

Fairer Together
Islington Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD

Report of: Leader of the Council

Meeting of: Executive

Date: 9 February 2023

Ward(s): All

Subject: Islington Together 2030 Plan

1. Synopsis

- 1.1. This report outlines the proposed content and launch of a new strategic direction for the borough, captured in a refreshed strategic plan.
- 1.2. It provides an overview of our approach to develop a new strategic direction informed by our dynamic Let's Talk Islington engagement programme, as well as the changing national and local challenges emerging in recent years. It outlines the key components of a refreshed strategic plan that captures our vision for Islington in 2030.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. To approve the new strategic plan for launch, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

3. Background

- 3.1. In September 2021 we published our strategic plan: "Islington Together: For a More Equal Future", outlining our vision, key priorities and principles for the coming years. A decade on from our pioneering Fairness commission, we recognised that while good progress has been made there is so much more to do in realising our vision of more equal future in Islington. Not least because of the massive challenges we have faced such as a decade of austerity, Brexit and the devastating and disproportionate impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Navigating

out of the pandemic with a new Leader of the Council at the helm, we felt this was an opportune moment for us to refresh our priorities, tell our story and clearly reaffirm our mission. We wanted to build on the work that was started with the Fairness Commission and go further in understanding the experiences of our residents and refreshing our priorities to reflect the unique challenges that are faced in Islington today.

- 3.2. In the last few years the challenges we face have continued to change. We have seen the rise of the 'gig economy', where local people rely on work which is often precarious with short term or zero hour contracts. We know more working families in Islington are forced to depend on food banks, we have an aging population and an exponentially rising demand on social care, and of course all this against the backdrop of a decade of austerity, Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic and now a cost-of-living crisis. Recent events have shone a light on the scale and complexity of the challenge for both local people and public services. Just as the pandemic exposed stark inequalities, the current cost of living crisis, the war in Ukraine and the unstable economic picture have all dealt a further blow.
- 3.3. In this time we have also heard more from our communities about the different way these challenges affect them, in their own words. We launched Let's Talk Islington in November 2021 with the mission to dig deeper into people's experiences and invite critical challenge from those who live, work and study in the borough to inform the action we need to take to achieve our ambitions. We know that inequality can look and feel very different for different people. As a result, we focused this work on understanding how the different faces of inequality— poverty, mental ill-health, racism and others – really impact on people's daily lives. Our key questions were about what it means to different people to live a good life here and how exactly we can work better with communities to address these issues.
- 3.4. What this picture tells us is that these are hard times and many in our communities are facing both acute and immediate hardship, as well as long-term, systemic inequalities. In meeting this challenge we recognise the constraints within which we operate as a local authority – both national and global. Many of the factors that generate inequality in our borough lie outside of our control. However, we still have huge scope to change lives. In hard times, we know that we need to be bolder and go further than ever before to make the best use of what we have. We need to make sure our priorities align with what really matters to our local people and that our ways of working are responsive to the new challenges and opportunities we face. We must utilise the power, resources and assets we share in Islington in creative, innovative and intentional ways to continue to deliver in a meaningful way for our residents and maximise positive impacts across our borough.

- 3.5. Launching a refreshed strategic plan will allow us to acknowledge and respond to the context we find ourselves in now, without losing sight of our aspirations for the future. We also have the opportunity to consider how we can change the way we work to help us meet those future challenges. If we have learnt anything from the last few years, it's that we don't know exactly what's coming, but whatever happens we are determined to be on the side of our residents working with, and responding creatively, flexibly and supportively to, those who need us most. This will be a core message carried throughout the plan.
- 3.6. The new strategic direction has been developed with colleagues from across the Council to shape the direction of travel for the next decade. The insight gained from our Let's Talk Islington engagement work has been, and will continue to be, utilised to co-design a more detailed transformation delivery plan which underpins our strategic narrative. Feeding back to communities on how they have informed and shaped the plan will be a key part of the launch which is planned for March 2023. The design concepts and communications approach for launch will be reviewed separately.

4. Implications

4.1. Financial Implications

- 4.1.1. There are no financial implications arising from this report. All programmes set out in the Islington Together plan will use existing available resources and therefore not create a budget pressure for the Council.
- 4.1.2. Any financial implications arising need to be considered and agreed as necessary by the Council.

4.2. Legal Implications

- 4.2.1. While it is correct to say there is no specific statutory duty to produce a strategic plan, it is a necessary element of good governance. The performance regime established by the Local Government Act 1999 as amended by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 together with supporting legislation, requires the Council to work to achieve continuous improvement and best value. A strategic plan, its objectives and in time how the delivery measures up in terms of outcomes, are therefore one of the signifiers of a well-run local authority.

4.3. Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030

- 4.3.1. The strategic priorities include our ambition to work together towards finding local solutions to tackle the climate emergency as well as how we will deliver our ambition to achieving net zero carbon by 2030.

4.4. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 4.4.1. The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.
- 4.4.2. An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required in relation to this report as Equality Impact Assessments will be considered and developed separately for each of the strategic programmes set out in the plan. The refreshed strategic plan sets out the council's approach to removing and minimising disadvantages by putting Challenging Inequality at the heart of our plans. There are no specific equality impact issues to consider as a result of this report.

5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 5.1. The launch of our refreshed plan will provide a compelling, collective vision for the upcoming decade for the borough as we navigate out of the pandemic and respond to emerging challenges such as the cost of living crisis. We recognise the constraints within which we operate as a local authority – both national and global. However, we still have huge scope to change lives. Our new strategic direction will provide critical focus on utilising the power, resources and assets we do have in meaningful, creative and innovative ways to maximise the impact on local people and place to build a more equal future.

Appendices:

- Islington Together 2030 plan final content

Background papers:

- None

Final report clearance:

Authorised by: **Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz, Leader of the Council**

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