

# OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 25 June 2018 at 6.30 p.m., Room C1, 1st Floor, Town Hall,  
Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London, E14 2BG

This meeting is open to the public to attend.

**Members:**

**Chair:** Councillor Abdal Ullah

**Vice Chair:** To be appointed (See item 2)

Councillor Sufia Alam

Lead for Children's Services

Councillor Mufeedah Bustin

Councillor Kahar Chowdhury

Lead for Health, Adults and Community

Councillor Dipa Das

Lead for Place

Councillor Marc Francis

Lead for Resources

Councillor James King

Councillor Kyrsten Perry

Councillor Mohammed Pappu

Lead for Governance

Councillor Bex White

Councillor Andrew Wood

**Co-opted Members:**

Joanna Hannan

Representative of Diocese of Westminster

Dr Phillip Rice

Church of England Representative

4 Vacant Positions

To be confirmed

**Deputies:**

Councillor Peter Golds, Councillor Tarik Khan, Councillor Victoria Obaze and Councillor Val Whitehead

[The quorum for this body is 3 voting Members]

**Contact for further enquiries:**

David Knight, Democratic Services

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Web: <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee>

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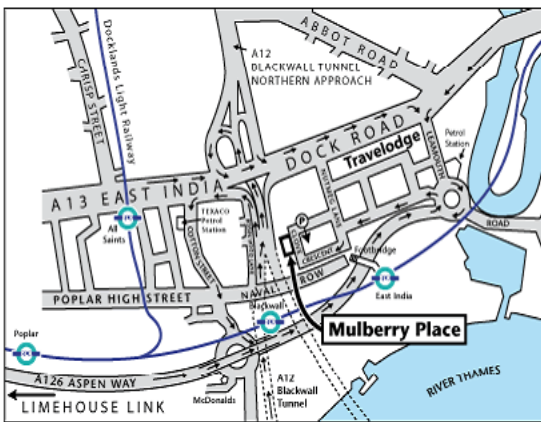
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<b>SECTION ONE</b>	<b>WARD</b>	<b>PAGE NUMBER(S)</b>
<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>		
To receive any apologies for absence.		
<b>2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR</b>	<b>All Wards</b>	
To receive nominations and appoint a Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the duration of the 2018/19 Municipal Year.		
<b>3. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST</b>		<b>7 - 10</b>
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 Monitoring Officer.		
<b>4. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES</b>		
To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on:		
3.1- 22 <sup>nd</sup> March, 2018; and		
3.2- 23 <sup>rd</sup> May, 2018.		
<b>4.1 Minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22nd March, 2018</b>	<b>All Wards</b>	<b>11 - 22</b>
<b>4.2 Minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd May, 2018</b>	<b>All Wards</b>	<b>23 - 26</b>
<b>5. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS</b>	<b>All Wards</b>	
To receive any petitions (to be notified at the meeting).		
<b>6. OVERVIEW &amp; SCRUTINY COMMITTEE QUERY AND ACTION LOG 2018/2019</b>	<b>All Wards</b>	
To be tabled at the meeting		

- |              |   |                  |                |
|--------------|---|------------------|----------------|
| <b>7.</b>    | <b>CHAIRS UPDATE</b>  | <b>All Wards</b> |                |
| <b>8.</b>    | <b>UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'</b>   | <b>All Wards</b> |                |
|              | No decisions of the Mayor in Cabinet 20 <sup>th</sup> March, 2018 in respect of unrestricted reports on the agenda were 'called in'.  |                  |                |
| <b>9.</b>    | <b>PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF UNRESTRICTED CABINET PAPERS</b>   | <b>All Wards</b> |                |
|              | To consider and agree pre-decision scrutiny questions/comments to be presented to Cabinet.  |                  |                |
|              | (Time allocated – 30 minutes).  |                  |                |
| <b>10.</b>   | <b>SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT</b>   |                  |                |
| <b>10 .1</b> | <b>Mayor John Biggs</b>   | <b>All Wards</b> |                |
| <b>11.</b>   | <b>OVERVIEW &amp; SCRUTINY IN TOWER HAMLETS 2018-19</b>   | <b>All Wards</b> |                |
| <b>11 .1</b> | <b>Strengthening Overview and Scrutiny in 2018-19</b>   | <b>All Wards</b> | <b>27 - 68</b> |
| <b>12.</b>   | <b>ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT</b>   | <b>All Wards</b> |                |
|              | To consider any other unrestricted business that the Chair considers to be urgent.  |                  |                |
| <b>13.</b>   | <b>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</b>  |                  |                |
|              | 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.

