**       **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Item A4)**  
**RESOLVED:**  
That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4 April 2019 be confirmed and the Chair be authorised to sign them

**109**       **CHAIR'S REPORT (Item A5)**  
The Chair informed Members that the next meetings of the Committee will be held on 18 June and 25 July 2019

The Chair added that the Scrutiny Review topics for next year would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee, and it has been proposed that Performance of Council services should be a topic for consideration

**110**       **PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item A6)**  
The Chair outlined the procedures for Public questions and filming and recording at meetings

**111**       **SCRUTINY REVIEW - UNIVERSAL CREDIT - DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS (Item C1)**  
The draft recommendations, and proposed amendments, were laid round for consideration by Members

During consideration of the draft recommendations the following main points were made –

- Reference was made to the amendment to Recommendation 6, as laid round
- It was stated that additional recommendations should be added to reflect the problems faced by the self-employed and sole traders in claiming UC, particularly as there are a large number of these in Islington
- Reference was made to Recommendation 7 and that there should be a statutory requirement on the Government on private landlords to provide evidence of tenancies
- It was stated that it was felt that either PPS or Housing Scrutiny Committee should keep under review the level of rent arrears caused by UC and to look at measures that may need to be taken by the Council to address this. Councillor Gallagher stated that he would e mail in a request in this regard
- It was also stated that amendments should also be made to recommendation 8 to reflect the need for data to be provided to Local Authorities, on the number of hardship payments, claimants that do not receive the full amount within the timescale, number of Food Bank referrals and why a claim is made late
- Members concurred with the proposed amendments laid round

**RESOLVED:**

That, subject to the above amendments and those laid round, the final report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee for approval

**112**

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - PRESENTATION (Item C2)**

Councillor Una O'Halloran, Executive Member Community Development was present and made a presentation to the Committee. Kevin Turner VC Development and Equalities Co-ordinator was also present

During discussion of the presentation the following main points were made –

- The Community Development portfolio focuses on building strong, cohesive, and resilient communities and supporting local communities, and residents, to engage in their community and help each other. Specific areas of responsibility are – VCS, community development and resident engagement, ward partnerships and Local Initiative Funding, Equalities and Community cohesion, no recourse to Public Funds, and refugee and migrant communities in Islington
- Collectively the VCS sector makes a contribution to every one of the Council's 7 key priorities, and as a Council we are committed to support an independent, vibrant and dynamic VCS, and recognise that this sector had reach beyond our services, and that can respond in ways which the Council cannot
- The Council has a localities programme and want to establish a new system partnership with the voluntary sector to co-ordinate local activity, networks and opportunities to make best use of the strengths and assets of our communities
- There is a Community Strategy 2020-24 that will aim to see a whole community working in partnership and collaborating effectively to achieve a fairer and more equal borough. This will replace and build on the current VCS strategy, and the Council are currently working with Islington CCG to map a collective £100m spend on 'people focused' services
- VSC Grants programme provided £2.6m per annum in core funding to organisations identified as being of strategic importance to the Council and the borough. In 2018 Islington VCS brought in over £19m from external funders to deliver services that benefit the local community
- The current VCS Partnership Grants Programme is due to end on 31 March 2020. The Council has made a commitment to protect levels of Council grant giving to the

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local voluntary and community sector. The programme will be designed around the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-22

- The Council gives funding to advice groups in the voluntary sector, and this ensures residents can access independent and impartial advice on welfare benefits, debt, housing and immigration services which help improve household income, tackle indebtedness, sustain tenancies and secure residency
- Funding and finance advice is offered to the voluntary sector, and the VCS Development Team has actively sought opportunities to advise and support commissioners to ensure that the VCS is playing an active role in delivering commissioned services
- In addition, a social value framework has been developed that ensures our contracts achieve social value for the community and VCS
- The Council is also reviewing its discretionary rate relief programme and preparing a successor programme for 2020 onwards
- There is also a small grants programme, the community chest and Local Initiatives Fund
- The Committee noted that during 2018 the Community Development Team have carried out intensive work to assess and appraise buildings at estate based community facilities, and 3 new community spaces have been opened since February 2018, and 5 new community centres will be delivered in the next 18 months
- A review is also taking place of Tenants and Residents Organisations to review and investigate support offered to estate based constituted TRA's, governance and paperwork, and barriers to engagement. The review team will be presenting its findings and recommendations to the Executive on 19 June
- The Council is developing an Equalities Strategy 2019-23, which will dovetail in with the Peoples Strategy and Community Strategy, and a directorate-level Equalities Group, and an officers Corporate Equalities Management Group and the Equalities Strategic Group will be converted into an Equalities Board and the Executive Members will continue to Chair a board, attended by the senior lead from each Directorate
- There are a number of equality events, such as refugee week, Black History month, Interfaith week, International Day for Disabled People etc. and this is done in conjunction with an extensive range of community partners
- Further work is required to develop and ensure consistent quality across all community events
- With regard to No Recourse to Public Funds,(NRPF) Refugee and Migrant Communities, 33% of all Islington residents were born outside of the UK, and less than half of Islington residents are estimated to be white/British
- In 2018/19 a safety net support has been established to provide support to 69 vulnerable households. Exclusions based on immigration status block efforts to achieve a fair, cohesive and prosperous society, and we operate a range of specialist NRPF, refugee and migrant services to address these challenges
- Departments have worked collaboratively on connected issues such as a response to Windrush, preparations for exiting the EU, and welcomed 60 refugees through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement scheme
- The NRPF is a self-funded organisation hosted by Islington, working to influence national policy development, support local authority best practice, and evidence cost pressures where social services safety net duties must be enacted to alleviate destitution
- Reference was made to the issue of social isolation, and that a report on this would be submitted later in the year, and this could be circulated to Members

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- Discussion took place as to the funding of the Advice sector and that there is a need to look in future at areas of overlap between services so that value for money is being achieved
- Reference was made to the small grants fund and that Members should be kept informed of what funds are available to be used
- Discussion also took place relating to funding of schemes across Wards and with other Boroughs, and the Executive Member stated that she would welcome this and facilitate it, if requested
- Reference was also made to the Community Centres review and that this should take into account the offer to residents in an area, so that duplication is avoided. The Executive Member stated that this was taking place and any proposals would be discussed with local Ward Councillors
- A Member referred to the NRPF/Equalities presentation and that he felt that there needed to be 'senior officer' buy in, and it was stated that this could be discussed with Corporate Directors

### **RESOLVED:**

That the presentation be noted

The Chair thanked the Executive Member Community Development for her attendance and presentation

### **113 MONITORING REPORT (Item )**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted

### **114 VOTE OF THANKS (Item )**

It was moved by Councillor Heather, and formally seconded –

#### **RESOLVED:**

That a vote of thanks be accorded to the Chair, Councillor Champion, and the former Chair Councillor O'Halloran for the services rendered by them to the Committee in the current municipal year

The meeting ended at 8.35 p.m.

## **CHAIR**