

Meeting of the

# OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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Tuesday, 7 April 2009 at 7.00 p.m.

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## A G E N D A

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### VENUE

Room M71, 7th Floor, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent,  
London, E14 2BG

Members:	Deputies (if any):
Chair: Councillor Abdul Asad Vice-Chair: Councillor Bill Turner	
Councillor Stephanie Eaton Councillor Ahmed Hussain Councillor Waiseul Islam Councillor Ann Jackson Councillor Shiria Khatun Councillor Abjol Miah Councillor Oliur Rahman Councillor A A Sardar Councillor David Snowdon	Councillor M. Shahid Ali, (Designated Deputy representing Councillors Abdul Asad, Waiseul Islam, Ann Jackson, Shiria Khatun, Oliur Rahman, A. A. Sardar and Bill Turner) Councillor Tim Archer, (Designated Deputy representing Councillors Ahmed Hussain and David Snowdon) Councillor Peter Golds, (Designated Deputy representing Councillors Ahmed Hussain and David Snowdon) Councillor Carli Harper-Penman, (Designated Deputy representing Councillors Abdul Asad, Waiseul Islam, Ann Jackson, Shiria Khatun, Oliur Rahman, A. A. Sardar and Bill Turner) Councillor Azizur Rahman Khan, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Stephanie Eaton) Councillor Abdul Matin, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Stephanie Eaton)

Councillor Fozol Miah, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Abjol Miah)

Councillor Harun Miah, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Abjol Miah)

Councillor Tim O'Flaherty, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Stephanie Eaton)

Councillor M. Mamun Rashid, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Abjol Miah)

Councillor Salim Ullah, (Designated Deputy representing Councillors Abdul Asad, Waiseul Islam, Ann Jackson, Shiria Khatun, Oliur Rahman, A. A. Sardar and Bill Turner)

**[Note: The quorum for this body is 4 voting Members].**

**Co-opted Members:**

Mr D McLaughlin	– Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster Representative
Mr Ahbab Miah	– (Parent Governor Representative)
Mr H Mueenuddin	– Muslim Community Representative
Mr Abdur Rouf	– (Parent Governor Representative)
Vacancy	– Church of England Diocese Representative

If you require any further information relating to this meeting, would like to request a large print, Braille or audio version of this document, or would like to discuss access arrangements or any other special requirements, please contact: Amanda Thompson, Democratic Services, Tel: 020 7364 4651, E-mail: [amanda.thompson@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:amanda.thompson@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**  
**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, 7 April 2009**

**7.00 p.m.**

**SECTION ONE**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive any apologies for absence.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To note any declarations of interest made by Members, including those restricting Members from voting on the questions detailed in Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992. See attached note from the Chief Executive.

**3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES**

**3 - 10**

To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 10 March 2009.

**4. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS**

To be notified at the meeting.

**5. REQUESTS FOR DEPUTATIONS**

To be notified at the meeting.

**6. SECTION ONE REPORTS 'CALLED IN'**

There were no Section One reports 'called in' from the meeting of Cabinet held on 10 March 2009.

**7. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Lutfur Rahman, will attend to report on his portfolio.

(Time allocated – 40 minutes)

**8. PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

## **8.1 Comprehensive Area Assessment**

To receive a presentation by Jon Underwood and Daisy Beserve, Strategy and Performance.

(Time allocated - 20 minutes)

## **8.2 Draft Strategic Plan 2009/10 - To Follow**

(Time allocated – 30 minutes)

## **9. SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT**

### **9.1 Alcohol Misuse Amongst Young People (Smashed) - Report of the Scrutiny Working Group - To Follow**

(Time allocated – 15 minutes)

## **10. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS**

(Time allocated – 5 minutes each)

## **11. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF SECTION ONE (UNRESTRICTED) CABINET PAPERS**

(Time allocated – 30 minutes).

## **12. ANY OTHER SECTION ONE (UNRESTRICTED) BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT**

## **13. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

In view of the contents of the remaining items on the agenda the Committee is recommended to adopt the following motion:

“That, under the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for the consideration of the Section Two business on the grounds that it contains information defined as Exempt in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972.”

### **EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL SECTION (Pink Papers)**

The exempt committee papers in the agenda will contain information, which is commercially, legally or personally sensitive and should not be divulged to third parties. If you do not wish to retain these papers after the meeting, please hand them to the Committee Officer present.

**14. SECTION TWO REPORTS 'CALLED IN'**

There were no Section Two reports 'called in' from the meeting of Cabinet held on 10 March 2009.

**15. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF SECTION TWO (RESTRICTED) CABINET PAPERS**

(Time allocated 5 minutes).

