

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 20 July 2017 at 6.30 p.m., Room C1, 1st Floor, Town Hall,
Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London, E14 2BG

SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA

This meeting is open to the public to attend.

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For further information including the Membership of this body and public information, see the main agenda.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

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To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 9th May, 2017 and 21st June, 2017.

Agenda Item 3

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE,
09/05/2017

SECTION ONE (UNRESTRICTED)

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.15 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 9 MAY 2017

C1, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,
LONDON, E14 2BG

Members Present:

Councillor John Pierce (Chair)
Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaqim
Councillor Helal Uddin
Councillor Andrew Wood

Co-opted Members Present:

Dr Phillip Rice	– (Church of England Representative)
Fatiha Kassouri	– Parent Governors
Shabbir Chowdhury	– Parent Governors
Christine Trumper	– Parent Governors

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Rabina Khan
Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs

Apologies:

Asad M Jaman	– Muslim Faith Community
Councillor Julia Dockerill	
Councillor Clare Harrison	

Officers Present:

Claire Belgard	– (Interim Divisional Director, Youth Services)
Janet Fasan	– (Divisional Director, Legal)
Afazul Hoque	– (Interim Service Manager, Strategy, Policy & Performance)
Ronke Martins-Taylor	– (Interim Divisional Director, Youth Services)
Christine McInnes	– (Divisional Director, Education and Partnership, Children's)
Peter Quirk	– Senior Strategy, Policy & Performance Officer
Pat Watson	– (Head of Building Development,

Gillian Beadle Phelps

- Children's and Adults Resources)
- Service Manager for Community & Hospital Integrated Services
- (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

David Knight

1. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest.

2. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

Item deferred

3. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

Nil items

4. FORTHCOMING DECISIONS

Noted

5. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

The Committee received and noted the Annual Report that provided a summary for Council the work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the Health, Housing and Grants Sub Committees in the 2016-2017 municipal year.

The questions and comments from Members on the presentation are outlined as follows:

The Committee:

- Noted that over a number of years the scrutiny function has operated as part of the overall governance framework of the Council and has been structured with a main Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported by a Health Scrutiny Sub Committee;
- Was reminded that in 2016-2017 the Council had introduced changes to the scrutiny arrangements recognising the need for scrutiny to adopt and embrace the changing structural and governance environment which it operates within;
- Was reminded that in Tower Hamlets the majority of the social housing provision is managed by Registered Social Landlords and housing is a key priority for local people as noted in the Annual Residents Survey. Accordingly recognising this importance the Council established in 2016 a Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee which provided a vehicle for scrutiny and dialogue with the decision makers within those bodies;

- Noted that a Grants Scrutiny Sub Committee has also been set up as part of the Best Value Action Plan with the aim of scrutinising the grants making process and overall approach to grants ensuring that an objective, fair, transparent and co-ordinated approach is adopted and implanted;
- Noted that Tower Hamlets is also the current host of the Inner London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee comprising of the neighbouring boroughs of Newham, Hackney and City of London. This Committee has considered the local Sustainability and Transformation Plan;
- Agreed to formally place on record their thanks to Victoria Ekubia who had passed away recently. Victoria had been a Co-opted Member for a number of years on this Committee and a stalwart of the local and voluntary community sector. She had made a very positive input to the deliberations of the Committee particularly with reference to provision of children's services and that she had been deeply committed to the Roman Catholic Church and a governor on two local Catholic Schools;
- Noted that Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaqim as the Scrutiny Lead for Governance would be undertaking a scrutiny challenge session on opportunity and integration, in Tower Hamlets;
- Noted that the Mayor and the Cabinet wanted to be challenged effectively on a range of the issues and to engage with elected members on those issues that needed to be addressed.

As a result of a full and wide ranging discussion on the above the Chair Moved and it was:-

RESOLVED

To **note** the Annual report.

5.2 Social Value Act - Challenge Session

The Committee received and noted a report that highlighted the approach, methodology and evidence gathered during the challenge session and subsequent review which were then used as the basis for developing the recommendations from the Social Value Act challenge session. The session formed part of the annual work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2016/17.

The challenge session provided an opportunity to review the opportunities that the Social Value Act offers for the communities of Tower Hamlets. The review built upon the excellent work carried out by the Council as an early adopter in introducing social value clauses into major contracts which has delivered significant economic and community benefits to date.

However, the Council now needs to further develop its approach to social value and work on a more joined up approach to the management , measurement and monitoring of the social value element of contracts . In

In addition the challenge session has identified the need to clearly evaluate the impact of the social value requirements for the communities of Tower Hamlets through some form of social impact assessment tool. In addition, it was accepted that it is important to communicate effectively with potential providers and the local communities demonstrating the benefits and impact of social value.