## **SECTION TWO**

### **14. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

Nil Items

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

Nil Items

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

To consider and agree pre-decision scrutiny questions/comments to be presented to Cabinet.

(Time allocated 15 minutes).

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

To consider any other exempt/ confidential business that the Chair considers to be urgent.

## **Next Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Monday, 23 July 2018 at 6.30 p.m. to be held in Room C1, 1st Floor, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London, E14 2BG

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# Agenda Item 3

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS - NOTE FROM THE MONITORING OFFICER**

This note is for guidance only. For further details please consult the Members' Code of Conduct at Part 5.1 of the Council's Constitution.

Please note that the question of whether a Member has an interest in any matter, and whether or not that interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, is for that Member to decide. Advice is available from officers as listed below but they cannot make the decision for the Member. If in doubt as to the nature of an interest it is advisable to seek advice **prior** to attending a meeting.

### **Interests and Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs)**

You have an interest in any business of the authority where that business relates to or is likely to affect any of the persons, bodies or matters listed in section 4.1 (a) of the Code of Conduct; and might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial position of yourself, a member of your family or a person with whom you have a close association, to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward affected.

You must notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of any such interest, for inclusion in the Register of Members' Interests which is available for public inspection and on the Council's Website.

Once you have recorded an interest in the Register, you are not then required to declare that interest at each meeting where the business is discussed, unless the interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI).

A DPI is defined in Regulations as a pecuniary interest of any of the descriptions listed at **Appendix A** overleaf. Please note that a Member's DPIs include his/her own relevant interests and also those of his/her spouse or civil partner; or a person with whom the Member is living as husband and wife; or a person with whom the Member is living as if they were civil partners; if the Member is aware that that other person has the interest.

### **Effect of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest on participation at meetings**

Where you have a DPI in any business of the Council you must, unless you have obtained a dispensation from the authority's Monitoring Officer following consideration by the Dispensations Sub-Committee of the Standards Advisory Committee:-

- not seek to improperly influence a decision about that business; and
- not exercise executive functions in relation to that business.

If you are present at a meeting where that business is discussed, you must:-

- Disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of the interest at the start of the meeting or when the interest becomes apparent, if later; and
- Leave the room (including any public viewing area) for the duration of consideration and decision on the item and not seek to influence the debate or decision

When declaring a DPI, Members should specify the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which the interest relates. This procedure is designed to assist the public's understanding of the meeting and to enable a full record to be made in the minutes of the meeting.

Where you have a DPI in any business of the authority which is not included in the Member's register of interests and you attend a meeting of the authority at which the business is considered, in addition to disclosing the interest to that meeting, you must also within 28 days notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest for inclusion in the Register.

**Further advice**

For further advice please contact:-

Asmat Hussain, Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer. Tel 020 7364 4800



## APPENDIX A: Definition of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

(Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, Reg 2 and Schedule)

Subject	Prescribed description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vacation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	<p>Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by the Member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of the Member.</p> <p>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.</p>
Contracts	<p>Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority—</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to the Member's knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the Member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>

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**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 13<sup>th</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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**



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**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT 8.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 23 MAY 2018**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL MULBERRY PLACE**

**Members Present:**

Councillor Ayas Miah (Chair)  
Councillor Abdal Ullah  
Councillor Dipa Das  
Councillor James King  
Councillor Kahar Chowdhury

Scrutiny Lead for Place

Scrutiny Lead for Health, Adults, and  
Community

Councillor Kyrsten Perry  
Councillor Marc Francis  
Councillor Mohammed Pappu  
Councillor Mufedah Bustin  
Councillor Sufia Alam  
Councillor Andrew Wood

