

A meeting of the Cabinet and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee held at Kensington Town Hall, Hornton Street, London W8 7NX at 6.30pm on 20 June 2016

PRESENT

Members of the Committee

Councillor Pat Mason (Chairman)
Councillor James Husband (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Adrian Berrill-Cox
Councillor Barbara Campbell
Councillor Emma Dent Coad
Councillor David Lindsay
Councillor David Nicholls
Councillor Monica Press
Councillor Andrew Rinker

Others in attendance

Councillor Deborah Collinson
Councillor Gerard Hargreaves (Cabinet Member for Civil Society)
Councillor Robert Freeman (Lead Member for Civil Society)
Mark Grant (for Director of Property)
Jacqui Hird (Scrutiny Manager)
Nicholas Holgate (Town Clerk)
Stuart Priestley (Chief Community Safety Officer)
Tony Redpath (Director of Strategy and Local Services)
Chief Supt. Tariq Sarwar (Borough Police Commander)
Marion Sinclair (Head of IT Strategy)
Martyn Carver (Principal Governance Manager)

A G E N D A

A1 CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Committee confirmed the appointments of Cllr Mason as Chairman and of Cllr Husband as Vice-Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

The Chairman welcomed Councillors Nicholls and Press to the Committee and thanked Councillor Pascall for his work during his membership.

A2 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Moylan.

A3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

A4 MINUTES

The minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 23 May and of the special meeting held on 25 May were confirmed as correct records and were signed by the Chairman.

A5 CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT SARWAR

Chief Superintendent Sarwar, the Borough Police Commander, attended the meeting. He advised that he had been in post since January 2016. Crime in the Borough had shown a downward trend, although the MOPAC target of a 20% reduction on seven key crime indicators (the 'MOPAC seven') by 31 March 2016 had not been met. In January 2016, this was showing an increase of 2% but by 31 March it was showing reduction of 1.6%.

Chief Superintendent Sarwar spoke of recent improvements made to procedures for dealing with those in custody. Enhanced stop and search tactics were being used, although officers were aware of the need to use this tactic sensitively. Current challenges were from motorvehicle crime, residential burglary and robbery. There was good news in that incidences of Serious Youth Violence had shown the biggest drop in London and victim-based offences had also fallen. Future developments would see police officers wearing mobile recording devices and officers using tablet PCs to speed up the processing of incidents.

Cllr Dent Coad expressed concern about online/cyber crime and the white-collar drug industry and asked what was being done to tackle these areas. Chief Superintendent Sarwar said that cyber crime was dealt with centrally but he would get some information and pass it to the Chairman. Similarly, although intelligence about drug dealing was obtained locally, it was dealt with centrally. He would obtain some figures.

Following a question by Cllr Press, Chief Superintendent Sarwar described the joint working between the police and the Council's Community Safety Team. Fortnightly tasking meetings were held at which police officers were allocated to tackle current key tasks.

Chief Superintendent Sarwar said that he was particularly concerned about preventing terrorist attacks, given that the Borough was home to many embassies and iconic sites and had a high daily footfall of visitors.

The Chairman referred to a TMO publication which stated that the Borough was the fifth highest in Inner London for residential burglary. The Chief Superintendent commented that daily meetings and the tasking meeting he referred to earlier would analyse the latest position and look at prevention and offender management. The Chairman also asked about the position in

respect of PCSOs. It was noted that the fact that the Metropolitan Police had not had to make very significant savings as part of the last Budget meant that PCSOs were expected to continue. The new Mayor may, however, bring new ideas and policies.

The Chairman also asked about efforts to reduce knife-crime. The Chief Superintendent advised that undercover police cadets were used to make test purchases of knives from premises. Businesses were then prosecuted if they sold knives to the cadets. Weapon sweeps were also undertaken.

The Chairman thanked Chief Superintendent Sarwar for attending the meeting and invited him back in six months' time.

Action by: Governance Services

A6 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Paragraph 1 – Anti-extremism strategy

The paragraph was received and noted.

Paragraph 2 – Managed Services programme

The paragraph was received and noted.

Paragraph 3 – Future agenda and scrutiny items

The paragraph was received and noted.

A7 RELEASE OF ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO DELIVER TRI-BOROUGH IT WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

The Chairman queried the long-standing entry in the Forward Plan which stated that implementation of this decision would be 'not before 29 June'. He advised that he was yet to see a report and asked if the entry in the Forward Plan should be deleted as it had been rolled forward several times. Ms Sinclair said that the timescale for the project had been extended but a decision had been taken in consultation with Governance Services to leave the item on the forward plan rather than remove and resubmit it. This would result in further delays. She added that once the job descriptions for the new posts had been evaluated, consultation would take place over the following months. Ms Sinclair undertook to discuss with Governance Services whether the item should be left on the Forward Plan.