The questions and comments from Members on the presentation are outlined as follows:

The Committee **noted**:

- That the challenge session was held on 9 March 2017 and had reviewed the existing procurement and commissioning approach to social value;
- The assessment of the monitoring, measurement and review of social value clauses and requirements in contracts;
- That the session had reviewed of the approach to assessing social value impact;
- That the session had recommended that the Council should develop a Social Value Policy including associated social value priorities and carry out a review of synergies and linkages with other complementary Council policies and strategies;
- That it was recommended that the Council should develop an approach to monitoring and measuring the social value outputs and deliverables; which could be through a standard framework, flexible to needs and nature of each contract;
- As a result of the challenge session it had been recommended that there should be an examination of the options to develop a social value impact and outcomes assessment tool, to determine the impact of social value activity and gauge its contribution to the Mayoral priorities;
- There should be a determined approach to cross organisation working to ensure that there is collective ownership of social value throughout the commissioning and procurement cycle; and
- A Social Value Communication and Engagement Plan should be developed so as to ensure that providers and communities are aware of the opportunities and impact of social value delivery in Tower Hamlets.

As a result of a full and wide ranging discussion on the above the Chair Moved and it was:-

RESOLVED to

1. **Agree** the Scrutiny Challenge Session Report and its five (5) recommendations; and
2. **Authorise** the Divisional Director Strategy, Policy and Performance to amend the draft report if necessary before submission to Cabinet, after consultation with the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5.3 Youth Service - Challenge Session

The Committee received a report that highlighted the approach, methodology and evidence gathered during the challenge session and subsequent review which were then used as the basis for developing the recommendations from the Youth Service challenge session. The challenge session was prompted by concerns about whether the significant changes made to the youth service (i.e. the interim delivery model put in place from July 2016) and the larger changes to come as a result of service review and reorganisation, adequately address the “lessons learned” from previous shortcomings in service delivery and provide the right service for local young people. The challenge session aimed to ensure that the future plans for the youth service have properly absorbed “lessons learned” from past work and have explored innovative approaches to achieving desired outcomes. It was noted that the three main areas of focus during the challenge session were the:

- resilience of the service,
- staffing of the service, and
- approach to outreach.

The questions and comments from Members on the presentation are outlined as follows:

The Committee:

- Commented that it would wish to see in future more details on the numbers attending youth centres in the Borough;
- Indicated that it would wish to see how the offer provided by the Youth Service measured up against other providers. In response it was noted that best practice from such providers would be considered;
- Would wish to see further evidence that would illustrate the benefits of the new ways of working;
- Noted that once restructure of the Service is completed then Members would receive an update;
- Noted that the Executive wished to develop a Service that provided value for money;
- Noted that incidences of Anti-Social behaviour near Youth Centres was being addressed by the Council and partner agencies but the perpetrators were not those using the Centres;
- Agreed that it was important to get the message out to the community as to what was being done to deliver an improved delivery of the service;
- Commented that it needed to be recognise the challenge that gangs present now that they are very much embedded in our communities and the impact upon young people; and
- Agreed that it was important that the Service should have access to funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106

As a result of a full and wide ranging discussion on the above the Chair Moved and it was:-

RESOLVED to

- **Agree** the draft report and the recommendations.
- **Authorise** the Divisional Director Strategy, Policy and Performance to amend the draft report if necessary before submission to Cabinet, after consultation with the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5.4 Free Schools - Challenge Session

The Committee received and noted a report that submitted the report and recommendations of the Free Schools Site Allocation Challenge Session. The Challenge Session took place on 26th February 2017 as a result of concerns amongst some Members about how the Council would be implementing the free school presumption process. Whilst the DfE has opened new free schools in Tower Hamlets, a number of site allocations for schools have been achieved through negotiations with developers for which the free school presumption process will apply.

It was noted that concern had been expressed that there was a risk that the Council can retain a large degree of control which could be seen as being contrary to the free school ethos. There is an additional risk that the Council, in being able to define the specification and design of new buildings, and consultations for a new school, could influence the outcome of the free school process such that any new school does not meet the expectation of local parents and children. The aim of the Session had been to explore ways in which the Council can ensure it offers families the kind of school places they seek, sufficient to meet demand both now and in future.

As a result of a full and wide ranging discussion on the above the Chair Moved and it was:-

RESOLVED to

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (a) **Agree** the draft report and the recommendations.
- (b) If necessary **authorise** the Divisional Director strategy, policy and partnership to amend the draft report before submission to Cabinet, after consultation with the Scrutiny Lead.

