

CABINET

Tuesday, 31 October 2017 at 5.30 p.m.

TABLED PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

	PAGE NUMBER
4.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions	
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) to report on any issues raised by the OSC in relation to unrestricted business to be considered.	3 - 6

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LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS
Pre-Decision Questions - Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 25th October 2017

Cabinet Report	Questions / Responses
<p>Item 5.7 – Statement of Licensing Policy Review</p>	<p>Question: There have been concerns raised by Licensing Committee about the changing nature of the borough through the introduction of high density residential developments. This was of particular concern when considering the SEV Licenses for Whites and Flamingos, which now have a substantial residential community on their doorsteps. It is understood that the Council is now going to work towards addressing this issue as part of the consideration of future SEV Licenses?</p> <p>Response: The SEV (Sexual Entertainment Venues) Policy is not due for review – it’s already set at nil, apart from current operators exempt.</p> <p>It is the Statement of Licensing Policy that is for review and adoption next year (Sept 2018) This covers alcohol and late night refreshment.</p> <p>The question of locality can be used under the current SEV policy to refuse a licence – the Committee were provided with data this year which did not seemingly demonstrate a change in the locality.</p> <p>This is therefore not a change of policy issue but one of sufficiency of evidence.</p>
<p>Item 5.9 – Contract Forward Plan</p>	<p>Question: Contracts Forward Plan – Quarter Three – specifically CS5277 Externally commissioned placements for children looked after</p> <p>The committee wished to know that following discussions at the YOT Management Board, the Council will now make it a contractual obligation placed upon these providers that they will not pursue criminal proceedings against children we place in their care without the express authority of the Council.</p> <p>Response:</p>

Cabinet Report	Questions / Responses
	<p>It is our expectation that providers do not criminalise our children unnecessarily. They therefore need to discuss any proposed criminal action against the children we place with the allocated social worker unless the matter is so serious that it is not feasible for this happen. Where this is case the allocated social worker needs to be informed within one working day.</p>
<p>Item 5.12 School Place Investment Planning, Children's Services Capital Programme</p>	<p>Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why is it that this report was submitted so late and after Overview & Scrutiny Committee? <p>Response:</p> <p>Attached a copy of the note sent to Cllr Chesterton in this regard, which was sent towards the end of last week.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. What are the Air Quality readings on the proposed Bromley Hall school site situated close to the A12 in an area that the draft Local Plan says has a nitrogen oxide concentration of in excess of 40 u/g/m3? <p>Response:</p> <p>A complete air quality assessment has been conducted as part of the planning application submission process, alongside a planned monitoring and mitigation strategy. Anticipated nitrogen dioxide levels across 7 receptors located around the school site at child height, indicate that on average, levels will be at circa 32.6 u/g/m3 by the projected year of opening of 2023. This is a projected fall from the average in 2014 of 42.7 u/g/m3. In relation to particulate matter the anticipated reduction between 2014 levels and 2023 is smaller falling from 26.8 u/g/m3 to 26.6 u/g/m3. Both of these are below the air quality standard quoted of 40 u/g/m3.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. George Greens School – current buildings may only last another 10 years, is it not time to look at a more thorough rebuild rather than more patchwork changes?

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	<p>Response:</p> <p>Limited capital resources are available for addressing the condition needs of schools (circa £3m grant per year for all schools maintained by the local authority) and these funds need to be targeted to ensure that premises are wind and weather tight and safe for use in terms of heat and light and other environmental conditions. Other resources secured from S106 and CIL are largely focused on providing additional facilities/infrastructure in response to housing growth and it is therefore not possible simply to replace existing provision through use of these funds. The changes proposed at George Green's and Langdon Park provide additional school places and deploy the new place related 'Basic Need' in addition to S106. Wholesale replacement of school accommodation would be planned where this was considered the most cost effective way forward, but the level of resources available does not allow this.</p> <p>4. Birth rate in Tower Hamlets – given reduction in Reception class intake is this because of fall in birth rate 4 to 5 years earlier or because parents are choosing to send their children to schools elsewhere? What explanations does LBTH have for this reduction given continuing population growth?</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>The number of births in 2013/14 and 2014/15 fell from a high in 2012/13 of circa 4,800 to between 4,500 and 4,600. This is feeding through to lower numbers in current year reception classes. While the number of births is now very slowly rising, the borough's general fertility rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15-44) has been falling from 62.1 in 2012 to 53.5 in 2016. Birth rates have also fallen in other inner London boroughs. Tower Hamlets now has the 6th lowest birth rate in London – with 2016 rates most similar to Kensington & Chelsea (51.1) and Wandsworth (54.1). This is why the number of births is relatively low despite the borough's fast population growth.</p> <p>5. Given that LBTH is the fastest growing Borough in the country and number one recipient of New Homes Bonus why has it taken so long to set up new schools (8 to 10 years approximately between introduction of free school presumption and proposed new school opening at Bow)</p>

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	<p>Response:</p> <p>New schools have been proposed in response to the anticipated timing of projected demand for additional places. Prior to the current round of proposed new schools (Bromley Hall, Bow, Wood Wharf etc.), additional provision has been made by the expansion of existing schools which is generally more cost effective than making provision through new schools. Existing schools were therefore the providers in these cases and there was no need to go to the market to invite providers through the FSP process.</p> <p>6. No information about Westferry nor Millharbour schools in text despite substantial sums in the budget section.</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>Westferry and Millharbour schemes were covered in the place planning report to Cabinet on 19 September and there is nothing further to report at this stage. No changes are being proposed to the previously agreed budgetary provision through this report.</p> <p>7. Update required on London Dock School as budget shows substantial spend in the next few years, no mention in text, is proposed public meeting on 9th November still going ahead?</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>As for Westferry and Millharbour, the London Dock scheme was reviewed in the place planning report to Cabinet on 19 September and there is no further information to report. The cash flow of the available funding will not be revised until an alternative delivery timescale is agreed, following the next review of projections of demand for secondary school places in summer 2018. It continues to be proposed to submit the developed scheme for planning consent within the next few weeks, so that the scheme can be reactivated quickly for implementation if necessary. The consultation proposed for 9 November will therefore still proceed.</p>