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London Borough of Islington

Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee - 19 September 2016

Non-confidential minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee held at on 19 September 2016 at 7.30 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** Greening (Chair), Jeapes (Vice-Chair), Gantly,
O'Halloran, O'Sullivan, A Perry, Russell, Wayne and
Heather
Also **Councillors:** Hull and Shaikh
Present:

Councillor Richard Greening in the Chair

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

Councillors Doolan and Chowdhury

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

None

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

None

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

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the deletion of third bullet point in minute 233 - the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 July 2016 be confirmed as a correct record of the proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them

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

None

256 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Item 6)**

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

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

The Chair stated that at present no scrutiny topics had been selected by the Committee for the current year to enable more consideration to be given to crime matters and regular updates from the ICO Board.

258 PRESENTATION - EXECUTIVE MEMBER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Item 8)

Councillor Asima Shaikh, Executive Member for Economic Development was present and made a presentation to the Committee, copy interleaved.

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

- One of the key challenges is continuing the creation of apprenticeships and achievements included 104 Islington residents placed into apprenticeships, 44 of which were Council apprenticeships
- There were activities to promote apprenticeships including pathways to apprenticeships and apprenticeship fairs, which included students and employers
- Work was going on with the Corporation of London and schools. There had been pilot training with students who had taken on a repairs role for 3/6 months as a type of mini apprenticeship and there had also been workshops held in schools
- There is also a need to look at employment provision for over 55's
- Reference was made to the need to look at employment opportunities in the future for domiciliary staff given the possible effect of Brexit and the skills strategy that is being drawn up may assist in this
- There may be an initial effect on the level of apprenticeships due to the introduction by the Government of the Apprenticeship levy, however it is felt that from discussions with employers they were keen to promote apprenticeships, but discussions were still at an early stage
- It was stated that it is hoped to increase the number of Council apprenticeships in future years
- There are challenges in providing low skilled jobs as these were predicted to decrease in future years and whilst NEET'S and young offenders were being targeted this would prove a challenge
- Members expressed the view that it would be useful if future reports could indicate the number of Islington residents assisted into work by the Council
- Members welcomed the fact that despite massive budget reductions imposed by Central Government it had not closed any Libraries in the borough

The Chair thanked Councillor Shaikh for her presentation

259 INCOME GENERATION - 12 MONTH REPORT BACK (Item 9)

The Executive Member for Finance, Performance and Community Safety was present for discussion of this item. The Director of Environment and Regeneration, Kevin O'Leary and the Chief Executive, Lesley Seary were also present for discussion of this item.

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

- Members expressed the view that good progress was being made and that whilst the £3 million target would not be achieved in the timescale envisaged it was felt that it would be achievable over a longer period
- Future projects included the tree service and pest control service

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- The Commercial Board provides governance and maintains central oversight of all commercial opportunities and assists in developing ideas and provide support
- Staff were being engaged on developing proposals
- Income Generation proposals by other Local Authorities were being looked at to see whether they were suitable for Islington
- Challenges included looking again at services that are currently offered free of charge to see whether these continue to be appropriate, and to look at areas where the Council's reputation can be utilised to justify higher charges than similar private providers and to ensure. There is also a challenge to see if services proposed for income generation are financially robust ones and there is the necessary investment made available to support them
- The monies felt to be achievable for advertising had had to be reduced due to decisions made by the Planning Committee and it would need a different approach to planning policy to achieve this income in future
- In response to a question it was stated that of the £3 million saving envisaged in 2016/17 it was expected that £1.5 is achievable
- It was stated that any staff incentivisation scheme would need to be considered carefully to ensure it was equitable to all staff and the Trade Unions should be involved in such discussions
- Reference was made to the close proximity of the City of London and services such as Pest Control could be a good source of income and Members welcomed the proposed increased use of Finsbury Square and Highbury Fields, where appropriate
- Concern was expressed that the majority of the projects for income generation were E&R functions and that other directorates should be bringing forward proposals. It was stated that E&R were the frontrunners in this but that other directorates were now bringing forward/considering income generation options
- In response to a question it was stated that the lettings agency has been established with a small number of properties at present and that further details could be provided to Members
- In response to a question it was stated that there has been a small reduction in building control, planning income. since Brexit
- It was stated that there should be information detailing whether income generation savings were comparable to other London Boroughs

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and that the Committee receive 6 month progress reports on ICO at future meetings of the Committee and where possible comparisons on savings with other London Boroughs

260

CRIME STATISTICS/GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (Item 10)

Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance, Performance and Community Safety was present for discussion of this item.

