

Committee: Community and Children’s Services – for decision Culture, Heritage and Libraries – for information	Date: 11 March 2024 18 March 2024
Subject: Draft High-Level Business Plan 2023/24 – Community and Children’s Services	Public
Report of: Judith Finlay, Executive Director, Community and Children’s Services	For Decision
Report author: Ellie Ward, Community and Children’s Services	

Summary

This report presents for approval the high-level Business Plan for the Community and Children’s Services Department for 2024/25. At Member’s request it also presents a five-year horizon scan.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- i. Note the factors taken into consideration in compiling the Community and Children’s Services departmental Business Plan; and
- ii. Approve, subject to the incorporation of any changes sought by this Committee, the departmental Business Plan 2024/25.
- iii. Note the five-year horizon scan

Main Report

Background

1. As part of the new framework for corporate and business planning, departments were asked to produce standardised high-level, 2-side Business Plans for the first time in 2017 for the 2018/19 year. Members generally welcomed these high-level plans for being brief, concise, focused and consistent statements of the key ambitions and objectives for every department.
2. For 2024/25, the high-level Business Plan has been further evolved to describe the funding and people resources associated with each priority workstream. As a high-level plan, this document does not capture the granularity of departmental work but gives the overall picture of departmental activity, customer feedback, trends where applicable and direction of travel.

Draft final high-level Business Plan for 2024/25

3. This report presents, at Appendix 1, the draft final high-level Business Plan for 2024/25 for the Community and Children's Services Department.
4. All elements of the Business Plan presented are relevant to this committee apart from references to libraries which are relevant to the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee.
5. The priorities outlined in the headline Business Plan reflect a range of strategies, which are informed by stakeholder engagement and approved by Members, and our statutory responsibilities.
6. The Department has a wide range of statutory responsibilities and receives a range of Government funding and grants to deliver this. The Housing Revenue Account is legally ringfenced and annual expenditure must be contained within this funding envelope.
7. The Department produces a range of dashboards to monitor performance and various sub-committees scrutinise these on a regular basis. Performance is also benchmarked with other relevant organisations through published data and relevant networks run by organisations such as London Councils and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Care.
8. Feedback from citizens on our services is gathered in a wide range of ways including a compliments and complaints process, regular surveys undertaken across a range of services and the monitoring of specific outcomes from service users.
9. In order to ensure value for money, the Department utilises sub regional and regional frameworks for some services such as placements and regularly benchmarks itself against other relevant organisations. Organisations such as the Local Government Association also regularly produce analysis of costs of services such as social care at regional and national levels to allow value for money to be assessed.
10. Members will receive quarterly updates on progress on the Business Plan KPIs and there are specific scrutiny committees such as the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee who look at specific areas of the Department's work.

Five-Year Horizon Scan

11. As requested by Members, a five-year horizon view is included in Appendix 2 – this sets out the forecast trends for service demand over the next five years.
12. This will inform our work around five-year planning.

Departmental Operational Property Assets Utilisation Assessment

13. In relation to the assets allocated for the delivery of services, these are broadly fully utilised. As noted in the Headline Business Plan, operational space within the Guildhall (North Wing) provides for around 60% of the departments staff, with 40% located across the Barbican Estate Office, three Community Libraries, two community centres, and small estate offices on out of City housing estates.

14. At the Guildhall, operations includes social care, homeless assessment and rough sleeping outreach where the nature of delivery requires higher rates of attendance. Overall, utilisation does vary and is partly utilised some days but some days nearly 100% utilised. With an increase to three days a week in the office from September 2024, utilisation will increase and it is likely that there will be pressures. This will be mitigated by encouraging staff to spread out their working days over the week to include more attendance on a Monday and Friday and to use desk space on other floors outside our designated area.
15. The Barbican Estate Office includes floor space for public receptions and meeting facilities and provides a greater square metre per staff area. However, the office in the basement will soon become redundant as working space as it is not fit for purpose and will be used by the City of London Police for storage. Desk utilisation rates are partly utilised in the rest of the office space but increasing attendance to three days a week will create a pressure.
16. The Golden Lane Community Centre is integral to the estate (and a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) asset), providing staff space to support its operation. The Department leases (at pepper corn rent) the Portsoken Community Centre. The Golden Lane Leisure Centre is leased to the commissioned provider of leisure services.
17. There are 73 HRA commercial units and 10 of these are empty with an average void period of 3 years. A range of uses for these units are being explored.
18. The Pavillion café on Aldgate Square is a departmental asset that is leased for a 15-year term. Rental revenue is received into the Department's local risk to support community focused services, including contributing to the operational costs of the Portsoken Community Centre.
19. The Department is the lease holder of premises at Bartholomew Close until 2030. The premises are sublet commercially as surplus to the Department's operational requirements.
20. Middlesex Street Estate has delivered space for the CoLP Eastern Hub and the Department will continue to explore options for the use of under-utilised resources across its property portfolios including its residential estates.
21. An Operational Property Review was undertaken across DCCS based on property information provided by The City Surveyor and financial data provided by The Chamberlain. Desk utilisation information was based on evidence collected over a 2 week period. The results of the review were reported to and scrutinised by the OPR Board; RPR Board; SLT; & Efficiency & Performance Working Party (Members).

Corporate & Strategic Implications

The strategic priorities and commitment of the Department are expressed in the Headline Business Plan in Appendix 1. These reflect the many statutory responsibilities that the Department has and contribute broadly to the new Corporate Plan priorities.

Security implications

Actions highlighted in the Headline Business Plan contribute to the departmental objective that people of all ages and all backgrounds live in safe communities, that our homes are safe and well maintained and that our estates are protected from harm.

Financial implications

A balanced budget was previously agreed for the 2024/25 Estimates that includes an increase of £470k to address pressures in social care. Further financial pressures resulting from the likely increased demand set out in the five year horizon scan will need to be taken into account in budget setting for future periods.

Equalities implications

The strategic commitments and actions outlined in this headline business plan are designed to improve outcomes for protected characteristic groups. Where any new services or initiatives are developed, Equality Impact Assessments are carried out as part of the process to inform their development and consider their impact on different groups.

Resourcing implications

None. Any significant changes to resources were identified and delivered through the move to the Target Operating Model.

Climate

The Department is committed to taking action to contribute to delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan. A major workstream is to deliver a number of housing projects, as set out in the Action Plan, to reduce the City Corporation's carbon footprint.

Conclusion

This report presents the high-level Business Plan for 2024/25 for the Community and Children's Services Department for Members to consider and approve.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Final high-level Business Plan 2024/25
- Appendix 2 - Five-Year Horizon Scan

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