5.5 Reablement Scrutiny - Scrutiny Review

The Committee received and noted a report that outline what the Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee had done through a thematic approach to its work programme to focus on those issues relating to the access of health and social care services in Tower Hamlets. As part of this, the Sub-Committee had identified the performance of the Council's Reablement' Service as the subject for a Scrutiny Review, as it is a key gateway into the social care system from both acute and community health services. The ever increasing pressure on the NHS and adult social care arising from the needs of a growing, older population and continued public spending restraint, means the performance of the Reablement Service is an issue of major importance to the sustainability and effectiveness of the boroughs social care services.

The questions and comments from Members on the presentation are outlined as follows:

The Committee:

- Wanted to know which Housing Providers were seen to be good as supporting discharges through housing adaptations;
- Agreed that an effective Reablement Service is beneficial for residents, local authorities, and the NHS as it assists individuals to lead full and independent lives whilst reducing the overall cost of provision;
- Noted that the Reablement Service offers a short-term, six week Occupational Therapy-led intervention that supports people to regain their abilities to manage everyday tasks following an accident, ill health, disability or a stay in hospital, enabling them to live as independently as possible in the community; Acknowledged that an effective Reablement Service is beneficial for residents, local authorities, and the NHS as it assists individuals to lead full and independent lives whilst reducing the overall cost of provision.
- Recognised that Reablement can play a decisive role in helping people to regain their independence and maximising their health and wellbeing following hospitalisation or ill health; and
- Noted that Reablement can also reduce the amount of time a person needs to stay in hospital, therefore aiding faster recovery.

As a result of a full and wide ranging discussion on the above the Chair Moved and it was:-

RESOLVED to

Formally **note** the recommendations of the Health Scrutiny sub-committee's review of the LBTH Reablement Service.

6. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS

Nil items

7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

Nil items

8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The agenda circulated contained no exempt/ confidential business and there was therefore no requirement to exclude the press and public to allow for its consideration.

9. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

Nil items

The meeting ended at 7.15 p.m.

Chair, Councillor John Pierce
Overview & Scrutiny Committee

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.45 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 21 JUNE 2017

**ROOM C1, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE
CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Councillor Denise Jones (Chair)

Councillor Rajib Ahmed (Substitute for
Councillor Clare Harrisson)
Councillor Danny Hassell
Councillor Rabina Khan
Councillor Ayas Miah
Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaqim
Councillor Oliur Rahman
Councillor Helal Uddin
Councillor Andrew Wood

Co-opted Members Present:

Dr Phillip Rice	Church of England Representative
Fatiha Kassouri	Parent Governors
Shabbir Chowdhury	Parent Governors
Christine Trumper	Parent Governors

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor David Edgar	Cabinet Member for Resources
Councillor Sirajul Islam	Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing

Apologies:

Asad M Jaman	Muslim Faith Community
Councillor Clare Harrisson	

Officers Present:

Mark Baigent	Interim Divisional Director, Housing and Regeneration
Janet Fasan	Divisional Director, Legal
Sharon Godman	Divisional Director, Strategy, Policy and Partnerships
David Knight	Principal Committee Services Officer

Neville Murton

Divisional Director, Finance,
Procurement & Audit

Peter Quirk

Senior Strategy, Policy & Performance
Officer

Philip Wadsworth

Plan Making Team Leader

Robert Wingate

Complaints & Information Officer, Legal
Services, Chief Executive's

1. **DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST**

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest.

2. **UNRESTRICTED MINUTES**

The Chair **Moved** and it was:-

RESOLVED

That the unrestricted minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 29th March, 2017 and 26th April were approved as a correct record of the proceedings.

3. **REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS**

4. **UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'**

Nil items

5. **SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT**

5.1 **Budget Proposals**

The Committee received a presentation from Councilor David Edgar – Cabinet Member for Resources and Neville Murton - Service Head of Finance and Procurement highlighting a number of key issues including Smarter Together which is the name for the LBTH transformation programme that will fundamentally change the way the Council works, providing an opportunity to rethink and create the right service models, skills and tools to get the best outcomes for residents; the Whilst the Workforce Strategy has been designed to articulate the Councils vision and blueprint to ensure LBTH has the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time for the right price;. The Digital Strategy providing the context and framework for the digital transformation of the Council and empowering customers with greater access to complete 80% of their transactions online; and the Benefits and Third Sector Team which is at the forefront of welfare reform proving support, advice and guidance to residents.