**16. ANY OTHER SECTION TWO (RESTRICTED) BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

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# Agenda Item 2

## DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS - NOTE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE FOR MEMBERS OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

This note is guidance only. Members should consult the Council's Code of Conduct for further details. Note: Only Members can decide if they have an interest therefore they must make their own decision. If in doubt as to the nature of an interest it is advisable to seek advice **prior** to attending at a meeting.

### Declaration of interests for Members

Where Members have a personal interest in any business of the authority as described in paragraph 4 of the Council's Code of Conduct (contained in part 5 of the Council's Constitution) then s/he must disclose this personal interest as in accordance with paragraph 5 of the Code. Members must disclose the existence and nature of the interest at the start of the meeting and certainly no later than the commencement of the item or where the interest becomes apparent.

You have a **personal interest** in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:

- (a) An interest that you must **register**
- (b) An interest that is not on the register, but where the well-being or financial position of you, members of your family, or people with whom you have a close association, is likely to be affected by the business of your authority more than it would affect the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision.

Where a personal interest is declared a Member may stay and take part in the debate and decision on that item.

**What constitutes a prejudicial interest?** - Please refer to paragraph 6 of the adopted Code of Conduct.

**Your personal interest will also be a prejudicial interest in a matter if (a), (b) and either (c) or (d) below apply:-**

- (a) A member of the public, who knows the relevant facts, would reasonably think that your personal interests are so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgment of the public interests; AND
- (b) The matter does not fall within one of the exempt categories of decision listed in paragraph 6.2 of the Code; AND EITHER
- (c) The matter affects your financial position or the financial interest of a body with which you are associated; or
- (d) The matter relates to the determination of a licensing or regulatory application

The key points to remember if you have a prejudicial interest in a matter being discussed at a meeting:-

- i. You must declare that you have a prejudicial interest, and the nature of that interest, as soon as that interest becomes apparent to you; and
- ii. You must leave the room for the duration of consideration and decision on the item and not seek to influence the debate or decision unless (iv) below applies; and

- iii. You must not seek to improperly influence a decision in which you have a prejudicial interest.
- iv. If Members of the public are allowed to speak or make representations at the meeting, give evidence or answer questions about the matter, by statutory right or otherwise (e.g. planning or licensing committees), you can declare your prejudicial interest but make representations. However, you must immediately leave the room once you have finished your representations and answered questions (if any). You cannot remain in the meeting or in the public gallery during the debate or decision on the matter.

**There are particular rules relating to a prejudicial interest arising in relation to Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

- You will have a prejudicial interest in any business before an Overview & Scrutiny Committee or sub committee meeting where both of the following requirements are met:-
  - (i) That business relates to a decision made (whether implemented or not) or action taken by the Council's Executive (Cabinet) or another of the Council's committees, sub committees, joint committees or joint sub committees
  - (ii) You were a Member of that decision making body at the time and you were present at the time the decision was made or action taken.
- If the Overview & Scrutiny Committee is conducting a review of the decision which you were involved in making or if there is a 'call-in' you may be invited by the Committee to attend that meeting to answer questions on the matter in which case you must attend the meeting to answer questions and then leave the room before the debate or decision.
- If you are not called to attend you should not attend the meeting in relation to the matter in which you participated in the decision unless the authority's constitution allows members of the public to attend the Overview & Scrutiny for the same purpose. If you do attend then you must declare a prejudicial interest even if you are not called to speak on the matter and you must leave the debate before the decision.



**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 10 MARCH 2009**

**ROOM M71, 7TH FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE  
CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

**Members Present:**

Councillor Abdul Asad (Chair)  
Councillor Waiseul Islam  
Councillor Ann Jackson  
Councillor Oliur Rahman  
Councillor A A Sardar  
Councillor David Snowdon  
Councillor Bill Turner (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Peter Golds  
Councillor Salim Ullah (Deputising for Councillor Shiria Khatun)

**Other Councillors Present:**

Councillor Ohid Ahmed  
Councillor Clair Hawkins  
Councillor Sirajul Islam  
Councillor Joshua Peck  
Councillor Lutfur Rahman

**Co-opted Members Present:**

Mr Ahbab Miah – (Parent Governor Representative)  
Mr H Mueenuddin – Muslim Community Representative  
Mr Abdur Rouf – (Parent Governor Representative)

**Officers Present:**

Lutfur Ali – (Assistant Chief Executive)  
Aman Dalvi – (Corporate Director, Development & Renewal)  
David Galpin – (Head of Legal Services (Community))  
Afazul Hoque – (Acting Scrutiny Policy Manager)  
Jebin Syeda – (Scrutiny Policy Officer)  
Anthony Walters – (Interim Service Head Strategy, Partnership and Performance, Children's Services)  
Owen Whalley – (Service Head, Major Project Development)  
Beverley McKenzie –  
Amanda Thompson – (Team Leader - Democratic Services)

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed Mr Abdur Rouf and Mr Ahbab Miah, the two recently appointed Parent Governor Co-opted Members, to their first meeting.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stephanie Eaton, Ahmed Hussain and Shiria Khatun.

