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London Borough of Islington

Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 4 July 2016

Non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee held at on 4 July 2016 at 7.30 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** Greening (Chair), Court, Doolan, Russell, Gantly,
Jeapes, O'Halloran, Wayne, Debono and Heather
Also **Councillors:** Watts, Calouri
Present:

Councillor Richard Greening in the Chair

236 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item 1)**

Councillors Chowdhury, Perry, Heather and Hull. Councillor Gantly for lateness. It was noted that Councillor Debono would need to leave before the end of the meeting.

237 **DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item 2)**

Councillor Angela Picknell for Councillor Jilani Chowdhury

238 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)**

Councillor Greening stated that he had was the Council representative on the North London Waste Authority

239 **TO APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 March 2016 be confirmed and the Chair be authorised to sign them

240 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Item 5)**

None

241 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 6)**

The Chair outlined the procedure for Public questions and filming and recording of meetings

242 **CHAIR'S REPORT (Item 7)**

None

243 **MEMBERSHIP, TERMS OF REFERENCE ETC. (Item 8)**

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

244 **PRESENTATION BY LEADER - COUNCILLOR RICHARD WATTS ON EXECUTIVE PRIORITIES - 2016/17 - VERBAL (Item 9)**

Councillor Richard Watts, Leader of the Council, was present and outlined the Executive priorities for 2016/17.

During consideration of the presentation the following main points were made –

- There were 5 main areas of priority for the Executive as follows –
- Housing – more affordable housing and dealing with the implications of the Housing and Planning Act
- Employment and family support
- Health and social care which is the biggest area of Council funding and under increasing pressure. There is a need to focus more on
- Crime – there need to be more effective focus on dealing with crime and dealing with troublesome families. There is also a need to focus on community cohesion given the rise in hate crime, which is likely to increase after Brexit
- There is a need to maintain the competence of performance in the borough despite rapidly diminishing Government funding. Work needs to continue to transform work/public spaces such as with the Archway gyratory system

The Chair thanked the Leader for attending

245 **REPORT ON YOUTH OFFENDING (Item 10)**

Councillor Joe Calouri, Executive Member for Children and Families, was present for discussion of this item, together with the Director of Children's Services and officers from Children's Services Department.

During consideration of the report the following main points were made –

- The Executive Member stated that he welcomed that the Committee had played an important role in the scrutiny review recently carried out in relation to knife crime
- The Committee welcomed the additional £500k allocated to tackle youth crime and the new integrated Gangs Team
- Perpetrators of low level ASB tended to escalate into more organised crime and therefore there is a need to target this
- The scale of the problems are recognised and it is felt that the Police and the Council have a better idea of how to address these issues than in the past and the Youth Council and young people are involved in discussions
- It was noted that Universal youth funding has been protected however there is a need to involve young people in the development of this to ensure what is provided is what young people want to access

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- The Committee expressed the view that it was essential that the additional monies were spent wisely and the outcomes effectively analysed. It was stated that an evaluation framework is being drawn up and to look at where outcomes have been successful
- Programmes in schools were taking place to warn of the dangers of child sexual exploitation and a group has been established to look at methods of dealing with child sexual exploitation involving young people
- A Member stated that she would like to see the work going on in youth hubs to be more ward based and enquired whether there is scope for this in the future. The Executive Member stated that whilst estate based provision is important the youth hubs could provide activities of a specialist nature that could be provided locally and there needed to be a balance of provision provided
- A Member expressed the view that some areas now had no community facilities and that young people did not have the facilities available to access and that particularly in these areas schools needed to play an increased role, particularly where they had S106 community access commitments
- In response to a question it was stated that work will be going on with about 100 of the most difficult young people and work would be done in schools and youth projects. Schools are increasing their involvement with Chance UK and work has been extended to reach more young people. A restorative justice officer will also shortly be taking up their post
- In response to a question it was stated that a future measure of success it was stated that this would be reducing the large number of young people subject to the youth offending service and a better offer to the Courts could reduce the costs of young people in custody
- The Committee stated that they would welcome an update in 6 months on how the additional £500k has been invested given the high priority of tackling youth crime
- Reference was made to the fact that 1:1 interventions were expensive and that any programmes put in place needed to be the appropriate ones. There also needed to be assistance provided, not only to the most prolific offenders, but also to those on the periphery of gangs, and younger siblings of offenders
- The Chair stated that funding should be directed at the areas with best outcomes

RESOLVED:

That a report be submitted in 6 months to update the Committee on the proposals for spending the additional £500k allocated to tackling youth crime by the Council is to be invested

The Chair thanked Councillor Calouri and officers from the Children's Services Department for attending

246

REVENUE BUDGET PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2015/16 (Item 11)

Councillor Richard Watts stated that he was deputising for Councillor Hull on this item. Steve Key, Service Director Finance was also present.

