

## CHILDREN'S TAKEOVER DAY SPECIAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

FRIDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2016

PRESENT: Takeover Day Participants: Luisa Marinozzi (Chairman), Sidra Al-Magazachi, Susannah Ames, Sam Hester, Joseph Ioras, Rida Naseer, Jay Sidapara, Jamoi Sill and Ewelina Sobon

Also in attendance: Councillor Charles Hollingsworth, Councillor Lynne Jones, Councillor MJ Saunders and Councillor Derek Wilson

Officers: Alison Alexander, Terry Baldwin, Simon Fletcher, Danny Gomm, Kevin McDaniel, David Scott, Felicity Screen, Karen Shepherd and Anna Trott

### APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Luisa Marinozzi (Takeover Day Lead Member for Finance) be appointed as Chairman for the duration of the meeting.**

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Sidra Al-Magazachi, Susannah Ames, Sam Hester, Joseph Ioras, Luisa Marinozzi, Rida Naseer, Jay Sidapara, Jamoi Sill and Ewelina Sobon declared interests in the item 'Improving Choice in Education' as pupils at borough schools.

### COUNCIL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK QUARTER 2 2016/17

The Panel considered the latest council performance report. Jay Sidpara (Takeover Day Strategy and Performance Manager) explained that the report helped identify areas for improvements. The report had been updated and condensed to ensure it was easy to comprehend. Benchmarking allowed comparison to other councils and the implementation of strategies to improve performance. The new infographics section showed performance at a glance.

Over half of the indicators were on target, including satisfaction with parks, use of borough libraries and museums, and online payments. A number of areas were off-target including school exclusions, support for care leavers and the number of people quitting smoking. Managers were putting in place plans to improve performance for the next quarter.

Susannah Ames (Takeover Day Leader of the Opposition) asked what were the biggest risks and challenges faced at the moment? Jay Sidpara responded that the outcome to ensure that every child and young person in the borough was safe and had the opportunity of an excellent academic and vocational education had a number of indicators were red and these needed to become green.

Susannah Ames highlighted that 41% of aims were not met in the Adults, Children and Health sector. The Managing Director acknowledged that there were a number of

indicators in amber or red. The resources of the directorate were being put in to address the issues. She expected the situation to improve by the end of the year.

Sidra Al-Magazachi (Takeover Day Strategic Director for Corporate and Customer Services) asked whether the collection of data was an automated process? Jay Sidpara responded that it was not currently an automated process. Teams across the council collated data and submitted to the team.

Susannah Ames asked for an explanation as to why the new smoking cessation contract was significantly below target. Sam Hester (Takeover Day Managing Director) explained that the contracts had not come through and the new target rates had not yet been reached. Susannah Ames asked if there had been a change in the way funding had been allocated recently? The Managing Director explained that the contract had been re-issued in the year with a new type of target focussing on vulnerable adults. The current provider had not secured sufficient work with these individuals to reach the target.

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the recommendations in the report be endorsed.**

#### FINANCIAL UPDATE

The Panel considered the latest financial update. The Chairman (Takeover Day Lead Member for Finance) reported that there was a projected year end underspend of £420,000. It was therefore expected that reserves would be £1.2m above the minimum required. Paragraph 4.12 provided details of a recommendation for an additional capital budget of £350,000 to begin works on the new leisure centre at Braywick Park.

Susannah Ames requested an explanation of the cash flow. The Chairman responded that in March 2017 the council would be borrowing to meet its needs in the short term. There would be no material impact on the revenue budget. Rida Naseer (Takeover Day Strategic Director of Operations and Customer Services) asked why borrowing was necessary. The Chairman responded it was because the council had invested cash in new libraries and other important assets. Rida Naseer asked what residents thought about this; the Chairman responded that residents did not yet know about the proposal.