This was followed by questions and comments from Members which is summarised as follows:

The Committee:

- Noted that the Mayor and Cabinet Member for Resources both appreciated the support provided by the Committee and welcomed their views on how they would wish to consider those issues;
- Asked for details on the Councils spend in agency workers. In response it was that the intention was to reduce the use of such workers although it was noted that they do provide the Authority with a valuable and flexible resource;
- Requested information on what is being done to help small business address the challenges they are facing with the new taxes now to be paid on non-residential properties. In response it was noted that it is accepted that help must be provided to businesses and going forward work is being undertaken to promote economic growth **e.g.** helping those businesses in significant need and require time to adjust to the increases in their rates;
- Wanted to know what is being done to help those on low incomes and who may be eligible for a council tax reduction of up to 100%;
- Wanted to be informed what is being done to ensure that the Boroughs IT infrastructure has the desired stability;
- Wished to be advised as to what is being done to help those self-employed workers on housing benefit. In response it was noted that work was being to help those with a low income who may be able to get Housing Benefit dependent on their self-employed earnings and any other earnings and benefits that they may receive.
- Wanted to be kept advised of what being done to support the long term development of the Boroughs infrastructure. In reply the Committee was informed that the infrastructure spend under constant review;
- Noted the need to monitor the impact of savings on the delivery of services and the plans for growth;
- Expressed concern that apparently there were those in the Borough either on low incomes or who were currently claiming benefits who were unaware that they might be able to apply to have their Council Tax reduced by up to 100%;

In conclusion, it was noted that the Executive were keen to be challenged on any of the issues referred to tonight and to discuss directly with the elected members who had specific issues that needed to be addressed and suggestions on how these might be resolved **e.g.** Council Tax and Business Rates.

6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Appointment of Scrutiny Vice-Chair; Lead Members, Co-options to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Establishment of Sub-Committees

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) received a report that:

- Asked for agreement on the Scrutiny Lead Members based on the Council's Directorates; and
- Asked Members to note the co-opted members of OSC in accordance with legislation.

As a result of a full and wide ranging discussion on the recommendations' contained in the report OSC

1. Agreed that it wished to continue to operate Scrutiny Leads with specific portfolios and appointed the following Lead Scrutiny Members:

Lead for Health, Adults & Community	Claire Harrisson
Lead for Lead for Governance	Ayas Miah
Lead for Children's Services	Danny Hassell
Lead for Place	Helal Uddin
Lead for Resources	Ansar Mustaquim

2. Noted the co-option to the membership of the OSC of representatives in respect of education matters, as set out below:

Church of England Diocese representative	Dr Phillip Rice
Roman Catholic Diocese representative	Nomination is awaited
Parent Governor Representative	Shabbir Chowdhury
Parent Governor Representative	Fatiha Kassouri
Parent Governor Representative	Christine Trumper
Muslim Community Representative (non-voting)	Asad M Jaman

3. The Housing; Health and Grants Sub-Committees be established with the Membership as set out in **Appendix 1** of the report and that the following Councillors are appointed to Chair these Sub-Committees:

Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee	Helal Uddin
Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee	Claire Harrisson
Grants Sub-Committee	Ansar Mustaquim

(Subsequent to the meeting the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny, Councillor Denise Jones, has raised with the Monitoring Officer her concerns over the appointments to Lead Members. She has stated that, for a number of reasons, there was significant confusion during that item of business and that the decisions taken was therefore not sound. The Monitoring Officer has agreed to void those decisions and to instruct the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to reconsider those decisions at its 20th of July 2017 meeting. Although the decisions made at the last

meeting to establish and appoint Members to the Sub-Committees are still valid. The Committee therefore have before them a new report to allow for the opportunity to retake the decisions).

6.2 Complaints and Information Half Year Report 2016/17

The Committee was informed that the Council receives an annual report on its complaints handling and information requests and also a briefer half year update. It was noted that this report accounts for the half year period 1 April 2016 to 31 October 2016. In addition, whilst the Council's escalation in the internal process and to external regulators including the Information Commissioner and the Local Government and Housing Ombudsmen are low, response rates could be improved in all areas of complaints and information requests. The Committee was also advised that a focus on quality is a key component of achieving a more streamlined 2 stage Corporate Complaints procedure and, although it was not addressed specifically within this report, this focus will it was noted would drive an improvement across the processes.

The questions and comments from Members are summarised as follows.