Scrutiny Lead for Resources

Scrutiny Lead for Governance

Scrutiny Lead for Children's Services

**Co-opted Members Present:**

Dr Phillip Rice

– Church of England Representative

**Other Councillors Present:**

Mayor John Biggs  
Councillor Faroque Ahmed  
Councillor Sabina Akhtar  
Councillor Shah Ameen  
Councillor Amina Ali  
Councillor Ruhul Amin  
Councillor Asma Begum  
Councillor Rachel Blake  
Councillor Kevin Brady  
Councillor Shad Chowdhury  
Councillor David Edgar  
Councillor Peter Golds  
Councillor Ehtasham Haque  
Councillor Muhammad Harun  
Councillor Danny Hassell  
Councillor Mohammed Ahab Hossain  
Councillor Asma Islam

Councillor Sirajul Islam  
Councillor Denise Jones  
Councillor Rabina Khan  
Councillor Tarik Khan  
Councillor Gabriela Salva Macallan  
Councillor Eve McQuillan  
Councillor Puru Miah  
Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE  
Councillor Victoria Obaze  
Councillor John Pierce  
Councillor Leema Qureshi  
Councillor Candida Ronald  
Councillor Zenith Rahman  
Councillor Dan Tomlinson  
Councillor Helal Uddin  
Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman  
Councillor Val Whitehead

**Apologies:**

Councillor Bex White  
Joanna Hannan

Representative of Diocese of  
Westminster

**Others Present:**

Rushanara Ali	– MP Bethnal Green & Bow Constituency
Jim Fitzpatrick MP	– MP Poplar and Limehouse Constituency
Unmesh Desai	– London Assembly Member

**Officers Present:**

Will Tuckley	– (Chief Executive)
Zena Cooke	– (Corporate Director, Resources)
Debbie Jones	– (Corporate Director, Children's)
Asmat Hussain	– (Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer)
Denise Radley	– (Corporate Director, Health, Adults & Community)
Ann Sutcliffe	– (Acting Corporate Director, Place)
Matthew Mannion	– (Committee Services Manager, Democratic Services, Governance)
Joel West	– (Senior Democratic Services Officer)
Zoe Folley	– (Committee Officer, Governance)

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Speaker of the Council, Councillor Ayas Miah, is elected as administrative Chair of the Committee, for the purposes of this Meeting only.

**1. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST**

There were no declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

**2. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**2.1 Establishment of the Scrutiny Sub-Committees and Appointment of Members to those Sub-Committees**

The Committee received a report regarding the establishment of the Scrutiny Sub-Committees and Appointment of Members to those Sub-Committees.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised of the nominations for the Scrutiny Leads and portfolios as set out in resolution 1 below.



Councillor Kevin Brady **moved** and Councillor Abdal Ullah **seconded** the following amendment to the Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee Terms of Reference.

Amendment – 3.1 (Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee – Terms of Reference)

It is proposed to amend paragraph 3.1 of the report, to change the membership of the sub-committee from being drawn strictly from the main O&S committee, to being drawn from the council. This would bring the sub-committee in line with the health scrutiny and housing scrutiny committees, and would retain the same political balance.

The amendment also increases the number of members from three to six, in line with the allocation of places report included as part of the council's Annual General Meeting.

Proposed amendment to the terms of reference (deleted text scored out, added text underlined):

“The membership of the Grants Sub-Committee will consist of the Lead Member for Resources (or his nominated Deputy) as Chair of the Grants Sub-Committee, with the composition consisting of ~~three~~ six Members of the ~~Overview and Scrutiny Committee.~~ council, in line with proportionality rules.”

The amendment was voted on and agreed.

The Chair Moved and it was:-

## **RESOLVED**

1. That the following Members be appointed to the Scrutiny Leads posts as set out in Section 3 of the report.  
  
Lead for Health, Adults and Community - Councillor Kahar Chowdhury  
  
Lead for Place - Councillor Dipa Das  
  
Lead for Children's Services - Councillor Sufia Alam  
  
Lead for Resources - Councillor Marc Francis  
  
Lead for Governance - Councillor Mohammed Pappu
2. To note the co-option to the membership of the OSC of representatives in respect of education matters, as set out at Paragraphs 3.3 to 3.9 of the report.

3. To establish the Sub-Committee with Terms of Reference (Attached at Appendix 2 to the report) subject to the following amendment to the Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee terms of reference.


