

Councillor Diarmaid Ward Executive Member for Finance, Planning, and Performance

Policy and Performance Scrutiny Annual Report
February 2023

Areas of Responsibility in Resources

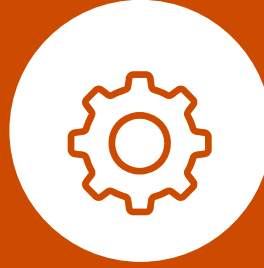
- 1. Finance**
- 2. Legal**
- 3. Democratic Services**
- 4. Information Governance**
- 5. Elections**
- 6. Business Support**
- 7. Islington Digital Services**
- 8. Human Resources**

Resources – Finance key highlights



Achievements

- Completed the service reorganisation.
- Paid out close to £30m in Energy grants and Covid funding to 80,000 residents and 3,000 businesses
- Launch of the non-recent child abuse support payment scheme with all insurance and finance issues resolved.
- Launched the first ever ISA eligible Community Municipal Investment for our NZC programme
- Pension Fund deficit reduced by c£200m and Carbon Intensity by 30%



Challenges

- Increase demand across social care putting pressure on budgets.
- Investment needed to achieve Net Zero Carbon (NZC) by 2030 is in excess of £1.5bn.
- Declining school balances since 2018/19 with 11 schools in deficit by year end.
- Transition of 20,000 residents who eBill to the replacement portal.
- The Local Authority external audit market is broken.



Next steps...

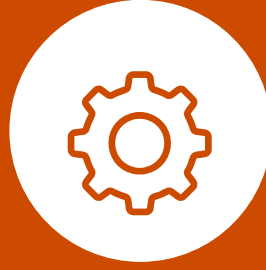
- Deliver a robust set of 2022/23 final accounts by end July 2023 and support the subsequent audit.
- Implement new Pensions Administration online member self-service portal by June 2023.
- Have a revised Principal Risk profile by Spring 2024.
- Responsible Investment Strategy rebasing carbon footprint to include actuals.
- Ensure a balanced budget and robust MTFS through turbulent economic times.

Resources – Legal Services key highlights



Achievements

- Contracts - renegotiated energy contracts & review of indexation clauses in response to cost of living crisis
- Property/Planning - top performing London borough for temporary accommodation acquisition & 1000 new homes at Holloway Prison (60% social housing)
- Disrepair – met challenge of increasing cases – avoided payment of damages in 70% of claims



Challenges

- Delivery of icasework and the roll out of the transformation project to digitise Legal Services
- Managing high and growing volumes of cases in most areas
- Recruitment/retention of difficult to recruit legal specialists & reducing number of agency staff
- Streamlining systems and procedures
- Achieving income targets to ensure a balanced budget for 2022/23



Next steps...

- Reviewing staffing, filling vacant posts & reducing agency staff
- Work on Legal Services People Plan- development of emerging leaders & apprentices + encourage learning & development
- Implementation of i-casework and digital integration with the court systems
- Support the council in its focus on resolving damp & mould issues in council homes

Resources – Democratic Services key highlights



Achievements

- New member development programme
- Comprehensive Member Induction following the election in May
- Member casework system procured
- A high standard of support for the Mayor, formal decision making and Committee meetings - ten scrutiny reviews ongoing



Challenges

- Member engagement with development opportunities and achieving LGA Charter Status
- Maximizing the benefits of the casework management system
- Achieving broader engagement with and understanding of governance
- Delivering improvements to our governance arrangements
- Training and developing the new members of the team



Next steps...

- iCasework system pilot with member focus group
- Developing a Member Development Strategy
- Developing a project plan to achieve LGA Member Development Charter status
- Improvements to our governance arrangements
- Improving the Civic Awards ceremony and the awards profile

Resources – Information Governance key highlights



Achievements

- Implemented CoreStream (compliance software for managing mandatory UK GDPR paperwork)
- Created and delivered bespoke data protection training for Housing Operatives (repairs and caretakers)
- Improved compliance for FOIs and SAR responses
- Taken over responsibility for providing schools DPO service



Challenges

- FOI and SAR compliance continues to be below ICO target of at least 90%
- Rollout of CoreStream has been patchy in some areas due to capacity constraints in Directorates



Next steps...