During consideration of the report the following main points were made –

- It was noted that there had been a £2.9 m overspend in the previous financial year 2015/16 and this had been funded from contingency
- There were increasing pressures on the budget due to the rise in the number of people requiring temporary accommodation, and there had been an in year cut in the Public Health budget

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- In addition there had been an increase in the numbers of unaccompanied asylum seekers and an increase in children in social care
- In response to a question as to the overspends in the E&R budget it was stated that one of the reasons for this had been caution from Members in the impact of some of the savings on services and in some other instances costs that were not in the Council's control had increased, such as the NLWA. In addition, there is a need to look at whether the income generation targets set were feasible
- Members noted that the 12 month progress of the Income Generation scrutiny review is due to come to the September meeting of the Committee and that the Committee as part of its work programme for the coming year would wish to focus on projects and income generation being pursued by ICO

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and that the Committee receive regular reports on ICO projects, as outlined above

247 QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT (Item 12)

Councillor Richard Watts stated that he was deputising for Councillor Hull in respect of this item. Lela Kogbara, Assistant Chief Executive Strategy and Community Partnerships was also present.

During consideration of the report the following main points were made –

- There are increasing financial pressures on adult social services, particularly in the area of sexual health and it was stated that details of the funding and proposals in relation to sexual health would be circulated to Members
- Reference was made to the fact that the organisation of sexual health services across London could be improved and made more efficient. The provision of the service is currently being renegotiated to reduce the spend, without reducing the level of service provided
- The Chair stated that he had discussions with the Executive Member Finance and Performance about revisions to the Performance Indicators and when these were concluded they would be reported to PPS/Scrutiny Review Committees for final approval
- Reference was made to the quality of life measures, outlined at page 69 and it was stated that reductions in funding and the Housing and Planning Act would make this much more difficult to achieve, however there were still a number of measures the Council could take to improve the lives of residents
- There were however significant challenges in the reductions in Adult Social Services funding by 2020 and in the schools budgets
- Members were informed that across all services, Police, Council and health services spending on domestic violence is over £35m per year and that money could be saved if there is an increased focus on prevention. Whilst this is a challenge this could achieve results in the number of multiple children from families taken into care and there needed to be a focus on early intervention in the longer term
- There is also a challenge of education budgets being cut in real terms and this will get worse with the Academisation programme and the proposals around the National Schools formula funding
- Reference was made to the fact that schools were often not fulfilling their S106 agreements to make school facilities available in the evenings. In addition, there is a possibility that RC schools were looking at an Academy model and that often schools did not want to open in the evenings as it costs them money to do so