The membership of the Grants Sub-Committee will consist of the Lead Member for Resources (or his nominated Deputy) as Chair of the Grants Sub-Committee, with the composition consisting of six Members of the council, in line with proportionality rules.

4. That the following Councillors be appointed to Chair the above Sub-Committees:

Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee - Councillor Kahar Chowdhury  
Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee - Councillor Dipa Das  
Grants Scrutiny-Sub-Committee - Councillor Marc Francis

The meeting ended at 8.35 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Ayas Miah  
Overview & Scrutiny Committee

<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p><b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b></p> <p>25 June 2018</p>	 <p><b>TOWER HAMLETS</b></p>
<p><b>Report of:</b> Will Tuckley, Chief Executive</p>	<p><b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted</p>
<p><b>Strengthening Overview and Scrutiny in 2018-19</b></p>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Elizabeth Bailey – Senior Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards

## Executive Summary

This report reviews the overview and scrutiny arrangements of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (Tower Hamlets) against the national, regional and local context to assess its effectiveness to date and identify areas for improvement. This report makes 14 recommendations to strengthen scrutiny in 2018-19 and sets out how these will be implemented in the accompanying action plan.

## Recommendations:

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Comment and agree the report;
2. Review and comment on the draft action plan;
3. Authorise the Divisional Director Strategy, Policy and Performance to amend the report following comments by Overview and Scrutiny; and
4. Note the specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph 4.

## **1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 This report reviews the overview and scrutiny arrangements of Tower Hamlets against the national and local context to assess its effectiveness to date and identify areas for improvement.
- 1.2 This report makes 14 recommendations to help strengthen scrutiny arrangements at Tower Hamlets and sets out associated actions to address these.

## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 The Mayoral Advisory Board may decline to agree the recommendations. This is not recommended as the report outlines feedback from the Centre for Public Scrutiny and members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, together with work undertaken by officers, to identify areas of improvement for scrutiny arrangements at Tower Hamlets.

## **3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT**

- 3.1 This report reviews the overview and scrutiny arrangements in Tower Hamlets against the national and local context to assess their effectiveness to date and identify areas for improvement. This report makes 14 recommendations to strengthen scrutiny in 2018-19.
- 3.2 The Communities and Local Government Committee (the Select Committee) carried out the first comprehensive assessment of scrutiny arrangements, since their introduction by the Local Government Act 2000, and published its final report in December 2017 (the Select Committee Report).
- 3.3 The Select Committee Report, entitled 'effectiveness of local authority overview and scrutiny committees', makes 21 recommendations focusing on the themes of organisational culture, parity of esteem between scrutiny and the executive, independence, member training and skills, role of the public and scrutinising public services delivered by external organisations.
- 3.4 In March 2018, the Government published its response to the Select Committee Report and accepted most but not all of the recommendations aimed at the Government (Government Response).
- 3.5 The Government Response notes that scrutiny plays a vital role in ensuring local accountability on a wide range of local issues and comments that the Government is committed to ensuring councils:
  - are aware of the importance of scrutiny,

- understand the benefits of effective scrutiny and
  - have access to best practice to inform Councils' thinking.
- 3.6 However, the Government Response comments that Councils are best-placed to shape scrutiny arrangements to suit local needs, and recognises the flexibility local authorities need to put those arrangements in place. In particular, the Government Response highlights that the Government is wary of imposing particular arrangements on local authorities, such as prescribing how scrutiny chairs are elected/appointed, resources and training, Government monitoring systems and how to hold external bodies running public services to account.
- 3.7 The Strategy Policy and Performance team has undertaken a review of the effectiveness of scrutiny arrangements at Tower Hamlets, based on the themes of the Select Committee Report and feedback from Councillors, officers and the Centre for Public.
- 3.8 In particular, the Report bases 'effective scrutiny' on the Centre for Public Scrutiny's following four principles, which set out that good scrutiny:
- provides a constructive "critical friend" challenge;
  - amplifies the voices and concerns of the public;
  - is led by independent people who take responsibility for their role
  - drives improvement in public services.
- 3.9 The following key areas of improvement have been identified to strengthen scrutiny arrangements in Tower Hamlets:
- **Clarifying roles and processes** through updating and publicising guidance
  - **Remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its sub-committees** to strengthen scrutiny's role in reviewing the Improvement Framework and exploring extending the role of the Grants Scrutiny Sub-Committee
  - **Developing the skills of committee members and officers** through training
  - **Effective work programming** through focusing on priority matters to residents and sub-committees leading on performance and budget issues

- **Amplifying the voice of residents** through recruiting co-opted members to scrutiny committees and developing a communications and engagement plan
- **Using local Independent expertise** by exploring existing networks and contacts
- **Monitoring and evaluating** the impact of scrutiny by developing an evaluation tool.

