

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT 6.45 P.M. ON THURSDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2016**

**ROOM 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)	– Scrutiny Lead for Resources
Councillor Amina Ali	– Scrutiny Lead for Development and Renewal
Councillor Abdul Asad	
Councillor Julia Dockerill	– Scrutiny Lead for Children's Services
Councillor Clare Harrison	– Scrutiny Lead for Adult Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaqim	
Councillor Helal Uddin	

**Co-opted Members Present:**

Victoria Ekubia	– (Roman Catholic Church Representative)
Dr Phillip Rice	– (Church of England Representative)

**Other Councillors Present:**

Mayor John Biggs  
Councillor David Edgar (Cabinet Member for Resources)  
Councillor Sirajul Islam (Cabinet Member for Housing Management and  
Performance)

**Apologies:**

Councillor Oliur Rahman

**Officers Present:**

Zena Cooke	– (Corporate Director, Resources)
Janet Fasan	– Head of Legal (Operations)
Sharon Godman	– Service Head, Strategy, Policy & Performance
David Knight	– (Senior Democratic Services Officer)
Shanara Matin	– (Scrutiny Policy Officer)
Neville Murton	– (Service Head, Finance &

Peter Quirk

- Procurement)  
– Senior Strategy, Policy &  
Performance Officer  
– (Director of Adults' Services)

Denise Radley

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Oliur Rahman.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

No declarations were received.

### 3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

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

#### **RESOLVED**

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2016 was approved as a correct record of the proceedings subject to the following amendment:

#### **Item 12.4 Progress Update on Cycling Safety Challenge Session**

The Committee wanted an update on what consultation there had been with Hackney Council on the feasibility of keeping the cycle path in the Park open to cyclists in the evening.

### 4. APPOINTMENT OF SCRUTINY LEAD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES, LOCALITIES AND CULTURE

The Committee noted that there was a vacancy for the position of the Scrutiny Lead for Communities, Localities and Culture. Accordingly the Chair asked if there was any Member who wished to be considered for the appointment of Lead Scrutiny Member for Communities, Localities and Culture. As a result of discussions on the report Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaqim and Councillor Abdul Asad both indicated that they wished to be considered for this vacancy and were invited to address the Committee as to why they felt able to undertake the work of the scrutiny aligned to this Directorate.

As a result of considering their respective presentations the Chair **Moved** and it was:-

#### **RESOLVED**

To **defer** consideration of the appointment for the position of the Scrutiny Lead for Communities, Localities and Culture.

**5. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'**

Nil items

**6. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS**

Nil items

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

The Committee received and noted an update on the outstanding actions.

**8. FORTHCOMING DECISIONS**

The Committee received and noted the published list of forthcoming decisions.

**9. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT**

**9.1 Welfare Reform Spotlight**

The Committee considered the presentation from the Deputy Mayor that highlighted a number of key issues relating to Welfare Reform and this was followed by questions and comments from Members which are summarised as follows:

- How do we provide clear pathways to advise people especially those in the poverty trap that is preventing them from climbing out of welfare dependency?
- How do we work with our partner agencies?
- What practical support do we actually offer families regarding Universal Credit?
- How can the Council and its partners identify any issues those in receipt of benefits will have with the introduction of direct payments?

A summary of the response is set out below:

- A fact sheet is being prepared for Councillors to enable them to advise their constituents and their dependents;
- There is a Welfare Reform Task Group that is made up of key agencies. It has developed a robust Action Plan to provide information and advice following the introduction of Universal Credit. Practical Advice is also available from the local Food Banks; and
- The Council and its partners identify any issues through public health and the data collected by Job Centre Plus. Also local authorities are lobbying the DWP about the amount of support those being transferred onto the new system will receive.

## **9.2 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Planning 2017-18 to 2019-20 - Update**

The Committee considered the presentation from Councillor David Edgar (Cabinet Member for Resources) that highlighted a number of key issues in relation to the update on the Budget Consultation, development of Capital & Investment strategies and key messages from the Autumn Statement. This was followed by questions and comments from Members which are summarised as follows:

- What did LBTH commit to in order to get Central Government to agree to the four year funding settlement?
- Concerns have been expressed that the increase in the business rates will make life difficult for companies so what is being done to minimise this impact?
- What is the risk if many of the large financial businesses were to leave Canary Wharf?
- Which Minority; Black and Ethnic communities were consulted as part of the Budget Consultation?
- What discussions have there been on the Sharing of Services;
- It would be helpful to see how LBTH compares to others authorities with regard to development of Capital & Investment strategies; and
- The Committee wished to see the bases cases that have been submitted and the impacts these changes will have on communities and businesses in LBTH.