Councillors Peter Golds and Salim Ullah were present as substitutes for Councillors Hussain and Khatun.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**4. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES**

Councillor Oliur Rahman stated that he had given apologies for absence prior to the last meeting and asked that this be correctly recorded.

Councillor Golds and Councillor Snowden asked that it be recorded that they had not agreed to support the budget as recorded in minute 7.1 (General Fund Budget Requirement & Council Tax 2009/10).

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes be adopted with inclusion of Councillor Rahman's apologies.

**5. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS**

None.

**6. REQUESTS FOR DEPUTATIONS**

None.

**7. SECTION ONE REPORTS 'CALLED IN'**

There were no Section One reports 'called in' from the meeting of Cabinet held on 11 February,

## **8. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT - LEAD MEMBER**

Councillor Ohid Ahmed Lead Member of Regeneration, Localisation and Community Partnerships opened his presentation by giving a brief overview of what his Portfolio entailed, in particular highlighting the areas of local regeneration such as Bishop's Square, Roman Road Town Centre, Blackwall Reach and the Ocean Estate.

Key project aims included the demolition and redevelopment of 1600 new homes at Blackwall Reach and Robin Hood Gardens, 35% of which would be affordable housing, and 771 new homes and 1229 refurbished local authority homes on the Ocean Estate.

The Committee noted that the remodelling of the Community Plan and Local Area which had been identified as challenges the previous year were now achievements as the new Community Plan had been written and published, 35 new LAA targets had been agreed through the Partnership, and the new LAP Steering Groups had been successfully recruited to.

The Committee were also informed of achievements in relation to community engagement, consultation and empowerment, strategic and regeneration partnerships, business liaison and partnership, business tourism and community cohesion.

Members of the Committee asked questions regarding community cohesion, the recruitment of the Roman Road Town Centre Co-ordinator, affordable homes targets, and the roles of the Thames Gateway Development Corporation and Partnership.

The Chair thanked Councillor Ahmed for his presentation and for providing responses to the questions raised by the Committee.

## **9. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK ITEMS**

### **9.1 Children and Young People's Plan 2009-12**

Councillor Clair Hawkins, Lead member for Children's Services, presented the draft 3-year Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2009-12 which was required to be published in April 2009.

The Committee noted that the new CYPP was different to previous plans as it was shorter and more focused on key priorities, and it outlined what was going to be done differently in order to address these. Three new cross-cutting themes had been identified which ran throughout the plan, these were tackling child poverty, engaging the community and supporting families.

Arising from the discussion the Committee

## **RESOLVED**

That the following comments on the draft CYPP 2009-12 be submitted to Cabinet:

- 1) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcome the Children and Young People's Plan 2009-12, and would like to thank the Lead Member and Officers for the extensive work that has gone into developing the plan. It is noted that this is a partnership document and consultation has taken place with all the stakeholders and young people and their families.
- 2) The Committee feel that there are a number of issues that the Cabinet should consider before endorsing the plan, including the need to be more explicit about how to tackle bullying especially homophobic bullying, and about the support available for 11-13 year olds which is a very important time of transition for young people.
- 3) The Committee have concerns about inter-generational worklessness and feel that the Plan should outline how this problem is being addressed and how young people are supported to be successful.
- 4) The Committee consider that the Olympics will provide a great opportunity for the Borough's young people to take an active part and the Council need to ensure this opportunity is maximised.

## **10. PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

### **10.1 Members Enquiries**

Councillor Sirajul Islam, Deputy Leader of the Council, introduced a report updating the Committee on further progress in finalizing the Members' Enquiries Business Process Improvement (BPI) project, and setting out current performance data in relation to Members' Enquiries.

The Committee noted that there had been an improvement in both quality and speed of response, with Council directorates presently achieving the target of 85% of enquiries responded to within 10 working days. Many of the milestones within the project had now been completed and attention was now focused on sustaining the improvement in response time, continued improvement, measuring the quality of responses and working with external bodies that had not yet achieved the target.

In response to questions, Beverley McKenzie, Members Support Manager, advised that the Council was still working very hard with the Housing Associations and they had been written to and urged to improve by the Chief Executive. Often their responses were not very satisfactory even when they were received and the quality needed improving.