Action by: Ms Sinclair

The Chairman said that if this information had been offered in advance of this scrutiny meeting, then a decision could have been made about when and if to call in to scrutiny. As it was, the “not before 29th June” stayed on the Forward Plan so the Key Decision would have to be scrutinised at this committee or, from the information previously available, may have been implemented on or after the “not before” date, but before the next scrutiny committee meeting.

A8 MANAGED SERVICES PROGRAMME – ORAL UPDATE

Mr Holgate provided an oral update on progress with the Managed Services Programme, the details of which are included in the confidential minutes.

A9 KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA ELECTORAL REGISTRATION AND EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE TO VOTE

Mr Redpath introduced the paper which had been written to address concerns about declining numbers of voters on the electoral register. It was noted that RBKC’s decline had been steeper than other Inner London Boroughs. He considered that the introduction of Individual Elector Registration (IER) had led to a fall in the number of electors not because people failed to register but because some people were on the register who should have been removed. The register was now more accurate. He reported that there had been no clamour at the recent GLA elections from voters who had been removed from the register.

Mr Redpath attributed the decline in voters in RBKC to increasing population churn, an increase in the proportion of residents who (by virtue of their nationality) were not able to register, an increase in the number of vacant properties and a rise in the number of second homes. There was nothing the Council could do about these factors. The Council could, however, make efforts to ensure people who were entitled to vote were on the register. He welcomed innovative ideas. The EU Referendum had been a big lever to get people to register. Since March the number of Parliamentary electors had risen from 75,404 to 83,034 and the number of local government electors from 90,892 to 98,656.

Cllr Dent Coad asked whether the events in local libraries aimed at increasing registration had been a success. Mr Redpath said that they had not been very effective. A better process would be enabling people to register on their own doorstep as part of the canvass. He undertook to consider some publicity around other benefits of being on the register, such as getting a credit rating.

Cllr Press suggested that the Council could influence schools and six forms to encourage registration. In addition, she said that it might be worth adding

links on registering to private-rented sector websites. Mr Redpath undertook to look into this.

The Chairman said it is clear that young people and ethnic minorities were under-represented on the Electoral Register and that only about 30% of young people used their right to vote. He said it seemed clear from the UK Youth Parliament Manifesto, included in the Agenda, that the failure of many young people to register to vote was not because they were not interested in local or national politics. Rather, it was because they often did not hear politicians and political parties talking about the issues that affect their daily lives. The Chairman undertook to explore whether it might be worth asking a representative of the Youth Parliament to attend a meeting of the Committee to discuss how registration might be improved, and probably how the Council might improve its offer to them.

The report was received and noted.

A10 BUSINESS RATES DEVOLUTION FOR LONDON: PROPOSALS FROM LONDON COUNCILS LEADERS' COMMITTEE

Mr Holgate spoke to the paper and advised that RBKC was unlikely to be a particular winner under such a regime. Paragraph 8 referred to a revaluation of business rates in April 2017. This could lead to an increase in business rates payable of up to £1 billion across London. It was noted that businesses would still be able to appeal against rates and also apply for a hardship grant. Utilities such as the National Grid also had compensation schemes to which business could apply should there have been disruption to their business from streetworks.

The report was received and noted.

A11 FUTURE AGENDA AND SCRUTINY ITEMS

The Committee noted that the Chairman would be meeting with the officers listed in the paper to discuss possible items for the Committee to scrutinise.

A12 TRI-BOROUGH UPDATE - ORAL REPORT

Mr Holgate advised that there was nothing to report to this meeting.

A13 CABINET AGENDA FOR 23 JUNE

In respect of **A4, Closure of Accounts**, the Chairman drew attention to paragraph 1.1 which reported an underspend of £14.5m.

On **A7, Retail Letting in the Silchester development**, Cllr Press referred to paragraph 5.1 and spoke of the need to define 'affordable units'.

On **A8, Learning from Complaints**, Cllr Press asked why matters referred by Councillors were treated as 'enquiries' rather than 'complaints'? She also asked whether Councillor referrals were included in the report's statistics. Mr Holgate said that they should be. He asked Cllr Press to send him examples of some complaints which had been raised and he would check.

Referring to **A10, Performance report/Vital Signs**, Cllr Lindsay drew attention to the fact that some FCS indicators had no commentary against them. Mr Holgate said that he was relaxed about this where performance was good. Cllr Dent Coad expressed concern that staff sickness absence had risen to 8 days (HR1108). She added that the Committee had previously considered youth unemployment and asked that an update paper be brought to a future meeting.

Action by: Governance Services/PPU

The remaining reports on the Cabinet agenda were noted.

A14 FORWARD PLAN - AS AT 10 JUNE

The forward plan was received and noted.

A15 OTHER URGENT ITEMS

None.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING:

RESOLVED – to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following specific items of business on the grounds that they may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act, as amended:

B1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 23 MAY

The confidential minutes were signed as a correct record.

B2 MANAGED SERVICES PROGRAMME UPDATE

Mr Holgate advised about progress with the programme.

No other matters were discussed.

The meeting ended at 8.10pm.