Joseph Ioras (Takeover Day Maidenhead Town Centre Manager) asked why the budget for supporting residents into temporary accommodation was projecting an overspend of £470,000? The Chairman explained that there was a rise in the number of families needing accommodation due to the emerging social fund cap.

Jay Sidpara asked when the new leisure centre would be built. It was confirmed this was planned for 2018.

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the recommendations in the report be endorsed.**

#### IMPROVING CHOICE IN EDUCATION

The Panel considered a report on improving choice in education in the borough. The report was presented by the Head of Schools and Education Services and the Ewelina

Sobon (Takeover Day Head of Schools and Education Services). It was explained that 84% of borough schools were judged by Ofsted as good or outstanding. Significant improvements had been made in recent years and attainment continued to improve. For the 2016 Year 6 SATS, 59% had met the expected standard. This meant the borough was 70th out of 150 highest achieving authorities in England. At GCSE level, 72.7% achieved A\*-C in English and Maths, therefore the borough was 9<sup>th</sup> out of 150 highest achieving local authorities in England.

The government was now consulting on the opportunity to introduce selective education. In 2015 13% of borough families applied for a grammar school as their first preference with a number being successful, meaning children travelled outside the borough for their secondary education. A second aspect of the consultation was the challenge for disadvantaged pupils. 3,500 out of 20,000 pupils were disadvantaged and eligible for free school meals in the borough. Despite a high performing system, at Key Stage 2 these pupils achieved 26% less than peers from advantaged families. At GCSE the gap was 28%.

The opportunity presented in the consultation to work with universities, independent schools and any selective provision should focus on reducing the gap. The recommendations therefore proposed the development of a number of options. Any proposal needed to include three factors:

- Continue to support a great system
- Success and access for the disadvantaged
- Backed up by evidence of parental demand

Susannah Ames stated that she could only support the recommendations if reference was made to paragraph 2.11, in particular that the council would support any proposal that considered full or partial selective education only where the proposal included a detailed commitment to raise the academic achievement of young people eligible for pupil premium. She therefore proposed this wording be added to recommendation i).

Susannah Ames commented that she felt the questions in the consultation were very leading. Sidra Al-Magazachi asked how less able pupils would benefit from the proposals? The Head of Schools and Education responded that the report set out that should new selective streams appear, universities who selected the brightest pupils and independent schools were being asked to bring their expertise to improve the situation for disadvantaged pupils. There was no one clear thing that could be done (otherwise the borough would already be doing it). The proposals would help target pupils in social and school settings to be confident and have high aspirations. Jamoi Sill (Takeover Day Projects Officer) asked how the proposals would help reduce the gap. The Head of Schools and Education responded that more resources would be brought to bear on disadvantaged groups. Sharing and collaboration would help. Three headteachers had shared best practice at a meeting of the School Improvement Forum the previous week, this was recognised by Ofsted.

Susannah Ames commented that the education system in the borough was very successful; she asked was there any evidence to suggest that the introduction of selective education would further improve it? The Head of Schools and Education responded that the historical secondary/grammar system showed evidence of a continued gap, however what was clear was that high standards came from young people seeing aspiration at all levels. Selective schools were clearly aspirational, so

were the borough's comprehensive schools. A system which encompassed all would have the most impact.

**RESOLVED:** That the Special O&S Panel endorsed the recommendations as listed in the report, with the addition of a proposed amendment to recommendation i:

**That Cabinet:**

- i. Endorse the development of selective or partially selective education within the education provision of the Royal Borough to further improve the choice of education available to pupils and the families. *This council will support any proposal that considers full or partial selective education only where the proposal includes a detailed commitment to raise the academic achievement of young people eligible for pupil premium***

**(Seven Members voted in favour of the motion - Sidra Al-Magazachi, Susannah Ames, Joseph Ioras, Luisa Marinozzi, Rida Naseer, Jamoi Sill and Ewelina Sobon. Two Members voted against the motion - Sam Hester, Jay Sidapara.)**

#### DELIVERING DIFFERENTLY - FUTURE PROVISION OF CUSTOMER AND LIBRARY SERVICES

The Panel considered the proposal to create a modern, first in class customer facing, high performing service called 'Customer Experience' with three access channels: 24/7 digital, face-to-face and telephone.