The difficulties encountered by Members trying to deal with NHS issues were also recognised, and pressure would need to be applied in the same way as the Housing Associations.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1) That the current activities and progress made in the Members' Enquiries Business Process Improvement project and the move to continuous improvement be noted;
- 2) That the improvement in timeliness of responding to Members' Enquiries and the success of all Council departments achieving the performance target of 85% be noted; and
- 3) That a vote of thanks be expressed to the Members Support Team for all their hard work.

### **10.2 Strategic Plan Corporate Revenue Monitoring Report 2008-09 (3rd Quarter)**

Councillor Josh Peck, Lead Member for Resources and Performance, presented the combined service and financial performance report which covered the authority's progress against the actions in the Strategic Plan, key performance indicators and the overall financial position to the end of December 2008 (Quarter 3).

Councillor Peck highlighted the projected underspend of £2.328m for the authority on the General Fund revenue budget for the current financial year, and the improvements in the average waiting time for calls to Hot Lines to be answered and for benefits claims to be notified.

Councillor Anne Jackson expressed concern that data was not yet available for the percentage of vulnerable people either achieving or being supported to achieve independent living and this was a priority indicator. Councillor Peck undertook to report back on this.

#### **RESOLVED**

That the performance information set out in the report be noted.

## **11. SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT**

### **11.1 Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Tracking Report**

The Chair introduced the report which provided an update on the scrutiny review recommendations undertaken over the last two years.

Overall services were implementing the majority of the recommendations and outcomes and ongoing work streams were in line with the spirit of the original recommendations. Of the 18 action plans being monitored, 11 were at green with 7 currently at yellow, six of which were due to the action plans only being agreed by the Cabinet recently.

The Chair advised that for the next year it was proposed that the Scrutiny Leads would meet with the relevant service to discuss a particular review and then provide an update to the Committee on the progress of those within their portfolios.

In respect of the scrutiny review concerning the determination of major planning applications, Councillor Ann Jackson advised that there were still many residents that were dissatisfied with the consultation process in relation to these, and the Council needed to be more proactive in increasing public awareness of what was going on.

Councillor Oliur Rahman expressed his thanks to the Scrutiny Team for all the support provided to Members when undertaking the reviews, and also asked for a breakdown of the nature of anti-social behaviour which was often wrongly just associated with young people.

#### **RESOLVED**

That the report be noted.

#### **12. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF SECTION ONE (UNRESTRICTED) CABINET PAPERS**

The Chair **moved** and it was **RESOLVED**

That the following pre-decision questions be submitted to Cabinet for consideration:

##### **Agenda Item 6.1 Review of Local Land Charges Search Fees (CAB 128/089)**

1. Are the prices fixed by legislation or can the Council set their own and can we keep our prices for priority searches to £200 and increase other areas to £155 per search?

##### **Agenda Item 7.2 Results of the Consultation on the 2010/11 Admission Arrangements for Tower Hamlets Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools (CAB 131/089)**

1. As only 2 school governors responded to the consultation can the Cabinet outline how they will change the consultation process to

ensure we have a more comprehensive involvement of school governors on this important issue?

2. Can the Council be proactive and introduce a mandatory admission for all 3 + years in nursery through this new admission scheme?
3. How will the new admission arrangements deal with the following:
  - Large increase in the population of young people in LAP 5 and 6 over the next 10 years:
  - The increase in the development of high rise buildings with families living in those and the demand on local schools from residents living in those

#### **Agenda Item 10.1 Local Area Agreement (LAA) Refresh ( CAB 132/089)**

1. The Partnership is seeking to review targets relating to housing delivery due to the economic downturn. Can the Cabinet outline what they are planning to do to reduce overcrowding and build more family sized homes through this agreement?

#### **Agenda Item 10.2 Future of Out of Hours Telephone Service**

1. Out of the 60,000 calls received in year 2007/08 how many of them were from RSL properties and how many from the council owned properties?
2. As most of the RSLs use the Council's out of hour services how much were their contribution towards the cost and how much is the cost of providing this service for them?

#### **Agenda Item 10.3 Award of Benefits Resilience Contract (CAB 134/089)**

1. Will the Cabinet agree to receive six monthly or annual review of the contract before extending the contract and use performance data from the last 3 years to benchmark against future performance?
2. Is this a gateway for the council to eventually outsource its core service of dealing with benefits?
3. Can the Cabinet provide more credible evidence which shows that the proposed contract will bring savings of £1.7m pa?
4. There are more than 30 organisations in the borough that deal with benefit claims; can the Cabinet create a local consortium to provide this service?
5. Will the Cabinet ensure the tendered organisation aspires to the Council's equal pay and workforce to reflect the community policies?

