

Democratic Services  
Town Hall, N1 2UD

Report of: Director of Law and Governance

Meeting of: Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Ward(s): N/A

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## Subject: Annual Report of the Council's Scrutiny Committees 2023-24

### 1. Synopsis

- 1.1. The terms of reference of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee state that the committee will consider an annual report from the council's scrutiny committees.
- 1.2. This report summarises the work of the council's scrutiny committees in 2023-24. All scrutiny committee chairs are members of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee and may wish to highlight the work of their committees at the meeting.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To note the work of the council's scrutiny committees in 2023-24.

### 3. Background

- 3.1. The Council has five scrutiny committees, each responsible for scrutinising the performance of particular services provided by the council and its partners. The Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee also has responsibility for coordinating the work of the scrutiny review committees.

### **3.2. Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee**

The Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee’s principal focus of review for 2023-24 was “The Children’s Workforce: Recruiting, Retaining and Growing Talent in Islington”, in which members considered the ways in which the council can accelerate how it attracts, grows and sustains an agile and responsive workforce which is increasingly confident, in sufficient numbers, to make a difference to the lives of children, young people and families. The Committee has received evidence internally from Human Resources, Targeted Youth Support and frontline social workers, teachers and support staff, and externally from Parent Empowerment Champions, the Metropolitan Police, the Islington Foster Carers Association, Isledon Arts CIC and the Greater London Authority.

Aside from the principal review on The Children’s Workforce, other matters considered by the committee during 2023-24 included reports on the committee’s 2021-22 review into SEND Transitions, on Attendance, on the Youth Justice Plan and on Early Years: annual reports on School Results and from the Executive Member for Children, Young People & Families, and quarterly performance reports. The committee also considered the call-in of the Executive Decision to merge Duncombe and Montem Primary Schools, school place planning and supported internships.

In February 2024, appointments were made to three co-opted member vacancies on the committee – the Primary & Secondary Parent Governor representatives and the Church of England Diocese representative – restoring the full complement of twelve members.

### **3.3. Environment & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**

In this municipal year, the Environment & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee has continued to scrutinise the council’s Net Zero Carbon 2030 Strategy, but with particular focus on Active Travel to consider what the Council could and already was doing to take the lead on supporting and enabling people to change to active travel; develop initiatives to widen the uptake of active travel and identify ways to support residents and businesses to achieve both health benefits and financial resilience through active travel. In its’ review, the Committee received evidence from a broad range of sources including internal services such as Public Health and Climate Change & Transport and external organisations such as Islington Pensioners’ Forum, Transport for London, OurBike, Living Streets, Wheels for Wellbeing and JoyRiders Britain.

Aside from the principal review on Active Travel, other matters considered by the committee during 2023-24 included a report on the committee's 2021-22 review on behavioural change, the Biodiversity Action Plan Review, and quarterly performance reports on the Net Zero Carbon programme, Employment & Skills, the Environment & Transport directorate and the Libraries and Heritage service.

Annual reports were also presented to the committee by the Executive Member for Environment, Air Quality and Transport, the Executive Member for Inclusive Economy and Jobs and the North London Waste Authority.

Towards the end of the municipal year, the committee held a special public meeting, held online, inviting Islington residents to participate in a discussion about how the Council was fairing in reaching its 2030 Net Zero Carbon Target.

#### **3.4. Health and Care Scrutiny Committee**

The Health and Care Scrutiny Committee's principal focus of review for 2023-24 was Access to Health and Care Services in Islington, which considered if residents are able to access health and care services in Islington effectively; specifically, GP appointments, and the Adult Social Care "front door". Evidence was sought from a broad range of sources including externally from the North Central London Integrated Care Board, Healthwatch Islington, the Islington GP Federation and also internally from Adult Social Care.

Aside from the principal review on Access to Health and Care Services in Islington, other matters considered by the committee in 2023-24 included performance updates from the London Ambulance Service, University College London Hospital, Whittington Health, Camden & Islington NHS Foundation Trust, and Moorfields Eye Hospital, annual reports from Healthwatch, the Safeguarding Adults Board and the Executive Member for Health and Social Care. There were also updates received on the NCL Start Well programme and the services for people that use drugs or alcohol in Islington.

