

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.12 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2016

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

Members Present:

Councillor John Pierce (Chair)	
Councillor Amina Ali	– Scrutiny Lead for Development and Renewal
Councillor Abdul Asad	– Scrutiny Lead for Communities, Localities & Culture
Councillor Julia Dockerill	– Scrutiny Lead for Children's Services
Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE (Vice-Chair)	– Scrutiny Lead for Resources
Councillor Md. Maium Miah	
Councillor Helal Uddin	
Councillor Clare Harrisson	– Scrutiny Lead for Adult Health and Wellbeing

Co-opted Members Present:

Victoria Ekubia	– (Roman Catholic Church Representative)
Dr Phillip Rice	– (Church of England Representative)
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Other Councillors Present:

Councillor David Edgar	– Cabinet Member for Resources
Councillor Rachel Blake	– Cabinet for Strategic Development
Councillor Rachael Saunders	– Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services

Apologies:

Councillor Mahbub Alam
Councillor Oliur Rahman

Officers Present:

Margaret Cooper	– (Section Head Transport & Highways, Public Realm, Communities Localities & Culture)
Ruth Dowden	– (Complaints & Information Manager, Legal Services, Law Probity &

Sharon Godman	Governance) – Service Head, Strategy, Policy & Performance
Afazul Hoque	– Interim Service Manager, Strategy, Policy & Performance
Christine McInnes	– (Service Head, Education and Partnerships, Children's Services)
Neville Murton	– (Service Head, Finance & Procurement)
David Knight	– (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Sharon Godman the new Head of Strategy Policy and Performance, to this her first meeting of the Committee.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mahbub Alam and Councillor Oliur Rahman. Also noted the following substitution arrangements

1. Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaquim for Councillor Mahbub Alam; and
2. Councillor Md. Maium Miah for Councillor Oliur Rahman.

3. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

The Committee noted that there were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest.

4. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

The Committee received the minutes of the last meeting as a result of considering the draft:

1. **Councillor Abdul Asad** indicated that the Committee should receive and update on the progress being made with regard to the appointment of the new co-opted members.
2. **Councillor Clare Harrisson** indicated that

Page 4 Item 5.3 Paragraph Question 1 Waste Management Services – Delivery Options (contract extension) she had been seeking clarification on if the contract had been extended with conditions attached as opposed to the redesigning of the contract.

Page 4 Item 5.3 Paragraph Question 2 Waste Management Services – Delivery Options (contract extension) this should have been referring to the extension and not the redesigning of the contract.

With particular reference in both instances to clarification if there would or would not be any changes specifically with regard to the extension of the contract

Page 4 Item 5.3 Paragraph Question 3 Waste Management Services – Delivery Options (contract extension) that the reference with specifically relates to Member involvement in the extension and not the redesign of the contract.

Page 4 Item 5.9 Question 4 Contract Forward Plan Quarter 3 (2016/17) wished to see the business case that validates the decision to extend the existing leisure management contract. Together with why that decision was made and why it was felt that the decision to redesign was applicable for Waste as the contract was no longer fit for purpose yet not for Leisure Services. Therefore, that there was an opportunity to undertake some positive work corporately to identify potential future savings.

Page 5 Item 5.9 Question 6 Contract Forward Plan Quarter 3 (2016/17) wanted to see what evidence will be provided on the financial planning and how we audit that.

3. **Councillor Abdul Asad** asked for clarity on the current situation with regard to the position regarding allegations of electoral fraud or malpractice that had been made in relation to the Tower Hamlets Mayoral election in 2014

Page 3 Item 12.1 Crime and Disorder Spotlight – Accordingly the Committee asked to receive a copy of the letter from Assistant Commissioner Helen King to the Editor Daily Telegraph regarding these allegations.

5. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

Nil Items

6. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

Nil Items

7. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT

Nil items

8. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE QUERY AND ACTION LOG 2016/17

The Committee received and noted an update on the outstanding actions. As a result of discussions on the report the following matters were raised:

The Committee:

1. Asked for data on Racist and Religious based crimes over the past 3 years compared to that data published by the Greater London Authority; and
2. Wanted to see within the statistics available a breakdown of unemployment and/or ethnicity details of those individuals from the Somali community.

9. FORTHCOMING DECISIONS

The Committee noted the published list of forthcoming decisions would be circulated prior to the next meeting.

10. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF UNRESTRICTED CABINET PAPERS

Item 5.3 Housing Strategy 2016-2021

The Chair welcomed Martin Ling who was in attendance to discuss the Housing Strategy with particular reference to the strengthening of the relationship with Registered Social Landlords, the impact of welfare reform. There was also a discussion on how to improve 'intermediate offer' options for residents who did not qualify for social housing but who could not afford market rents

A summary of the questions and comments from Members is outlined as followed:

Comment: There needs to be development of inclusive models for regeneration across both Council and ex Council estates, building on the lessons learnt from the regeneration of the Ocean Estate and Blackwall Reach

Comment: The reduction of the benefit cap has impacted especially hard on households living in particularly high cost areas such as Tower Hamlets. Therefore, what is being done to mitigate this?

Response: Effectively addressing the impact in the reduction of the benefit cap goes beyond addressing immediate issue and requires a sustained commitment to help these households get out from under the cap **e.g.** provision of appropriate support to get them into employment through the raising of skills levels.

Comment: What is the current position on succession rights?

Response: There will be a report coming to the Committee on succession rights.

Item 5.5 Our Borough, Our Plan: A New Local Plan Consultation Document

The Chair welcomed Councillor Rachel Blake who had come to the meeting to talk about the consultation on the new Local Plan, looking at the 15 year

vision on how to deliver for the community and local economy. It was noted that there was a particular role to place for local ward councillors particularly around issues such as town centres and local infrastructure.

Question: Will there be programme of digital engagement as part of the consultation and what structures are in place to allow comments to be fed into the process?

Comment: The infrastructure (e.g. schools; transport and health centres) needs to be able to meet the growing community.

Response: There will be programme of digital engagement as part of the consultation and there will be an opportunity for both the community and council committees to submit comments.

Comment: Need to ensure the provision suitable green space and to maintain and develop social housing.

Response: Discussions are taking place on the provision of affordable homes to meet the needs of the communities that we seek to serve e.g. Family homes being a priority.

Comment: The consultation process needs to be able to reach out to local communities; partner agencies and relevant stake holder groups. Consideration also needs to be given to ensure that the services being developed are accessible to all; meet the needs and aspirations of all our residents; utilising must be made of the findings of the Somali Task Group; use must be made of councillors local knowledge so as to extend the councils reach into those hard to hear groups and the Plan needs to be made available in community languages

Response: Work is being undertaken to look at how data collection is managed and imaginative ways developed to reach out to all groups within Tower Hamlets.

Comment: What will the Local Plan do to provide local people the opportunity for employment with the major companies based in Tower Hamlets.

Response: Work is being undertaken to ensure local people will have the required skill sets to secure employment with these employers.

11. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS

The Committee noted that:

1. The Review into the Night Time Economy would be considering on 27th October, 2016 the support for businesses together with the impact upon residents with a public meeting early in 2017;
2. The Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee would be looking at the health care infrastructure with particular reference to taking into account the population increases and the links between planning and health infrastructure and how this is implemented in LBTH; and

3. The review into the Youth Services would be held on 22nd November, 2016 with consideration of New Schools being undertaken early in 2017.

12. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

12.1 Local Plan - Item Deferred

12.2 Complaints and Information Governance Annual Report

Ruth Dowden the Councils Complaints and Information Manager introduced the Complaints and Information Annual Report 2015/16 which outlined the Council's activities and performance in response to Information Governance matters and Information Requests; Corporate Complaints and Statutory Complaints for Children's and Adults Social Care.

In addition to addressing the volume of complaints and information requests received by the Council in the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, the report also looked at the outcomes of those cases; and the standard of performance in dealing with them. Policy and practice developments in information governance and complaints are also summarised. The main point of the discussion maybe summarised as follows.

The Committee noted that:

- Both Member's enquiries and complaints are monitored so as to identify any overlap between the two. However, the Committee indicated that it wanted to see how a Members enquiry can be taken forward as a complaint if appropriate and to have a common sense attitude to the process to facilitate this;
- The number of corporate complaints had increased during 015/2016 with Stage 1 complaints increasing by 33%. The reason for this it was noted are unclear however the increase in the borough's population maybe one element;
- Fewer cases had been upheld which it was noted was seen as an indication that information requests had been properly responded to in the first instance;
- Out of 171 complaints received, 505 complaints had been dealt with and resolved within 5 working days; and
- The software is now in place that will be once it goes live will provide data on parking and expenditure.

