

Resources Department
Town Hall, Upper Street
London, N1 2UD

Report of: Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Meeting of: Executive

Date: 30 November 2023

Ward(s): All

Subject: Scrutiny Review of Cost of Living Crisis – Recommendation of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee

1. Synopsis

- 1.1. This report requests that the Executive receive the report of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee following the completion of its review of the Cost of Living Crisis. A response to the recommendations set out in the report will be considered at a future meeting of the Executive.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the report of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee be received.
- 2.2. That the Executive Member's response be reported to a future meeting of the Executive, including having due regard to any relevant implications of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee's recommendations.

3. Background

- 3.1. The review was held between July 2022 and May 2023. The overall aim was to identify the way in which residents are experiencing hardship in the current cost of living crisis, and to examine how the Council can best support residents' security and resilience in the home and in work. The Committee also agreed to the following objectives:

- To review the Council's mechanisms for supporting residents experiencing hardship, and to assess if they are as effective and accessible as possible.
- To review the Council's partnership work with the voluntary and community sector, and how this can be used to help support the financial resilience of Islington's communities.
- To examine the risks and impacts of food and energy insecurity and how the Council can best help residents with these issues.
- To assess how all council functions can contribute to supporting Islington's communities through local procurement.
- To review how early intervention and prevention approaches can be used to identify and best support residents before experiencing a financial crisis.

3.2. In undertaking the review, the Committee met with a range of council officers to consider topics such as Council Tax Support and the council's approach to arrears, the Resident Support Scheme, fuel poverty and the work of SHINE. The Committee also heard from external speakers, including Cally Energy on the financial benefits associated with Community Energy Schemes, evidence from residents on their experience of retrofitting energy-saving measures, and evidence from Cooperation Town, a network of local food cooperatives.

4. Implications

4.1. **Financial Implications**

4.1.1. The proposals in the report need to be costed before a response is made by the Executive.

4.2. **Legal Implications**

4.2.1. Relevant legal implications will be considered as part of the response to the review.

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

4.3.1. Any environmental implications and contributions to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030 will be identified as part of the Executive Member response.

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. Any equality impacts will be identified as part of the Executive Member response.

5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 5.1. The Committee has made 23 recommendations focused on addressing the Cost of Living Crisis. The Committee would like to thank all the witnesses that gave evidence in relation to the review. The Executive is asked to endorse the Committee's recommendations.

Appendices:

- Cost of Living Crisis Scrutiny Review – Report of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Background papers:

- None

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