The Strategic Director for Operations and Customer Services and Rida Naseer (Takeover Day Strategic Director for Operations and Customer Services) explained that this would make greater use of facilities at libraries and increase the times services were accessible to residents. The proposal would merge the existing customer services and libraries and registration services teams. Face-to-face customer service would be delivered through libraries in Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead. The arrangement at Windsor library would operate until York House was redeveloped. Telephone contact would be extended to seven days a week. The range of digital contacts would increase. If approved the new services would be in place by 1 July 2017.

Sidra Al-Magazachi asked how library staff would be trained to deal with a broader range of enquiries. It was explained that a quality assurance and training role would be permanently embedded in the team. Jay Sidapara asked how many staff would lose their job as a result of the proposals. The Director responded that there would be an overall reduction in numbers which would be set out in a report to the Employment Panel in January 2017. It was confirmed that savings would total £286,000 per year.

Sam Hester asked what impact there would be on the current library services. The Director responded that there had been careful thought about how not to impact on traditional service users. Officers and Members had looked at best practice around the country to ensure quality was maintained. Capital funding was requested to provide pods in libraries for private conversations with residents without affecting traditional library users. Jamoi Sill asked what would happen if a resident could not get their question answered when they visited a library? The Director explained that technology

and multiskilling introduced over the next few years would ensure almost every question could be answered. If a response was not available immediately, the resident would be given a date by which a response would be forthcoming.

Susannah Ames stated that she fully supported the proposals; it was important to support community services. Sam Hester asked how residents could access services if they were unable to travel to one of the three main libraries. The Director explained that new technology would help this situation. The Chairman asked how residents would feel they were getting a good quality service and that confidentiality was reliable? The Director explained that satisfaction with the service was already measured and it would be important to continue to monitor this if services were changing. The pods to be installed in libraries would allow private conversations to take place.

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the recommendations in the report be endorsed.**

### REVIEW OF PROGRESS IN HARD TO FILL ROLES

The Panel considered an update on 'hard to fill' roles. Sam Hester (Takeover Day Managing Director) explained the report provided an update since the report to Employment Panel in July 2016. A number of areas were highlighted:

- Maximum salaries for child protection workers had been used; advertising campaigns would take place in November 2016. Recruitment remained a challenge.
- Amended pay bands for Adult Social Workers and Occupational Therapists had been implemented; table 1 showed the response to adverts.
- A £2000 out of hours allowance for Approved Mental Health Professionals had been introduced
- Work was progressing in relation to Key Worker housing, with the aim this would be accessible in 2017.
- A revised relocation package had been successfully used in one case to convert a temporary worker to a permanent role.
- There had been a generally positive reaction to the announcement of new partnerships

It was noted that the Takeover Day had only been offered to residents in the borough or those linked to the youth service.

Jay Sidpara suggested there could be a reduction in tax levels for Key Workers. The Lead Member for Finance commented that unfortunately the council did not have control over taxation levels.

Joseph Ioras highlighted that there were difficulties in recruiting to planning roles but the report did not mention this service area. The Head of HR explained that the hard to fill policy covered a range of posts including planning and accountants, however the report had been produced for the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel so had focussed on relevant roles.

Rida Naseer asked what the council was doing to help young people into housing. Sam Hester explained that the council provided the Housing Solutions service for young people who received benefits.

Susannah Ames asked if the high turnover in key roles was a national trend. It was confirmed that councils across the country were experiencing the same trends. There was a general shortage of social workers.

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the recommendations in the report be endorsed**

The meeting, which began at 2.30 pm, finished at 3.24 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....