



ISLINGTON

# **Annual Report of the Executive Member for Finance, Performance and Community Safety**

**CLlr Andy Hull**

Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee  
31 October 2016

# Responsibilities



- **Finance** (eg budgets; revenues; welfare; procurement)
- **Resources** (eg property; health & safety; HR; legal; IT)
- **Democratic Services** (eg secretariat; registry; elections)
- **Customer Services** (eg Contact Islington; complaints)
- **Performance** (eg monitoring and management; risk)
- **Transformation** (eg shared services; income generation; asset optimisation; digitisation)
- **Community Safety** (eg crime; public protection; police)



# Budgets

- Delivered a balanced 2015/16 budget at year-end and annual accounts for 2015/16 signed off with no qualifications or issues
- Prepared and passed the council's 2016/17 budget, delivering a further £24 million of savings as a result of government cuts, meaning that the council has now in total had to reduce spending by £174 million since 2010
- Developed the council's budget strategy through the medium term financial forecast



# Revenue and benefits



- Maintained our council tax and business rates collection rates, generating £130m of revenue for the council
- Collected almost £1m since September 2015 in backdated debt through our targeted “attack arrears” project
- Oversaw the Council Tax Single Person Discount annual checking process
- Passed our Council Tax Support Scheme at Council



# Revenue and benefits



- Continued to run one of the best-performing Housing Benefit administration services in London
- Continued to fund the Resident Support Scheme, despite government cuts to grants, to support the vulnerable in crisis or in need of additional support
- Continued advice sector funding at the highest level in London, including our own Income Maximisation Team
- Continued to convene the Islington Debt Coalition
- Retained Universal Support Delivered Locally, linking people to iWork, Personal Budgeting Support and ACL
- Maintained the cap on council tax support at 8.5%, despite the loss of government support

# Procurement

- Agreed new Procurement Strategy 2015–20
- Appropriate contracts now in place for all external spend
- Commissioning & Procurement Board supporting and challenging all procurements to reduce costs and improve effectiveness
- All new national transparency requirements met
- Training on how to win council business delivered to local small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the voluntary sector



# Property

- Established a programme of work to generate £3m of additional income/savings through building rationalisation and increasing commercial lettings, eg:
  - Refurbished and re-let buildings at Old St likely to achieve over £1.5m pa additional income by 2019
  - Reducing our administrative office building footprint and partnering with health colleagues should save us over £400k pa
- Working with Housing and VCS colleagues to review use of community centres to ensure optimal use
- Restructured the property team
- Enhanced security at the Town Hall

# Legal

- Successful challenge to TfL's plans to close Caledonian Road Station for 8 months
- Successful partnership working with TfL to resist the application to judicially review the Archway Gyratory decision
- Assisting the Family Justice Group in providing innovative ideas to help families and reduce the need for Care Proceedings
- Dealing with in-sourced litigated insurance work
- Supporting Housing in establishing a property company





# Human Resources



- New online recruitment system (Trac) implemented
- Voluntary redundancy exercise (2015/16) carried out
- Successfully re-accredited by Timewise
- Payroll Giving Quality Mark Award 2016 achieved
- Coaching capacity expanded: 19 new coaches on track to complete CMI Level 5 qualification
- New Occupational Health provider procured
- First cohort of Inspiring Leadership programme for BME staff to address under-representation at senior levels



# Digital

- New council website launched in September 2016, making content and transactions easier to find
- Digital Inclusion programme (GO ON) now underway: 100 digital champions recruited and being deployed; plans to trial tablets with Hillside Clubhouse and on the Andover Estate; and libraries becoming digital hubs
- Introduced guest wifi in council buildings and improved remote working capabilities for council staff
- Established improved security arrangements to protect the council's networks
- Progressed the shared ICT service with Camden and Haringey, with a new Shared Head of IT

# Democratic Services



- Implemented changes to increase public involvement in meetings of full Council
- Supported the establishment of iCo (Islington Company)
- Supported a busy scrutiny programme with the completion of eight major and a number of minor scrutinies
- Significant reorganisation implemented across the department



# Registrars

- Increased performance levels and all national performance targets exceeded (target 95%)
- Income target of £1.2 million achieved
- Over 75% of appointments are now booked online
- Marketing website 'Say I Do Islington' achieved over 130,000 hits in the last 6 months
- New income generation pilots (eg Passport Check & Send; Online Wedding Supplier advertising)
- Currently Registrars Manager is shared with Hackney & City of London (bringing in revenue to Islington)



# Elections

- Delivered Greater London Authority elections and EU Referendum within 7 weeks of each other
- EU Referendum saw electoral registration hit historic highs. In the 3 weeks prior to the EU Referendum:
  - 19,265 applications to register to vote
  - Over 5,000 new postal voters added
- Canvassing with tablets this year – one of the first in UK
- Also delivered two Business Improvement District elections, Youth Council election, HMP Pentonville Prison Council election and Barnsbury Ward by-election




# Performance

- Reviewed and refreshed the council's corporate performance indicators, setting new challenging targets for 2016/17 – Scrutiny Chairs engaged in the process
- Introduced new arrangements for performance reporting to scrutiny – each committee will have responsibility for monitoring and challenging performance for those areas which fall within its remit
- Held Monthly Performance Panels (MPPs) focusing on key priorities with corporate directors and executive members
- Tracked progress against the wider Corporate Plan (Islington Commitment) publishing headlines on website and in posters across the council



# Risk

- Re-let our internal audit contract with six other London boroughs, delivering volume discounts
  - Completed the internal audit plan for 2014/15 with high levels of implemented recommendations. Prepared and embarked on fully consulted, risk-based plan for 2015/16
  - Revised the corporate anti-fraud strategy and policies to maximise the benefits from corporate anti-fraud resources
  - Rolled out revised corporate risk management framework
  - Achieved a 'reasonable assurance' (second best of four possible levels) following an audit by the ICO and have implemented all the post-audit recommendations
  - Data Protection Sharepoint site for handling 'subject access requests' and improved FOI handling
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# Transformation

- **Income generation:** eg established the Commercial Board; new income generating activities (such as Trees, Memorials and Pest Control); iCo established with several services now trading through it (eg Schools HR and Commercial Waste)
- **Shared services:** eg major shared digital service with Camden and Haringey
- **Asset optimisation:** eg accommodation review to vacate Northway House & CCG coming to Laycock
- **Digitisation:** eg more services such as Housing Repairs, Schools Admissions and Wedding Planning online, with first phase of Business Portal now live (reduced call volumes and visits into Contact Islington by 10% and 7% respectively last year)



# Community Safety



- Successful launch of the multi-agency Integrated Gangs Team based at Islington Police Station in Tolpuddle Street
- New Safer Islington Partnership Hate Crime strategy launched
- Reduction in repeat ASB callers to Islington Council
- Significant decrease in burglary offences
- Increased numbers of prolific adult offenders now in Education, Training or Employment (ETE)
- More effective handling of high risk Domestic Violence cases (through DV MARAC)



# Fairness



- Continued leadership on the Living Wage: first accredited Living Wage local authority in UK; 100% of LBI staff and 98% of contractors receive at least LLW; persuaded 110 other Islington employers to go LW; first council to become a Living Wage Friendly Funder
- Promoted awareness of IDAHOT, Transgender Day and Bi-Visibility Day in support of the LGBT community
- Launched Islington Council's 'Tough Choices' anti-cuts communications campaign
- Established and led Red Lines campaigns pan-London against cuts to youth funding and adult social care
- Supported Fairness Commissions to tackle inequality nationally and internationally