

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.35 P.M. ON THURSDAY, 22 MARCH 2018

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

Members Present:

Councillor Dave Chesterton (Chair)	
Councillor Danny Hassell	– Scrutiny Lead for Children's Services
Councillor Ayas Miah	– Scrutiny Lead for Governance
Councillor Helal Uddin	– Scrutiny Lead for Place
Councillor Andrew Wood	– Scrutiny Lead for Resources

Co-opted Members Present:

Shabbir Chowdhury	– Parent Governors
Joanna Hannan	– Representative of Diocese of Westminster
Fatiha Kassouri	– Parent Governors
Dr Phillip Rice	– Church of England Representative
Christine Trumper	– Parent Governors

Apologies:

Councillor Clare Harrisson	– Scrutiny Lead for Health, Adults & Community
Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaqim	
Councillor Oliur Rahman	
Councillor Rabina Khan	
Asad M Jaman	– Muslim Faith Community

Others Present:

David Burbage	– (Healthwatch Tower Hamlets Representative)
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Officers Present:

Ngozi Adedeji	– (Team Leader Housing Services, Governance)
Elizabeth Bailey	– Senior Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer
Ann Corbett	– (Divisional Director, Community Safety)
Emily Fieran-Reed	– (Service Manager, Community Cohesion, Engagement and

	Commissioning, Strategy, Policy and Equality)
Afazul Hoque	– (Interim Service Manager, Strategy, Policy & Performance)
Daniel Kerr	– Strategy, Policy & Performance Officer
Debbie Jones	– (Corporate Director, Children's)
Tom McCourt	– (Strategic Director)
Robin Payne	– (Interim Divisional Director, Public Realm)
Denise Radley	– (Corporate Director, Health, Adults & Community)
Adam Salmon	– Ending Gang, Group & Serious Youth Violence Coordinator
Simon Smith	– Prevent Co-ordinator
David Knight	– (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Noted that Councillor John Pierce (the Mayoral Advisor on Anti-Social Behaviour) had hoped to attend tonight's meeting so as to participate in the discussions on **Item 7.1** Prevent Duty and Safeguarding Scrutiny Review Action Plan but had been unable to do so.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

Nil Items

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 13th March, 2018 be approved and as a correct record of the proceedings.

4. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

Nil items

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

Noted

6. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT

6.1 Environment Portfolio

The Committee received and noted a presentation from the Tom McCourt, (Strategic Director) and (Robin Payne, Interim Divisional Director, Public Realm) in which they explained that the portfolio covers Environmental Health – Food Safety; Health and Safety; Noise Nuisance; Pest Control; Environmental Enforcement; Markets; Parking and Mobility Services; Fleet and Passenger Services and Highways and Transport.

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

The Committee:

- Noted in Tower Hamlets there are 4 automatic continuous monitoring stations with real time data reporting. The locations of the four monitoring sites are Queen Mary's University, Mile End Road; Victoria Park; Millwall Park and Blackwall Tunnel Approach. These continuous monitoring stations measure Nitrogen Dioxide, Particulates (PM10), Sulphur Dioxide and Ozone. In addition, the Council also has 90 Nitrogen Dioxide Diffusion tubes located across the Borough collecting data used to identify trends and hotspots, predict future pollutant levels, and monitor the success of the implementation of our air quality action plan;
- Indicated that they were pleased to see the reference to the Enforcement Review in the presentation and looked to see clarity and purpose on the role of the THEO's;
- Asked about when LBTH would have new Underground Refuse System [URS] Trucks and was advised that they would be arriving in autumn and that the delays in delivery were due to churn in the relevant personnel;
- Noted that whilst 10 noise measuring kits can be seen as an acceptable number for a Borough the size of LBTH, the key issue is having staff to listen to those recordings to evaluate them. However, the number of kits can be reviewed;
- Noted that any consideration on increasing the capacity of the Noise Team would need to consider the times of greatest and resources needed to construct a service that is fit for purpose i.e. to ensure the service is doing what we want it to;
- Noted regarding the development of an effective Parking Strategy reflects the commitment that the Council continues to give to the development of a balanced and integrated transport network for the Borough. Even the predicted increase car ownership over the next 20 years, a progressive programme of effective parking measures put in

place now will ensure that the economy and community of the Borough will continue to flourish. These measures will, by necessity, need to be focussed upon keeping the Boroughs road network, free from the detrimental effects of traffic congestion and pollution;