A summary of the response is set out below:

- Councils are required to develop an Efficiency Plan in order to qualify for the four year funding settlement and can be found on this [link](#);
- The Government has put in place transitional measures to minimise the impact but consideration will be given to a local scheme to help businesses in LBTH;
- It is too early to predict the impact of the recent Referendum on those Financial Businesses based in Tower Hamlets;
- The Council's Communications Team will provide the detail of which groups were consulted;
- Services such as Internal Audit; Pensions Administration and Reographics are potential areas for shared service arrangements; and
- There have been no formal discussions yet as the benefits in implementing such a service model.

## **9.3 Mayor's Spotlight**

The Committee considered the presentation from the Mayor that highlighted a number of key issues in relation to the Key Achievement's for 2016 and the

Best Value Action Plan and this was followed by questions and comments from Members which are summarised as follows:

- The results of Air Quality reports indicate that some traffic calming measures increase the emissions of some pollutants from motor vehicles;
- Who is responsible for the cleaning of the cycle superhighway?;
- How effective are the Registered Housing providers in enforcement against those who dump illegally on their estates?;
- How many schools are in the Tower Hamlets Education Partnership?;
- Work needs to be done regarding the enforcement of the 20 mph zones;
- What is being done to address residents' concerns about nitrous oxide; discarded needles; drug-related waste and anti-social behaviour?;
- There needs to be more consideration about how the Council engages with residents e.g. Wider use of the Idea Stores;
- What is being done to address the use of zero hour's contracts within LBTH?;
- What is being done to address the way Altab Ali Day is managed?;
- What is being done to address the numbers of women employed within the NHS?; and
- When considering the development of the Cycle Highway across Victoria Park consideration needs to be given to the incidence of anti-social behaviour and road safety.

A summary of the response is set out below:

- It would seem that some traffic calming measures do increase the emissions of some pollutants from motor vehicles however motorists can be re-educated to understand the effects of their driving style and roads can be re-designed;
- LBTH undertakes the cleaning of the cycle superhighway;
- Discussions are being held with the Registered Housing Providers on the enforcement against those who dump illegally on their estates;
- The majority of Tower Hamlets schools are within the Partnership;
- There needs to be a regular programme of enforcement and education regarding the 20 mph zones;
- LBTH and its partner agencies are working to address the use of nitrous oxide; discarded needles; drug-related waste and addressing anti-social behaviour;
- It is recognised that there needs to be consideration of how LBTH engages with residents;
- There is not a significant number of staff employed on zero hour's contracts in LBTH;
- We are not aware of any particular issues of a contentious nature but will be considering carefully how next year's event is managed; and
- The employment of women in the NHS is being monitored by the Health and Well-Being Board and through the Inner North East London Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

## **10. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

Nil Items

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

The Committee noted that:

1. Inner North East London (INEL) Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> December to consider an Overview of NHS 111 Integrated Urgent Care Procurement and Update on North East London Sustainability and Transformation Plan; and
2. The Review into the Night Time Economy had been convened twice so far and there would be a public session on the 13th December, 2016 and it was hoped the GLA Lead would be in attendance.

## **12. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT**

### **12.1 Review of proportionality and allocation of places on Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committees**

The Committee noted that a number of changes in the political composition of the Council have occurred recently following the Whitechapel Ward By-Election where Councillor Shafi Ahmed was elected. In addition, Councillors Shah Alam, Abdul Asad, Aminur Khan and Rabina Khan had given notice to the proper officer that for the purposes of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 ('the 1989 Act') they are no longer members of the Independent Group.

Councillors Shafi Ahmed, Shah Alam, Abdul Asad, Rabina Khan, Aminur Khan also informed the Proper Officer that they are forming a new Group on the Council called 'Tower Hamlets People's Alliance' with Councillor Rabina Khan as the Group Leader.

Consequent to these changes it was noted that the Council had reviewed the allocation of places on its Committees, including the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on Monday 5 December 2016. It is now for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to do the same for its Sub-Committees as they are also covered by the 1989 Act. The proposed new Sub-Committee allocations are set out at paragraph 4.2 overleaf.

As a result of discussions on this report.

The Committee **agreed**:

1. The proportionality as outlined in the report;

2. The allocation of seats on each Sub-Committee;
3. The size of each Sub-Committee;
4. The increase of the Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee to 7 seats; and
5. That Members and deputies be appointed to serve on those Sub-Committees in accordance with nominations from the political groups to be notified to the Acting Corporate Director, Law, Probity and Governance.

**13. 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.

**14. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

Nil items

**15. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS 'CALLED IN'**

Nil items

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

Nil items

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

Nil items

The meeting ended at 9.40 p.m.

Chair, Councillor John Pierce  
Overview & Scrutiny Committee