The Committee:

- Noted that the total for the half year shows a 16% decrease in volume of escalated complaints and this is reflected across the directorates. Resources had the greatest fall in volume (40%) followed by the former Communities, Localities and Culture Directorate with a 21% fall to 72 from 91 in the previous period. The total percentage of complaints closed in time remained at 76% over both periods. With the exception of Tower Hamlets Homes the general direction of complaints upheld or partially upheld has fallen with Place only upholding or partially upholding 5% compared to 30% in the previous period;
- Wanted to know if the complaints process was used to identify areas of concern and in response noted that if a pattern was identified then the service area would be identified;
- Noted that the Statutory complaint's procedure allows for one stage of investigation only, although the form this takes is agreed in the light of those issues raised;
- Noted that a variety of methods have been used to resolve complaints e.g. round table meetings; formal interview and file reviews, and liaison between the Service Manager and the complainant;
- Noted that the key to resolving matters has been the emphasis on identifying a resolution plan with the complainant;
- Also was informed how complaints are addressed is under regular review as part of the process to help services areas improve their delivery;
- Queried if residents were properly advised on how to make a challenge against a Penalty Charge Notice once it has been issued. In reply it was noted that a significant number of complaints were received about parking restrictions and how to get parking permits.

In conclusion, it was noted that the Committee indicated that it would like to consider further the inclusion of the complaints handling process within the Scrutiny Annual Work Plan.

6.3 Local Plan

The Committee received and noted a progress report on the Local Plan and was advised that since the end of 2015, the Government has launched a number key changes to reform the current planning system. This has had significant implications to the preparation of the new Local Plan.

It was noted that the national planning policy places Local Plans at the heart of the planning system, so it is essential that they are in place and kept up to date. Local Plans set out a vision and a framework for the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure – as well as a basis for safeguarding the environment, adapting to climate change and securing good design. They are also a critical tool in guiding decisions about individual development proposals, as Local Plans are the starting-point for considering whether applications can be approved.

The questions and comments from Members on the presentation are summarised as follows:

The Committee:

- Was advised that the Local Plans should be tailored to the needs of each area in terms of their strategy and the policies required. They should focus on the key issues that need to be addressed and be aspirational but realistic in what they propose;
- Noted that the Local Plan should aim to meet the objectively assessed development and infrastructure needs of the area, including unmet needs of neighbouring areas where this is consistent with policies in the National Planning Policy Framework as a whole. Local Plans should recognise the contribution that Neighbourhood Plans can make in planning to meet development and infrastructure needs;
- Noted that local planning authorities should ensure that the policies in their Local Plan recognise the diverse types of housing needed in their area and, where appropriate, identify specific sites for all types of housing to meet their anticipated housing requirement;
- Was informed that this could include sites for older people's housing including accessible mainstream housing such as bungalows and step-free apartments, sheltered or extra care housing, retirement housing and residential care homes;
- Commented that it wished to see a copy of the Local Plan at the earliest possible opportunity;

- Noted it is intended to engage as many as possible in the process around the development of the Local Plan;
- Expressed concern that the Local Plan needs to consider the clusters of betting shops that are changing the character and appeal of the traditional retail centres. In response it was noted that the proliferation of betting shops was to be addressed in the Local Plan; and
- Wanted the Plan to consider the role that the planning regulations can play in ensure that materials used in the design; construction and refurbishment of tall buildings is managed to address those concerns raised by the tragedy of Grenfell Tower. In response it was noted that in developing the Local Plan consideration had already been given to the design; construction and refurbishment of both tall and medium rise buildings.

7. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS

Noted that the Scrutiny Lead for Governance, Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaqim had as part of his work programme in the last municipal Year agreed to Chair a scrutiny challenge session. The aim of this session had been to consider the implications of the national review by Dame Louise Casey on opportunity and integration, in the Borough. It was noted the outcome of that challenge session would be published shortly.

8. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF UNRESTRICTED CABINET PAPERS

The Chair asked the Committee to submit any pre decision scrutiny of the unrestricted Cabinet papers prior to the 27th June, 2017 meeting.

(The submitted pre-decision scrutiny questions of the unrestricted Cabinet papers for the 27th June, 2017 meeting is attached at **Appendix 1**).

9. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

9.1 Fire Safety in Tower Hamlets

It was noted that Councillor Jones the Committee Chair had requested that the OSC Members should be provided with an update as an urgent item at this meeting on fire safety in Tower Hamlets.

Accordingly, the Chair invited Councillor Sirajul Islam Statutory Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayor for Housing to advise the Committee on those actions taken in Tower Hamlets following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in Kensington.