#### **3.4. Housing Scrutiny Committee**

The Housing Scrutiny Committee's principal focus of review for 2023-24 was New Build Homes in Islington, in which the committee strategically reviewed the new build programme so as to grasp a thorough understanding of the Council's historic performance in comparison with other Local Authority (LA) developers and how the programme intends to adapt or mitigate against future challenges including lack of land supply, high development costs and fluctuating current and future economic climate. In its review, the committee sought to collect evidence from a wide range of sources, including neighbouring boroughs such as Camden and Hackney, housing

associations operating a similar service (Newlon) and Housing Association development partners such as London Square and Mount Anvil, in addition to performance data and evidence from Council officers.

Aside from the principal review on New Build Homes in Islington, other matters considered by the committee during 2023-24 included a report on the committee's previous review into Communal Heating, a briefing on DAHA Accreditation, quarterly Housing performance reports and an annual performance report from the Executive Member of Homes and Communities.

### **3.5. Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee**

The Policy & Performance Scrutiny Committee's principal topic of scrutiny for 2023-24 was the multi-agency response to complex Anti-Social Behaviour, so as to specifically review the local arrangements for managing anti-social behaviour, particularly in relation to complex cases that involve joint working between council services, Police, housing providers, social care, mental health services, and other agencies. The Committee has received evidence internally from frontline staff including the Street Outreach and Intensive Teams, the Youth Council and Housing services, as well as externally from the Adult Safeguarding Board, housing associations including Peabody and Clarion, estate Champions, representatives of TRAs and community Groups.

Aside from the principal review on Anti-Social Behaviour, other matters considered by the committee during 2023-24 included updates on Council Transformation Projects and from the Metropolitan Police, a report back on the previous scrutiny review into Performance Management Working Groups, an annual report on the Voluntary and Community Sector, complaints performance and also from the Executive Members for Community Safety and Equalities, Culture & Inclusion. The committee also received a report on the budget outturn for 2022-23 and quarterly corporate performance reports throughout the year. Later in the municipal year, the committee on the structure of scrutiny itself, outlining proposals for a first phase in the transformation of how scrutiny is conducted in Islington.

### **3.6. Other matters**

In September 2023, the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee established a member working group to consider the operation of the council's scrutiny function. Phase 1 of that review included reviewing the structure of the council's scrutiny committees, how the work of the committees is communicated, and the constitutional mechanisms for councillors referring items to scrutiny committees.

Following consultation with senior officers and all members, the Member Working Group has recommended a new structure to the council's scrutiny committees, which was endorsed by the committee on 26th March 2024.

Subject to formal approval of the changes to the Council's Constitution at the Annual Council meeting on 16 May, the current scrutiny committees will be disbanded and replaced with a new committee structure, as follows:

- Corporate Resources and Economy Scrutiny Committee
- Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
- Environment, Climate and Transport Scrutiny Committee
- Health, Wellbeing and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee
- Homes and Communities Scrutiny Committee

New Terms of Reference are being drafted for each committee and these will also be confirmed at Annual Council. The new scrutiny committees are intended to be better aligned to both Executive Portfolios and the corporate management structure. Further information on the rationale and remit of the new committees is available in the report to the Policy and Performance Scrutiny committee and the appendix.

The review of scrutiny will continue into 2024/25, with the member working group set to consider ways of working under Phase 2 of its review.

## 4. Implications

### 4.1 Financial Implications

All costs for supporting scrutiny work are met through existing budgets. Each scrutiny committee is supported by an officer from the Committee Services team that acts as the comm, alongside their other responsibilities.

### 4.2 Legal Implications

Scrutiny is a statutory function under the Local Government Act 2000. Scrutiny committees have powers to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions, to make reports or recommendations relating to the discharge of those functions, and to make reports or recommendations to Council or the Executive on matters which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area. The work of the council's scrutiny committees is guided by the Scrutiny Procedure Rules and Terms of Reference in the Council's constitution.

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

There are no direct environmental implications associated with this report. The Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee regularly scrutinises performance against the council's net zero carbon ambitions and other scrutiny committees will consider environmental issues where relevant to their work.

#### **4.4. Equalities Impact Assessment**

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.

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required in relation to this report, which summarises the work of the council's scrutiny committees in 2023-24. The council's scrutiny committees regularly consider equalities issues in their work and any recommendations made by committees may be subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.

## **5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations**

- 5.1. The Committee is asked to note the work of the council's scrutiny committees. Scrutiny Committee Chairs may wish to comment on particular aspects of their committee's work at the meeting.

#### **Appendices:**

- None.

#### **Background papers:**

- None.

#### **Final report clearance:**

Approved by:

Date:

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