3.9 The attached Action Plan sets out how the recommendations will be implemented.

#### **4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty (as set out in the Equality Act 2010) aims to embed equality considerations into the day to day work of public bodies, so that they tackle discrimination and inequality and contribute to making society fairer.

4.2 Recommendations in the report relate to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and scrutiny sub-committee work programme for 2018/19. The work programme will be designed around prioritising key equality considerations of the Strategic Plan, including reducing inequality, promoting community cohesion and enabling community engagement. Identifying and prioritising issues, which are important to local residents, will play an important role in developing the work programme to drive service improvement.

4.3 Key to addressing equality issues is making scrutiny more accessible. This Report sets out the need for better use of communications, including social media, to highlight scrutiny events and raise residents' awareness the role of scrutiny and how they can get involved. Further, this Report discusses holding meetings in the community and providing greater opportunities for residents to contribute during meetings.

#### **5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision-makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),

- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.

5.2 The recommendations in this report are made as part of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's role in helping to secure continuous improvement for the council, as required under its Best Value duty.

5.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a mandatory consultation role on all items that are the responsibility of full Council as set out in the budget and policy framework. The recommendations in this report seek to strengthen the role of scrutiny sub-committees by monitoring budget and performance items throughout the year.

5.4 The recommendations in this report relate to consultation with local residents to develop the work programme.

5.4 Although likely to form part of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme, there are no direct environmental, risk management, crime reduction or safeguarding issues arising from the recommendations of this report.

## **6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

6.1 This report makes 14 recommendations to strengthen scrutiny arrangements in Tower Hamlets.

6.2 There are no direct financial implications to the Council from this report, however if the cost of actions carried out to implement recommendations cannot be contained within the existing Council revenue budget, then growth funding will need to be requested for consideration as part of the medium term financial planning process.

## **7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES**

7.1 The Council is required by section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 to have an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to have executive arrangements that ensure the committee has specified powers. Consistent with this obligation, Article 6 of the Council's Constitution provides that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants and may make reports and recommendations to the Full Council or the Executive in connection with the discharge of any functions.

7.2 The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its

functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. This is referred to as the Council's best value duty.

- 7.3 The recommendations to help strengthen scrutiny arrangements are consistent with both the Council's best value duty and its duties under Local Government Act 2000.

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## **Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents**

### **Linked Report**

- NONE

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Strengthening Scrutiny 2018/19 Report and Action Plan

### **Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012**

- NONE

### **Officer contact details for documents:**

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Senior Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer

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# **Strengthening Overview and Scrutiny in 2018-19**



**TOWER HAMLETS**

**May 2018**

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# Summary of Recommendations

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## Recommendation 1

The Council updates the Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit to clarify:

- the roles and responsibilities of the Chair and Scrutiny Leads
- scrutiny processes for officers and members before, during and after committee meetings
- how residents can get involved in scrutiny at Tower Hamlets

## Recommendation 2

The Council widely publicises the updated Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit among Council members, officers, partners and local residents.

## Recommendation 3

The Overview and Scrutiny Committees and sub-committees are supported by the Executive to enhance their role in scrutinising improvement activities across the organisation.

## Recommendation 4

The Scrutiny Lead for Resources explores how grants and community commissioning scrutiny can be developed in 2018-19 to reflect the Council's new focus on commissioning.

## Recommendation 5

The Council develops and implements a training programme for members to include:

- an induction into the role and mechanisms of scrutiny (all members)
- core skills for scrutiny members, such as effective questioning, budget scrutiny, reviewing the improvement framework, outcome based approach, scrutinising partners
- tailored one to one training for scrutiny members, based on specific needs.

## Recommendation 6

The Council develops a training programme for officers:

- in service areas to improve understanding of scrutiny processes and embed a scrutiny culture across the organisation
- in scrutiny functions, to assist officers support scrutiny members more effectively.