The questions and comments from Members on the update are summarised as follows:

The Committee:

- Noted that a letter from Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) has been posted on their [web-site](#) to provide some reassurance to residents. This letter would also be hand delivered to all residents living in flats over the coming days;
- Noted that Neighbourhood Housing Officers had been asked to be visible presence so that they can answer the questions that residents might have;
- Noted that as the cause of the fire was at present unknown the advice from the London Fire Brigade for people living in purpose built flats remains unchanged and is available on their [web site](#);
- Suggested that the Council should use some of its powers (i.e. through Building Control and Environmental Health) to ensure that all housing providers and businesses complied with fire safety requirements; and
- Also questioned the level of support that the Council is currently providing to those affected by the incident in Kensington along with the detail of the mutual aid provided to Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

In conclusion, the Chair confirmed that the Committee would like to have a further update at the next meeting and would like to be informed on the approach being to be taken by the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee in relation to scrutiny of the arrangements in the Borough pertaining to fire safety Accordingly, it was suggested that the Committee should carry out a review of the Council's Emergency Preparedness and Civil Contingency arrangements.

9.2 Children's Services Improvement - Update

The Committee received an update from Councillor Danny Hassell on the Children's Services Improvement Plan and noted that there had been an analysis of the situation within Children's Social Care. This 'diagnosis' has now been agreed by the Children's Improvement Board and Ofsted will look at whether they consider this is sufficient in terms of recognising the problems and failings. This has been reported by way of an introduction to the summary improvement document to the Best Value Improvement Board.

Following this diagnosis, it was noted that a thorough improvement plan had been drawn up for the Service, reflecting the issues stated in the Ofsted report and drawing on 10 key objectives of a good service for children and families which had been considered at the Children's Improvement Board.

The Committee was advised that the Improvement Board has now met twice and includes partners from a range of agencies (e.g. the independent Chair of Local Safeguarding Children's Board, Borough Commander and Clinical Commissioning Groups as well as internal officers and Councillors. The Board was chaired by Alan Wood, Director of Children's Services at Hackney Council. The aim of this Board being to 'hold a mirror up' at the improvement work and to encourage agencies to engage in a constructive critique of the services and ensuring that they meet the needs of children and families. It

had developed a Forward Plan of items to be considered and the next two meetings of the Board will be looking at the various thresholds; recruitment; supervision and casework recordings.

The Committee was also informed that following the cleansing of the data and the streamlining of some of the IT systems for recording referrals there is now a more reliable set of information going forward to be able to monitor improvements. The regular flow of these facts will work through officers and their relevant officer level boards before going to relevant elected members and the Improvement Board. This will be supplemented by other elements of quality assurance such as 'deep dive' case audits.

In addition, it was noted that due to the General Election there has been some delay in the Government formally issuing their directions in relation to the outcome of the Ofsted inspection. There was also a need to appoint an improvement partner for the local authority. Finally, when Ofsted visits next time as part of their programme of regular visits they will report on the progress, by which time the Authority needs to have made progress sufficient to assure Ofsted that the Authority is able to continue to make the improvements needed to protect and support our children and their families.

9.3 Scrutiny Work Planning Workshop

Noted that a Scrutiny Work Planning Workshop was scheduled for 22nd July, 2017 and would look at the range of scrutiny approaches available to the Committee and provided the opportunity to determine the key areas of focus and work for the Committee. This information would be used to update and refine the work plan for the year.

10. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The agenda circulated contained no exempt/ confidential business and there was therefore no requirement to exclude the press and public to allow for its consideration.

11. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Nil items

12. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

Nil items

13. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL) CABINET PAPERS

Nil items

14. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

Nil items

The meeting ended at 8.45 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Denise Jones
Overview & Scrutiny Committee

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS
Pre-Decision Question - Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 27th June, 2016

Cabinet Report/ Question	<u>Response</u>
<p><u>Item 5.1 Response to Ofsted SIF Inspection</u></p> <p>1) Page 8 Regarding the current model of social work practice 'Signs of Safety' not being effectively implemented, I understand that a back to basics training over the Summer of 2017 would assist with recalibrating the services' understanding of statutory requirements. It became evident from Family Support Workers that in some cases two different assessment tools were being used i.e. the understood, relevant 'Signs of Safety' were migrated into an existing assessment tool and the 'Signs of Safety' tool per se was being used.</p> <p>Can we have some understanding as to which assessment tool is going to be used as the standard assessment tool used by all moving forward?</p>	<p>Signs of Safety is the preferred model that LBTH will use throughout its practice as a consequence it is the expectations that assessments will follow the requirements of this framework. It is important to note however that practitioners and managers need to have the practice skills and the technical ability to assess well. Once they have developed this knowledge they will be able to apply their understanding within the signs of safety assessment framework. There will be times however, when specialist assessments will need to be applied because of the complexity of the child circumstances.</p>