- Noted that the Council undertakes reviews parking on a regular basis with the emergency services, in order to identify any possible conflict points (**e.g.** what vehicles are needed to deal with emergencies in a particular neighbourhood);
- Noted that parking needs are assessed and reviews planned to look at the impact of car free developments; the benefit of car clubs and the installation of electric vehicles charging points;
- Noted that car clubs have 140 bays in the Borough and 120 new bays for Zip Car where residents can drive a car or van by the minute, hour or day and go one-way across the Borough and that the designs of new charging points will be built into lamp columns;
- Noted that as part of the Asset Management Plan for highways there will be looking at expenditure on highways and footways especially where there is the highest number of incidences;
- Noted that the recently launched Find it, Fix it, Love it (FiFiLi) smart phone app enables Tower Hamlets residents and visitors to instantly tell the Council about pot holes; damaged footways and defective lighting. Users simply take a picture of the damage and the app will pinpoint its location and send the details directly to the Councils environmental contractors, ensuring that problems are dealt with swiftly. However, not every issue can be fixed at once as there is a need to prioritise where there is greatest need;
- Noted in the development of the Boroughs park infrastructure for the benefit of all consideration has to be given to a number of issues **e.g.** minimising the levels of pollution; addressing safety issue and manage our parks for the benefit of all;
- Noted the addressing of safety issues in local parks the Council is working on a programme to improve safety and a “Design Out Crime Specialist” will be seconded from the Metropolitan Police Service to address the impact of drugs and ASB; and
- Noted in the development of the Boroughs markets there is an issue about how markets have evolved (**e.g.** local markets that do not attract external foot fall when compared to the niche markets) and there need to look at how LBTH takes ownership and manages these markets more effectively and how can we increase the offer.

7. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

7.1 Prevent Duty and Safeguarding Scrutiny Review Action Plan

The Committee received a presentation from Anne Corbett (Divisional Director - Community Safety); Simon Smith (Prevent Co-ordinator) and Emily Fieran Reed (Service Manager Cohesion Engagement and Commissioning)

that provided an update on the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the delivery of the Prevent Duty in Tower Hamlets which was undertaken in 2016. The review the Committee was reminded had included representatives from the Council, community members and other local authorities. The session had focused upon the impact the delivery of the Prevent Duty had, had on young people, how the approach in delivery reflected the priorities of Tower Hamlets and the local challenges in meeting those obligations. The Committee had made a number of recommendations to improve delivery within Tower Hamlets and service areas have implemented the action plan which was produced to address the recommendations identified as part of the review. It was noted that this report provided an update on the progress of the recommendations:

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

The Committee:

- Noted that a significant amount of work had been undertaken in local schools around safe guarding which is far greater than in other areas of London including a regular and thorough assessment;
- Noted that the Boroughs Tension Monitoring Group has looked at hate crime incidents in depth with community leaders and how the response to such incidents can be addressed and how to provide to reassurance for the local community;
- Noted that the Home Office are currently reviewing the training on offer for agencies on radicalisation to ensure that it is fit for purpose;
- Noted that the development of greater community cohesion will have considerable benefit for a wide section of the community;
- Noted that consideration is being given to look at programmes to foster a wider level of cohesion and consider the make-up of our schools and to ensure those who are home schooled get the support that they need. In addition, work was being undertaken to increased good neighbourliness as part of living in a diverse London Borough;
- Noted that an established procedure is in place to address the radicalisation of those individuals returning from Syria;
- Noted that the Third Sector is keen to help the Council with working on this and to develop a cohesive response to addressing community cohesion; and
- Noted that in regard to the management of social media the Council are working with providers of social media sites to make it clear what is seen on social media is not necessarily true.