12.3 Progress report on Literacy Scrutiny Review

Councillor Saunders (Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services) presented the report to the Committee which provided an

update on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the scrutiny review on literacy across early years, primary, secondary and adult learning. The report and recommendations had it was noted been agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in May 2015. The main point of the discussion maybe summarised as follows.

The Committee:

- Noted that emotional health and well-being is a key issue to be addressed that would remove a barrier to learning;
- Noted that addressing the provision of Special Educational Needs is a significant issue for White British Girls and indicated that it would wish to consider what needs to be done to address this;
- Acknowledged that the way libraries go about promoting and advertising about what they do, needs to be revised;
- Commented that it would wish to consider in more detail the issue of literacy and how poor levels of literacy impact on worklessness e.g. through regular reviews of academic performance;
- Noted that in LBTH there is extensive training and tailored support to help those in greatest need e.g. The careers Service have a team to help young people Not in Education, Employment or Training/Adult Literacy and Worklessness;
- Noted that schools provide help for parents who have issues with literacy;
- Indicated it wished in 2017 to consider this issue in more detail and to invite Councillor Saunders and Christine McInnes (Service Head Education & Partnership) to participate in future discussions on this issue.

12.4 Progress update on Cycling Safety challenge session

Councillor Dave Chesterton (LBTH Cycle Champion) and Margaret Cooper the Councils Head of Transport & Highways presented the report that provided a follow up from the scrutiny challenge session on improving cycling safety. That report and its recommendations had been agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April 2015. An action plan had been developed to address the recommendations and the report and accompanying action plan had then been endorsed by Cabinet in November 2015. It was noted that this report reviews the progress against the original recommendations. The main point of the discussion maybe summarised as follows.

The Committee:

- Noted there are ongoing discussions with residents and ward members regarding the London Cycling Campaigns' proposal to keep the road to the south of Victoria Park open for longer and to explore ways to influence the parks statutory opening hours. This would require a

detailed feasibility study into the costs and benefits of providing secure after dark cycle route within the southern perimeter of the park to allow for there to be an informed judgement **e.g.** if the proposal is feasible in terms of costs and risks;

- Noted that it presented a significant challenge for the Parks Management as there needs to be proper lighting and for a cycle path physically separated from the rest of Victoria Park and how this will be managed;
- Consideration needs to be given to issues of dangerous driving at particular road junctions;
- How the shared use of the Greenwich Foot Tunnel; the proposed Rotherhithe Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge and other newly established or proposed routes will be managed;
- Noted that a dialogue needs to be undertaken with Registered Social Landlords on the provision of facilities on those estates that they manage **e.g.** cycle storage;
- Noted that LBTH is working with the MPS on addressing driver behaviour **e.g.** speeding;
- Noted that a scheme is being worked up for introduction on the Isle of Dogs with the aim of providing shared routes and access through local estates;
- Noted that LBTH have provided a Speed Gun for projects involving the MPS; local schools and communities; and
- Noted the need to raise awareness about the importance of protecting cyclists and pedestrians.

12.5 Progress report on Contract Management Scrutiny Review

Councillor Edgar (Cabinet Member for Resources) introduced the report that followed up from the scrutiny challenge session on contract specification and management in the council (using as a case study the contract with Veolia for environmental services). The report and recommendations was agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2015. An action plan had been developed to address the recommendations. The report and accompanying action plan had then been endorsed by Cabinet in October 2015. It was noted that this report reviews the progress against the original recommendations. The discussion on the report may be summarised as follows.

The Committee

- Indicated that it wished to see consideration of social values built into every stage of the Contract Management process and what benefit the local suppliers can provide when compared to the larger national and regional businesses; and
- Wanted to see that LBTH was getting value for money and that contractors were be held to account in the delivery of their contracts and what was the ability of LBTH to amend a contract to the need should arise to get the services delivered in the way it was intended.

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

Nil items

14. 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.

15. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Nil Items

16. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

Nil Items

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

Nil Items

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

Nil Items

The meeting ended at 9.10 p.m.

Chair, Councillor John Pierce
Overview & Scrutiny Committee