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<p>2) Page 9 With regards to the introduction of cleansed and reliable child level data in May 2017 - I witnessed there was difficulty with the practical use of this because existing child and family data could not be found. This meant that families who were already registered with a Tower Hamlets Children Centre (having previously provided information) were asked to complete new registration forms.</p> <p>a) Does this mean that additional tracked information recorded and input by staff would have been lost?</p> <p>b) Was this a temporary glitch resulting in original data having been found and restored or is this still an ongoing situation?</p> <p>The concern would be that any difficulties with the necessary transference of data to work with newly implemented or revised systems might delay any hoped for progress with regards to effective delivery of practice and that any reference to data held might not be a true and accurate reflection of work done and relevant</p>	<p>The previous data system (Capita eStart) used across Children’s Centres was not fit for purpose. It was a national commercial system designed to meet general requirements of councils in very different circumstances. In order to better serve residents’ needs, the decision was taken across the council some years ago, to develop a more responsive and fit-for-purpose system. The replacement, the Early Intervention and Safeguarding (EIS) system, is used by children’s centres and other parts of the council.</p> <p>The data migration issues raised in the query affects Children’s centres transferring their information onto EIS. The children’s centre data migration activity from eStart to EIS revealed the incompleteness of the records held by the eStart system in relation to users of children’s centres. Despite system upgrades, it provided an unsatisfactory service because it limited the information centres were able to store electronically. Due to the previous system’s limitations, a phased approach to data migration was required. At the time of inspection, the data migrated was incomplete. This necessitated review and collection of data held by centres.</p> <p>Where records have yet to be migrated or are incomplete, parents are being asked to complete new registration forms to ensure we have accurate updated information. The final phase of the data migration task will be completed by the end of July. This will see family and activity information held on eStart fully migrated into EIS. To mitigate the impact of the amount of data available on EIS, a search function was made available for staff from end of April to be able to query the eStart database.</p> <p>The family support information is at present held in paper case files. These are stored securely in the centres and archived as appropriate in line with retention guidelines and requirements.</p> <p>Child observations and progress tracking was not held on the eStart system. There was therefore no loss of data. These records are stored securely in the centres and archived as appropriate in line with retention and information governance guidelines and requirements.</p> <p>Centres have been inputting the monitoring data for attendance at sessions into the EIS system as soon as their centres completed the transition, with all centres using EIS from 1st April onwards. Historical attendance records will be migrated into EIS as part of the second phase. There will be no loss of data.</p> <p>There are additional management information reports available to query eStart should</p>

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<p>findings. I think it is important to ascertain that the risk of inadequate or incomplete data is minimal and an understanding of how this has been ensured.</p>	<p>statistics on attendance be required before the completion of the data migration task. With regards to the accuracy of the data migration task, there is a data dictionary outlining all data items included in the migration. The user acceptance test will carry out checks to ensure data has been migrated successfully before accepting the final solution. One delivery site in the SW has no access to IT. In these circumstances, staff are required to take down written details in order to keep families safe. Where parents have a second child, we ask for a re-registration as much of the information held for the first child is likely to change.</p>
<p>3) Page 10 Measures of Progress ...regularly and rigorously overseen by councillors in both executive and scrutiny roles. Please could we know how often 'regularly' would be.</p> <p>On Page 29 A stable workforce of qualified and experienced social workers - This is perhaps not a pre-decision scrutiny question but something I would like some further information about, as to what steps are being taken to effect this and what checks are in place to ensure the steps are</p> <p>a) Adequate and b) Time bound.</p>	<p>We have committed to ensuring that the Mayor, Lead Member and Scrutiny Lead will have access to a full data set on a monthly basis. In addition the Mayor, Lead Member and Scrutiny Lead attend the Children’s Services Improvement Board which routinely reviews and challenges the data.</p> <p>A comprehensive workforce strategy has been developed and actioned to take account of the recruitment and retention issues highlighted in the report. this will be reviewed as part of the Children’s Services Improvement Board.</p>