### **Recommendation 7**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and scrutiny sub-committees develop a work programme, focusing on priority areas such as:

- the Council's Improvement Agenda
- delivering the strategic plan
- linking performance and budget scrutiny.

### **Recommendation 8**

Scrutiny sub-committees lead on budget and performance scrutiny throughout the year for relevant service areas.

### **Recommendation 9**

The directorates ensure regular engagement between scrutiny leads and relevant corporate and divisional directors and Cabinet members.

### **Recommendation 10**

The Council recruit statutory and non-statutory co-opted members to all scrutiny committees to strengthen local people's voice in scrutiny.

### **Recommendation 11**

The Council explore how local residents, community representatives and voluntary organisation representatives can be co-opted into scrutiny challenge/review panels.

### **Recommendation 12**

The Council develops a scrutiny communications and engagement plan to promote the role of scrutiny and facilitate local residents, community groups and partners to engage in scrutiny activities, including contributing to the development of the work programme.

### **Recommendation 13**

The Council explores where 'independent expertise' exists in the borough, taking account of existing networks and contacts, and how this could be used to assist independent scrutiny of services.

### **Recommendation 14**

The Council develops a scrutiny monitoring and evaluation tool to evaluate the impact of scrutiny throughout the year.

# 1. Executive Summary

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- 1.1 This report reviews the overview and scrutiny arrangements of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (Tower Hamlets) against the national and local context to assess their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. This report makes 14 recommendations to strengthen scrutiny in 2018-19.
- 1.2 The Communities and Local Government Committee (the Select Committee) carried out the first comprehensive assessment of scrutiny arrangements, since their introduction by the Local Government Act 2000, and published its final report in December 2017 (the Select Committee Report).
- 1.3 The Select Committee Report, entitled 'effectiveness of local authority overview and scrutiny committees', makes 21 recommendations focusing on the themes of organisational culture, parity of esteem between scrutiny and the executive, independence, member training and skills, role of the public and scrutinising public services delivered by external organisations.
- 1.4 In March 2018, the Government published its response to the Select Committee Report and accepted most but not all of the recommendations aimed at the Government (Government Response).
- 1.5 The Government Response notes that scrutiny plays a vital role in ensuring local accountability on a wide range of local issues and comments that the Government is committed to ensuring councils:
  - are aware of the importance of scrutiny
  - understand the benefits of effective scrutiny
  - have access to best practice to inform Councils' thinking.
- 1.6 However, the Government Response comments that Councils are best-placed to shape scrutiny arrangements to suit local needs, and recognises the flexibility local authorities need to put those arrangements in place. In particular, the Government Response highlights that is wary of imposing particular arrangements on local authorities, such as the election of chairs, prescribed resources and training, Government monitoring systems and how to hold external bodies running public services to account.
- 1.7 The Strategy Policy and Performance team has undertaken a review of the effectiveness of scrutiny arrangements at Tower Hamlets, based on the themes of the Select Committee Report and feedback from Councillors, officers and the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS).

1.8 In particular, the Report bases ‘effective scrutiny’ on the CfPS’s following four principles, which set out that good scrutiny:

- provides a constructive “critical friend” challenge;
- amplifies the voices and concerns of the public;
- is led by independent people who take responsibility for their role
- drives improvement in public services.

1.9 The following key areas of improvement have been identified to strengthen scrutiny arrangements in Tower Hamlets:

- **Clarifying roles and processes** through updating guidance.
- **Remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its sub-committees** to strengthen scrutiny’s role in reviewing the Improvement Framework and exploring grants and community commissioning scrutiny.
- **Developing the skills of committee members and officers** through training
- **Effective work programming** through focusing on priority matters to residents and sub-committees leading on performance and budget issues
- **Amplifying the voice of residents** through co-opted members and developing a communications and engagement plan
- **Using local Independent expertise** to review service delivery
- **Monitoring and evaluating** the impact of scrutiny by developing an evaluation tool.