- Complete the review of the operating model for Access to Information (FOIs and SARs)
- Overhaul current policies with the aim of reducing or combining where possible
- Continue rollout of CoreStream with a focus on identification of information risks and creating data flow maps
- Work with IDS colleagues to create clear data classifications to assist with storage of information, improve information management and apply retention policies



Resources – Electoral Services key highlights



Achievements

- Successful delivery of Local elections.
- Finsbury Park Polling District Review.
- Successful Delivery of the Annual Canvass and publication of the revised register of electors.



Challenges

- Elections Act 2022: Voter ID, Votes for life for Overseas Electors and Changes to Absent Voting and EU Franchise.
- Introduction of new technology and portal for processing Voter Authority Certificates.



Next steps...

- Parliamentary Boundary Review.
- Implementation and Communications plan for Elections Act 2022.
- Preparation for GLA elections with first manual count and potential combined Parliamentary General Election.
- Preparation for Parliamentary Election under new Parliamentary boundaries.



Resources – Business Support Service



Achievements

- **Service model** - New Service, 0 redundancies, 65% staff increased grade, standard job descriptions.
- **Apprenticeships** – Increased from 3 to 6, new pathways into senior leadership positions in each area.
- **Recruitment** – Internal-first strategy embedded, 12 vacancies recruited to, 9 internally.
- **Skilled workforce** - 80% staff completed the skills Matrix Survey.



Challenges

- Embedding a new Service model, away from silo to centralised working.
- Delays in moving all posts into the new Service due to organisational challenges.
- Delays to some parts of the Improvement Plan as a result of recruitment to the Business Improvement Manager post.



Next steps...

- Deliver the Improvement Plan programme (2022-2024).
- Deliver the revised Target Operating Model, Skills Matrix, Benchmarking, and the Standard Operating Procedures (2023).
- Support the delivery of Icasework, and the roll-out of paperless working (2023).



Resources – Islington Digital Services key highlights



Achievements

- Northgate Housing Portal Phase 1 - Enable residents to self-serve by accessing their housing accounts.
- Door Entry System for Estates – Update and Migration to cloud.
- Migration of Parking system to Cloud and implementation of new rate structure.
- Upgrade & Migration of LiquidLogic social care system to Cloud



Challenges

- Refresh of all laptops – replacing end-of-life and failing laptops with Windows 11 devices.
- Increasing demand for new services – requiring prioritisation.
- Cybersecurity – attacks are still on the increase. Evolving defence capability required
- Complex IT regeneration - highly interlinked systems need capability uplifts to meet resident demands.



Next steps...

- Build resilience and exit the data centres – including freeing up NBW.
- Build Data capability & Digital Experience capability.
- Ongoing focus on improved cyber security – build Security Operations Centre capability.
- Transformation Partnering with Directorates – to ensure there is close alignment between the directorates' transformation plans and the strategic direction of Digital Services

Resources – Human Resources key highlights



Achievements

- Quality assured DBS and processed 347 checks for Ukrainian host families across 283 households.
- Developed Career Pathways & Apprenticeships Strategy
- Developed a new approach to Performance Development
- Produced an Employee Value proposition to support a refreshed attraction and retention strategy.
- Embedded management & leadership development including Black on Board and Mentoring for Inclusion
- Made improvements to recruitment to ensure fair and transparent selection



Challenges

- Delays to the Cloud migration have impacted the system and process improvement work
- There has been a need to prioritise assurance work when risks or critical projects have emerged
- Transition to new roles and cross-skilling of team members has had to continue into this financial year with a small number of critical roles taking longer to recruit
- Inflationary increases have changed the national pay climate



Next steps...

- Draft new Workforce Strategy aligned to 2030 plan.
- Sign and launch Partnership Agreement with TUs (including training for managers)
- First new Career pathways schemes to go live during 2023 (work experience/internships).
- Performance Development scheme goes live in April 2023.
- Introduce new EDI/cultural competence training.
- Attain Disability Confident Employer Status.