The Chair Moved and it was:-

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted:

1. The report and progress on the Action Plan;
2. Areas where improvements are still required; and.
3. The initial findings from the recent Home Office peer review of Prevent.

7.2 Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee Scrutiny Review; Health & Social Care Provision for Homeless Residents

Received a presentation from David Burbidge (Healthwatch Tower Hamlets Representative); Denise Radley (Corporate Director Adult Services) and Daniel Kerr (Strategy, Policy and Partnership Officer) that outlined the recommendations of the Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee's review of Health and Social Care Provision for Homeless Residents for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

It was noted that the Tower Hamlets Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee had identified the effectiveness of Health and Social Care Provision for Homeless Residents as the subject for a Scrutiny Review. Homelessness it was noted was a complex and growing problem that reached right across the health, public health and social care agendas. That has been a historic problem in Tower Hamlets and the Borough has the 9th highest number of homeless people within the United Kingdom. It also continues to be a pressing issue due to reforms to the welfare system, the austerity measures of the current government, and the ongoing national housing crisis, which is creating affordability pressures in the owner-occupier and rental sectors.

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

The Committee:

- Noted that this was a review that had involved and very high degree of involvement from across the relevant stakeholder's (e.g. Homeless persons and their advocates);
- Noted the enthusiasm of the professional agencies who work together and are committed to work in collaboration and they know how to raise concerns through Health Watch regarding the provision of local health services;
- Noted that the Council will be exploring the possibility of commissioning specialist provision to accommodate individuals with challenging behaviour (e.g. substance misuse issues) and are beyond the point where traditional treatment programmes are appropriate;
- Noted that on the Isle of Dogs there are members of the community who are willing to help homeless people by acting as intermediaries for those reluctant to seek help from professional agencies directly;
- Noted that there are 5 local churches with premises that are being used to provide accommodation for homeless residents although their capacity is limited and sometimes people have to be turned away. However, there are workers who go out to help those turned away with food and directions to other hostels;

- Noted that whilst there are various types of provision that is commissioned across the Borough to address the health needs of those living on the streets this reports focus was primarily on provision of health and social care for homeless persons; and
- Noted that as many homeless persons have dogs for a companion and Blue Cycle run a mobile clinic for these owners in the Borough in front of the Town hall on Mare St Hackney on [Wednesday's](#).

The Chair Moved and it was:-

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. Agreed the report and the recommendations; and
2. Authorised the Divisional Director Strategy, Policy and Partnership to amend the draft report before submission to Cabinet, after consultation with the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7.3 Gangs and Serious Youth Violence: A Scrutiny Review Report

The Committee received and noted a presentation from Debbie Jones (Corporate Director – Children’s Services) and Adam Salmon (Children's Social Care) on a report that outlined the findings and recommendations from the Gangs and Youth Violence Scrutiny Review, which had been was part of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s work programme for the 2017/18 municipal year.

It was noted that the Gangs and Serious Youth Violence Scrutiny Review was chaired by Councillor Danny Hassell in his role as Scrutiny Lead for Children’s Services in order to obtain an overview of the scale and impact of Gangs and Serious Youth Violence in the Borough and the work currently being planned and delivered by the Council and its partners.

It was noted that in 2017 the London Borough of Tower Hamlets underwent an Ofsted review of its Children’s Services and one of the recommendations that arose was that the Council should “Urgently improve the quality and timeliness of services for children who are at risk of becoming involved in gangs and serious youth violence. Ensure the alignment of those services with those for children who go missing and those who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation and radicalisation. Ensure that comprehensive and accurate intelligence and data inform service developments.”

The two sessions the Committee was advised had been held in January and February 2018. The first session had been at the Town Hall and looked at current approach and practices, existing research and findings and examples of good practice being delivered in other areas. The second session was held at a local youth facility called ‘Spotlight’ looked at real-life case studies, feedback and findings from reviews and the work of key partners in the borough. The review had been underpinned by three core questions:

- What is the true scale and impact of Gangs and Youth Violence issues in Tower Hamlets?
- What are common factors that lead to involvement in gangs?
- How can the Council and its partners work together more effectively to reduce the impact of gangs?