## 2. Context

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### 2.1 National Context

#### Introduction of scrutiny arrangements

2.1.1 The Local Government Act 2000 (Act) required local authorities to establish new executive arrangements, consisting of either a leader or elected mayor and cabinet members. The arrangements replaced the ‘committee system’, in which decisions were made by meetings of the full council or in cross-party committees. To offset these new centralised executive arrangements, the Act also required local authorities to set up at least one overview and scrutiny committee. The overview and scrutiny committee, consisting of non-executive members of councils, mirrors the relationship between Parliament and government<sup>1</sup>.

#### Role and remit

2.1.2 “Scrutiny is an essential part of ensuring that local government remains transparent, accountable and open, resulting in improved public policies and services”<sup>2</sup>. The principal role of the overview and scrutiny committee is to hold decision-makers to account by reviewing policies and decisions made by the council and other organisations involved in delivering public services<sup>3</sup>. Accordingly, the Localism Act 2011 consolidated scrutiny legislation and expanded the overview and scrutiny committee’s remit to review the work of key partner organisations and any matters, which “affect the authority’s area or the inhabitants of that area”<sup>4</sup>.

#### Legal powers and limitations

2.1.3 Overview and scrutiny committees have the legal power to:

- make reports or recommendations to the executive of the Council
- require that the Council makes information available to it, both in the form of written reports and by officer and cabinet member attendance at committee meetings
- require that the cabinet responds to its recommendations within a set time frame.

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<sup>1</sup> Select Committee, Effectiveness of local authority overview and scrutiny committees, page 8. para 6

<sup>2</sup> Local Government Association, Scrutiny for Councillors, February 2016

<sup>3</sup> Mark Sandford, Overview and scrutiny in local government, Briefing Paper No. [06520](#), 20 December 2017

<sup>4</sup> Localism Act 2011, s.9F

- 2.1.4 For external organisations, the overview and scrutiny committee may require health providers<sup>5</sup>, crime and disorder strategy<sup>6</sup> bodies and authorities of flood risk management<sup>7</sup> to provide information and respond to committee reports. Health bodies and providers must also attend scrutiny meetings. However, for other organisations delivering public services, there is no requirement for them to attend and “their participation depends on...the ability of scrutiny committees to forge a positive working relationship”<sup>8</sup>.
- 2.1.5 Notably, the overview and scrutiny committee does not have a formal power to compel the Council or partners to make changes and, accordingly, effective scrutiny work relies on scrutiny’s evidence-based recommendations and informal influencing powers.

### **When scrutiny fails**

- 2.1.6 A number of high profile cases have highlighted the devastating consequences of ineffective scrutiny and poor service delivery. The Francis Report was published in 2013, in response to poor care and high mortality rates at Mid Staffordshire NHS Trust. The Francis Report criticised a lack of understanding on local healthcare issues by members of the local authority health scrutiny committee. “Councillors are not and cannot be expected to be experts in healthcare. They can, however, be expected to make themselves aware of, and pursue, the concerns of the public who have elected them”<sup>9</sup>. In particular, the report notes that there was little real interrogation and an over-willingness to accept explanations.
- 2.1.7 Similarly, the Casey Report in 2015 on child sexual exploitation in Rotherham found a lack of effective challenge in Rotherham Council’s approach to scrutiny. In particular, the report found that “overview and scrutiny had been deliberately weakened” by an organisational culture, in which “challenge and scrutiny were not welcome”<sup>10</sup>. Further, committees were not able to access important information to hold the executive to account.

### **National review of scrutiny arrangements**

- 2.1.8 The House of Commons appointed the Communities and Local Government Committee (the Select Committee) to carry out the first comprehensive assessment of scrutiny arrangements since their introduction by the Local Government Act 2000. The Select Committee considered evidence from a

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<sup>5</sup> Health and Social Care Act 2012

<sup>6</sup> Police and Justice Act 2006

<sup>7</sup> Flood and Water Management Act 2010

<sup>8</sup> Select Committee, [Effectiveness of local authority overview and scrutiny committee](#), p.35, para 85

<sup>9</sup> Robert Francis QC, [Report of the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry](#), Volume 1: Analysis of evidence and lessons learned, Chapter 6, Patient and public local involvement and scrutiny, page 557, paragraph 6.351

<sup>10</sup> Louise Casey, [Report of Inspection of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council](#), page 76



range of sources, including written and oral evidence and a workshop in October 2017 and published its final report in December 2017 (the Select Committee Report). The Select Committee Report makes 21 recommendations focusing on the following themes:

- organisational culture
- parity of esteem between scrutiny and the executive
- independence
- member training and skills
- role of the Public
- scrutinising public services delivered by external organisations.