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- It was stated that it was pleasing that the PI target on accessing alternative therapies in mental health has been met
- In response to a question it was stated that there is enormous pressure on the housing budget in terms of rehousing homeless families which has been made worse by the benefit cap and the reductions in Local Housing allowance. The Leader indicated that a report on local connections re: housing policy has been considered by the Executive recently and that he would circulate this to Members of the Committee
- In relation to progress on the Council's new build housing programme, the Leader stated that new build projects took a while to come on stream and that these were subject to peaks and troughs, however this should be looked at over a 4 year period. He added there is a challenge to deliver because of the loosening of the planning regulations on developers in terms of affordable housing
- Reference was made to the increase in hate crime and that this could rise post Brexit, and that this is being looked at with the Police and that Police action needed to improve. The view was expressed that this issue should feature on the list of priorities at Safer Neighbourhood Panels
- Discussion took place as to the recent attack at the Finsbury Park Mosque and that nobody has still been apprehended for this which is very disappointing
- In relation to ASB this was well above the target figure and there is a strong relationship with youth offending. It was stated that a large number of young people were subject to civil orders and work is being carried out to ascertain if this is appropriate
- In response to a question it was stated that the Youth Offending service now has a new management structure
- It was noted that a relatively small number of prolific offenders were committing a large number of crimes, and many offences were linked to the drugs market. There is a need for local intelligence from the Public to provide data for the Police, especially in hotspots
- There is a need to involve Trident and the Metropolitan Police more in Islington, given the County Lines connections with the drugs market and Islington had not been regarded as a high priority in the past. This issue has now been raised with the Mayor of London in order to get more resources for tackling this
- Reference was made to the fact that residents were often afraid of reporting crimes, intelligence etc. due to fear of reprisals. In addition there is a need to build up trust between the Police and residents on the sharing of information
- In response to a question as to the number of children missing in care and it was stated that this information is regularly reviewed at Corporate Parenting Board. The majority of unaccompanied children in care were Albanian young men but there is not widespread problem of children going missing in Islington and children tended to go missing overnight and usually not for longer periods

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Chair be requested to circulate the draft revised PI's agreed with the Executive Member Finance and Performance to Members of the Committee when these are available
- (b) That the Police be invited to the September, November and March meetings of the Committee to discuss the crime statistics in more detail

The Chair thanked the Leader and Lela Kogbara for attending

248 **USE OF AGENCY STAFF (Item 13)**

Councillor Richard Watts, Leader of the Council and Debra Norman, Assistant Director HR and Governance was present for discussion of this item and outlined the report.

During consideration of the report the following main points were made –

- The Leader stated that the percentage of agency staff had reduced from 14.5% of the workforce to 13.3% of the workforce and the intention is to reduce this to 11.5% with a long term vision of 10%
- The biggest area of agency staff employment is Housing and Adult Social Services particularly the need to employ care staff to provide cover in the event of sickness, leave etc.
- It was noted that the Council as an employer paid significantly more than other care providers with the LLW
- A Member enquired the length of time that agency workers were employed for as the Committee had seen instances in the past of some agency staff being employed for 5 years. In addition a number of agency staff had been employed for long periods, particularly BME staff, and if agency staff had to be employed for this length of time then they should be a permanent member of staff
- The Leader stated there were 3 main areas that used agency/temporary staff – Housing repairs, E&R and social care
- The Leader requested the Committee to note that the figures in relation to Public Health were slightly misleading given the few numbers of staff employed there
- Members of the Committee expressed concern that they still felt that the number of agency/temporary staff is too high and the Leader responded that whilst recognising further reductions needed to be made, the numbers had fallen whilst numbers were rising in the rest of London

RESOLVED:

- (a) That future reports include details of the grades, department and length of time that agency/temporary staff, (including where services have been brought back in house) have been employed for so that the Committee can monitor this to ensure numbers are decreasing
- (b) That the Committee continue to monitor the situation with regular reports to the Committee, and these be referred also to Audit Committee

249 **APPROVAL OF SCRUTINY TOPICS 2016/17 - VERBAL (Item 14)**

Discussion took place as to the scrutiny topics for 2016/17. A list of possible topics was laid round by Councillor Doolan.

Following consideration it was -

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the following scrutiny topics be approved –

Policy and Performance – No specific topic at present but increased focus on the work of ICO and on crime statistics. Ad hoc task and finish topics may be added during the year at the discretion of the Committee which could include a focus on Domestic Violence and the impact on families and Job Centre Plus

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Children's Services – Post 16 Education, Employment and Training plus one off topics on the following –

The impact of school funding changes

The shortage of school place

The Prevent strategy and youth radicalisation

The Educational attainment of BME pupils and white working class boys

Health and Care – Access and Effectiveness of IAP and possible alternative arrangements

Environment and Regeneration – Regeneration of Retail Areas plus one off topics on the following –

Progress of installation of PV solar panels on Council buildings

Use of BBQ's in open spaces

Promoting use of electric vehicles

Flood preparedness

Housing Services – Housing services for Vulnerable People

(b) That the Chief Executive be invited to the next meeting of the Committee for discussion of the item on ICO

250 MONITORING REPORT (Item G)

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

The meeting ended at 10.15p.m.

CHAIR

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