

Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 4 May 2023

Non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 4 May 2023 at 7.30 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** Kay (Chair), Ozdemir (Vice-Chair), Jackson, Clarke, Chapman, Heather, Staff, McHugh, Pandor, Weekes, Ibrahim and Russell

Also Present: **Councillors:** Williamson and Convery

Councillor Jenny Kay in the Chair

94 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item A1)

Apologies were received from Councillors Nargund, Chapman and Chowdhury.

95 DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item A2)

None.

96 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item A3)

None.

97 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Item A4)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as a correct record and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

98 CHAIR'S REPORT (Item A5)

The Chair noted that the Borough Commander had been invited to attend to provide an update on the local response to the Baroness Casey Report and other local policing matters, however was unable to attend due to duties associated with the King's Coronation. The Chair commented that she would have liked to ask about a recent trial of live facial recognition outside of Highbury and Islington Station.

It had been requested that an update on complaints performance be submitted to the committee. This would be reported to a future meeting.

99 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item A6)

None.

100 EXTERNAL ATTENDEES (IF ANY) (Item A7)

None.

101 COST OF LIVING CRISIS SCRUTINY REVIEW - DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS
(Item D2)

The Chair noted that the draft recommendations had been circulated in an additional despatch of papers prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the draft recommendations of the Cost of Living Crisis scrutiny review be agreed.

102 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT - Q3 2022-23 (Item D1)

Joanna Dawes, Corporate Performance Manager, introduced the report.

The following main points were noted in the discussion:

- The Committee had previously commented on the need for the Challenging Inequality programme to have more developed performance measures. Officers advised that priority outcomes had been identified and performance measures and action plans were being developed. A further update would be provided to a future meeting.
- A member asked for further detail on the difference between Fairer Together Hubs and Access Islington Hubs.
- A member expressed his disappointment on the lack of progress on the borough's recycling rate, particularly as this had been a priority for some time. The member suggested that the council should be bold and seek innovative ways to increase the recycling rate.
- A member noted that the number of interim and agency staff had increased. It was advised that further detail would be reported to a future meeting.
- A member expressed concern about critical IT systems that were coming to the end of life and would be difficult to replace. It was particularly worrying that this included the case management system for Drug and Alcohol support services. It was asked if there was a timescale to resolve this issue, and if there were cyber security concerns. In response, the Corporate Director of Resources advised that significant progress had been made over the past two years and work was underway to move applications to the cloud. This would ensure that systems remained up-to-date going forwards. The council used approximately 400 different IT applications that reflected the hundreds of services offered by the local authority. It was expected that almost all of the council's data would migrate to the cloud by the end of the financial year.
- A member queried the backlog of digital projects. In response, officers advised that demand for digital projects was greater than the resource available and clear prioritisation was needed. A detailed plan had been considered by the officer leadership team.
- A member noted operational issues arising from the migration of the parking permit management system and suggested that it would be helpful to consider the lessons learned from that experience.
- A member queried progress on the council's New Build housing programme. The Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance noted that the council's target of building 750 new council homes was unchanged,

however rising inflation and interest rates were a risk to the programme. Members also queried voids performance, work to reduce overcrowding, and the processes for identifying new development sites. It was noted that this would be a matter for the Housing Scrutiny Committee. The Executive Member commented on the density of the borough being a particular challenge to building new homes, and the need to assess all possible development sites for the suitability of developing housing.

- A member asked about the backlog in homelessness decisions being addressed through staff overtime, and queried how much overtime was anticipated, and if further training could assist staff in making decisions faster. In response, it was advised that an update would be provided to a future meeting.
- The Committee commented on the urgency of responding to damp and mould cases and the impact that damp and mould could have on residents.
- A member commented on the shortage of social housing and suggested that this could be alleviated by helping to facilitate managed moves for residents who wanted to move outside of London.
- It was advised that an item on complaints performance would be submitted to the July meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the corporate performance report be noted.

ACTIONS:

- It was requested that an update on Challenging Inequality performance measures be detailed in a future report;
- A member asked for further detail on the difference between Fairer Together Hubs and Access Islington Hubs;
- It was advised that further detail on agency and interim staff would be reported to a future meeting;
- It was requested that an update on the homelessness application backlog to be detailed in a future report, including how much overtime was expected, and if training requirements had been considered.

103

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (Item D3)

Jonathan Moore, Committee Services Manager, introduced the report summarising the work of the council's scrutiny committees over the past year.

The Committee reflected on the work of the review committees and the range of topics considered, including the work of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee in considering issues relating to net zero carbon and the circular economy, and the work of the Health and Care Scrutiny Committee on adult social care and reviewing the services of local NHS organisations. A member commented that the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee had been particularly effective in ensuring that the voices of young people were reflected in its work.

RESOLVED:

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That the work of the council's scrutiny committees in 2022-23 be noted.

104 MONITORING ITEM (Item D4)

Noted.

105 VOTE OF THANKS TO THE OUTGOING CHAIR

The Committee thanked Councillor Kay for her work in chairing the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee over the past year.

The meeting ended at 8.30pm.

CHAIR