Nick Davies, Superintendent Islington Police and Lela Kogbara, Assistant Chief Executive, Strategy and Partnerships were also present.

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

- There had been a reduction of 1% over the past year in the MOPAC 7 crime statistics, however there were still challenges to reduce robbery/theft and theft by moped

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- Whilst ASB has reduced over a 3 year period, this is often linked to more serious criminality and violent crime
- Reference was made to the impact of Brexit on hate crime and it was stated that there had been an increase following Brexit and this was being analysed on a daily basis. However there had been increased reporting in faith crime
- It was noted that the Police were in regular communication with the Muslim Welfare House and the Finsbury Park mosque. Members expressed regret that nobody had been charged as a result of the arson attack at the Mosque
- Reference was made to the fact that a new SIP strategy had been agreed for dealing with hate crime and discussions were continuing about how best to implement this
- In response to a question it was stated that gangs were involved in the majority of knife crime incidents and the Borough is being supported by Operation Trident and there is a need to target habitual knife offenders
- It was stated that with regard to child sexual exploitation the gangs team were looking at this in relation to girls in gangs and some cases were handled by specialist investigators. There is a strategy being drawn up for CSE
- Reference was made to the increase in rape and sexual offences and it was stated that some of these were related to Domestic Violence, however these were being regularly monitored and that the way that the Police treat victims has improve greatly
- In response to a question it was stated that whilst PREVENT is not a popular strategy, there is a specialist officer on terrorism and it was felt that the numbers in Islington were minimal and education is an important element in PREVENT. Main concerns arose due to safeguarding issues at school and the Mosque and there were other organisations in the borough such as charities doing PREVENT work
- Concern was expressed at the recent re-organisation of senior management and the splitting of responsibilities in relation to crime both between Executive Members and Directorates. The Chief Executive stated that following staff consultation there had been changes to the consultation report in respect of crime and community safety and Members felt that these should be notified to Members
- A Member stated that whilst the reduction in transgender hate crime was welcomed there had been an increase in lesbian/gay hate crime compared to other boroughs. In response the Police stated they recognised the need to engage more widely with the gay community and that ideas would be welcomed on this
- It was stated that future reports should include statistics on the type of hate crime and sexual violence offences reported
- Reference was made to the governance arrangements and that this may need to be looked at at a future date

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and the statistics requested above be included in future reports to the Committee

The Chair thanked Nick Davies and Councillor Hull for attending

261 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT/SICKNESS ABSENCE (Item 11)

Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance, Performance and Community Safety were present for discussion of this item.

Lela Kogbara, Assistant Chief Executive, Strategy and Partnerships, was also present.

Departmental sickness absence figures were laid round.

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

- It was stated that the amended suite of PI's had been included in the report and that in future departmental performance indicators would be submitted to the respective individual scrutiny committees for consideration
- In response to a question as to sickness absence it was stated that this is still below the London average, despite the Council having taken a large number of manual staff in house
- The Committee thanked Lela Kogbara for her service to the Council, this being her last meeting with the Council
- The Chair requested that he be supplied with more details on the number of telephone calls handled by Contact Islington

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and the information requested above be forwarded to the Chair

262 REPORT OF PROCUREMENT BOARD (Item 12)

Councillor Andy Hull, Executive Member Finance, Performance and Community Safety was present for discussion of this item.

Steve Key, Service Director, Finance and Resources was also present.

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

- With regard to paragraph 3.18 a Member required whether the reduction in £20 million spend had impacted on local suppliers. It was stated that the Procurement Board did encourage local suppliers with training and assistance in bidding

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and Members be provided with details of the impact of the £20 million reduction on local suppliers if this information is available

263 MONITORING REPORT (Item)

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

The meeting ended at 10.10 p.m.

CHAIR

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