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<p><u>Item 5.4 Town Centre Wi-Fi Programme</u></p> <p>By rolling out the Wi-Fi to Tower Hamlets will this impact on Idea Stores reducing their services which could then be argued that savings can be made from Idea Stores?</p> <p>What safeguarding will be in place as free Wi-Fi means that children and young people will access without monitoring what they are searching on the internet potentially exposing them to various dangers such as radicalisation and child exploitation?</p>	<p><u>Connectivity and Ideas Stores</u></p> <p>The development work carried out to inform the Public Wi-Fi for All Programme found that there is a good level of Wi-Fi offered in public buildings in Tower Hamlets, including the Idea Stores, but there is a lack of Wi-Fi available in public spaces. The Wi-Fi for All Programme will improve coverage and connectivity capacity in the borough. The Street Furniture Concession will result in the deployment of technology on street lighting and CCTV columns to improve mobile connectivity and coverage across the borough and offer free public Wi-Fi in public spaces. The availability of free public Wi-Fi, together with the improved mobile connectivity, will complement the free Wi-Fi available in the Council’s Idea Stores.</p> <p>Therefore when people leave the Idea Store they will be able to continue to access free public Wi-Fi to access the internet. This enhances connectivity and does not duplicate any resident service provision.</p> <p>The borough’s Idea Stores are supporting delivery of a pilot Digital Inclusion project that will be delivered alongside the deployment of the first phase roll out of public Wi-Fi in Brick Lane, Watney Market and Chrisp Street. The Digital Inclusion project will deliver training and activities with businesses, including market traders, and residents to address digital exclusions issues they face and help them get on-line with confidence. The lessons learnt from the delivery of this pilot Digital Inclusion project will enable the Idea Store to consider how to develop its services to help address digital inclusion.</p> <p><u>Web Access restrictions</u></p> <p>The terms and conditions of the concession agreements that the Council will issue to the appointed Provider will include strict requirements that they prevent users of the public Wi-Fi service accessing sites that promote unhealthy lifestyles, divisive messages and that are deemed inappropriate for children and young people.</p>

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	<p>A list of websites, including those relating to forms of gambling, pornography, high interest loans, fast foods and man other areas, will be included in the concession agreement and these will be blocked by the Provider.</p> <p>Once this agreement goes live the list will be continually added to, ensuring that any new sites to be blocked are identified. Controls of this kind are widely and successfully used in these concession contracts in other local authorities who have delivered similar Wi-Fi access.</p>
<p>Item 5.5 - Update on the Civic Centre Project - Question on sprinklers:</p> <p>Will sprinklers be installed in the new Civic Centre as part of the refurbishment programme?</p> <p>Item 5.5 - Update on the Civic Centre Project – Paragraph 9.10 - Question on disposal sites: OSC committee welcomes the possibility that the council may develop some of the sites listed for disposal directly for the provision of homes or other uses, noting that a financial appraisal and feasibility study will be reported to the Executive at the appropriate time</p>	<p>The design team have recently completed stage 2 of the design process for the new civic centre. This is the concept design stage. At this stage, the fire strategy for the building has not yet been finalised. The fire strategy for the site will be developed further during stage 3 (detailed design), bearing in mind Part B of the Building Regulations. This will be reviewed in detail by the council’s Building Control service.</p> <p>Noted. The Mayor is keen to ensure the Council maximises the benefit of the council’s land holdings for the borough’s residents. These potential developments will, as noted by O&S Committee, require additional work by way of feasibility studies and financial appraisals before being presented to the Mayor for his determination.</p>

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<p>Item 5.5 - Update on the Civic Centre Project – Paragraph 19.5 - Question on disposal sites Question on risks: Having adopted a capital budget for the project how will Cabinet monitor the risks listed in the Report at Paragraph 23.2 that are to be managed by the Project Team and Senior officers of the council?</p>	<p>The project team regularly review all risks and control measures with any outstanding actions escalated including to Chief Officers if required. These risks are then reported on a regular basis to the project board and project team meetings, including any movement in risks, the implementation of control measures and any outstanding actions required to continue to manage and monitor the risk. Where there are high risks, these feed into the council’s corporate risk register, which gets reported to the Corporate Leadership Team for review and action.</p>
<p>Item 5.9 List of Executive Mayoral Decisions - (Page 359) - 10 Turin Street E2 6NJ Please explain where is the existing site as the paper states that the group are using 10 Turin Street as a decant space.</p>	<p>The proposed tenant’s existing site is 2A Buckfast Street, London, E2 6EY.</p>
<p>Item 5.9 Item 5.9 List of Executive Mayoral Decisions - (Page 383) Swanlea School I welcome the decision to approve the waiver of the council’s procurement procedures to allow the appointment of Oakray to immediately carry out the necessary smoke ventilation system in Swanlea School. But my concern is that the contract who is working with a sub-contractor carries out the work effectively meeting regulatory standards?</p>	<p>The Council will be monitoring the works to ensure that all regulatory standards are adhered to. Council officers will be working closely with the contractor and sub-contractor to ensure this happens, including specifying the works to be carried out and the equipment to be installed. These will then be verified by council officers after the works are completed.</p>

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It also raises that all schools should inspect their fire safety as soon as possible.	

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