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

The Committee:

- Noted that whilst gang involvement is predominantly male dominated the impact on women and girls through direct involvement or families had been an area of specific focus;
- Noted many young people who are at risk of becoming a gang member need to be diverted. In addition, whilst the Trident Matrix rates these people as to the degree of risk there are many who need to be worked with early on so as to prevent them from becoming a gang member;
- Noted that this year has seen a significant shift in numbers in gangs with a large reduction not just because in detention but through the work being done to address offending;
- Noted with regard to work within local schools a pilot has been running for a year with an allocated worker looking at the needs of schools and giving them schools the support they need; and
- Noted that there is at present a common police command to address these issues that manages the Gangs Team; YOT and Schools Team and local schools can feed in any comments/concerns to these teams so that a good flow of information is maintained.

The Chair Moved and it was:-

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. Agreed the report and the recommendations; and
2. Authorised the Divisional Director Strategy, Policy and Partnership to amend the draft report before submission to Cabinet, after consultation with the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7.4 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2017- 2018

Received and noted the Annual Report that provided a summary of the work the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the Health, Housing and Grants Sub Committees and Scrutiny Leads have delivered in the 2017-2018 municipal year.

The report highlighted the range of work delivered by Scrutiny during the municipal year this includes five in-depth reviews focusing on fire safety, access to health and social care services for homeless people, recreation activities for young people, gangs and serious youth violence and budget scrutiny. Scrutiny also held a one-off challenge session looking at the impact of Brexit on the Council. A key focus for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee it was noted had been on the progress in delivering the improvements in Children's Services. The Committee was reminded that it had held a number of sessions with internal and external stakeholders to understand this and welcomed the positive feedback received from Ofsted. However, it recognised that this is an area of on-going work and it is important that the 2018-19 Overview and Scrutiny Committee remains committed to undertaking further work.

The Chair Moved and it was:-

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. Agreed the report for submission to Full Council in the new municipal year; and
2. Authorised the Divisional Director Strategy, Policy & Performance to amend the report following comments by the Committee before submission to Full Council.

8. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS

The Committee received and noted the updates from the Scrutiny Leads which may be summarised as follows:

Councillor Danny Hassell (Scrutiny Lead for Children's Services)

Noted that the Social Care Practice Week had a positive event and had looked at the operational Sub Group which is working in a very co-ordinated and coherent fashion.

In addition, the DfE visit in February, 2018 in their feedback said that (i) they are pleased about the "Grown your own model for social workers". (ii) they are reassured that there is no compliancy from Corporate Leadership Team or the Political Leadership. (iii) They noted issues the Council was experiencing when having to work multi agency across Borough and County boundaries and the differing attitude of police services in other areas and their perception of the issue of the sexual exploitation of young women.

Councillor Helal Uddin - Scrutiny Lead for Place

Noted that the Committee had looked at Anti-Social Behaviour; the Self build and custom build [register](#) ; and Void Properties.

Councillor Dave Chesterton (Scrutiny Chair)

Councillor Chesterton formally placed on record his thanks to

- Ngozi Adedeji (Team Leader Housing Services, Governance);
- Elizabeth Bailey (Senior Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer);
- Afazul Hoque (Interim Service Manager, Strategy, Policy & Performance); and
- David Knight (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

For their invaluable help and support of the committee and the scrutiny process over the past year.

In response Councillor Hassell on behalf of the Committee thanked Councillor Dave Chesterton for all his hard work since having taking over the Chair part way through the Municipal Year.

Finally, Councillor Chesterton Action reminded the Committee that they would be interviewed in relation to the Council's response to the Government Response to the Communities and Local Government Committee Report on the Effectiveness of Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

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

Nil items

10. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Nil items

11. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Nil items

12. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

Nil items

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

Nil Items

The meeting ended at 9.25 p.m.

**Chair, Councillor Dave Chesterton
Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