2.1.9 In March 2018, the Government published its response to the Select Committee Report and accepted most but not all of the recommendations aimed at the Government (Government Response).

2.1.10 The Government Response notes that scrutiny plays a vital role in ensuring local accountability on a wide range of local issues and comments that the Government is committed to ensuring councils:

- are aware of the importance of scrutiny
- understand the benefits of effective scrutiny
- have access to best practice to inform councils' thinking.

Accordingly, the government have agreed to update and publish new guidance later this year to replace guidance published in 2006<sup>11</sup>.

2.1.11 Further, the Government Response reiterates the independent role of scrutiny, importance of chairs having the requisite skills and knowledge, the need for appropriate scrutiny resources and access to information and the role scrutiny plays in taking account of service users to shape and improve services.

2.1.12 However, the Government Response comments that Councils are best-placed to shape scrutiny arrangements to suit local needs, and recognises the flexibility Councils require to put those arrangements in place. In particular, the Government Response highlights the government is wary of imposing particular arrangements on local authorities, such as the election of chairs, how to hold external bodies running public services to account and

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<sup>11</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government, New Council Constitutions: guidance to English Authorities, 2006

prescribing dedicated scrutiny support staff arrangements, scrutiny resources, training and monitoring systems.

## **National bodies supporting scrutiny**

2.1.13 The CfPS is a non-profit organisation, which aims to improve public understanding of the role and impact of scrutiny and provides training and support to scrutiny members and officers across the UK. Over the last two years, CfPS has provided a programme of support to Tower Hamlets, which is referred to later in this report.

2.1.14 The Local Government Association (LGA) is a cross-party organisation that aims to promote local government issues with central government and strengthen local government capabilities. The LGA offers support to local authorities through leadership programmes, peer challenges, training and has produced guidance on scrutiny. The LGA will be invited to Tower Hamlets in June 2018 as part of a peer challenge review, which includes reviewing scrutiny arrangements.

## **2.2 Regional Context**

2.2.1 The Greater London Authority (GLA), consisting of the Mayor of London and 25 members of the London Assembly, has a strategic regional authority over issues such as transport, policing, economic development and fire and emergency planning in greater London. Under the Greater London Authority Act 1999, the primary purpose of the London Assembly is to hold the Mayor of London to account and examine a wide range of subjects, which are “of importance to Londoners”<sup>12</sup>. Local policies therefore need to feed into regional strategies, such as the London Plan, as part of the Council’s scrutiny work programming.

2.2.2 From a health perspective, following Lord Darzi’s vision for health services, Healthcare for London – A Framework for Action (Framework), the London wide Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) was set up across 32 London boroughs. JOSC scrutinises whether the Framework’s proposals are in the interests of the health of local people and will deliver better healthcare for the people of London. Following on from this, at a sub-regional level, the Inner North East London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee was set up between the London Boroughs of Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and City of London Corporation (JHOSC). JHOSC’s remit is to consider London wide and local NHS service developments and changes that impact all the authorities mentioned above.

2.2.3 The London Councils provides support to the London Scrutiny Network, which brings together overview and scrutiny committee members and scrutiny

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<sup>12</sup> Section 59(2)(e), GLA Act 1999

officers across London local authorities. Tower Hamlets scrutiny members and officers have attended and contributed to training across London, benefiting from<sup>13</sup>:

- the ability to share best practice and discuss solutions to common problems across local authorities
- raising the profile of overview and scrutiny in Tower Hamlets
- discussing developments and their implications for overview and scrutiny
- identifying issues of joint concern and discussing methods for scrutinising these.

## 2.3 Local Context

### Background

2.3.1 Tower Hamlets was one of the first local authorities to pilot an executive model of decision-making in early 2000 and created a scrutiny function consisting of a main overview and scrutiny committee and a number of subject matter sub-committees. At a national and regional level the Tower Hamlets scrutiny function was recognised for good practice in a number of areas, featuring in the CfPS' and the London Scrutiny Network's publications.

2.3.2 Over the last 18 years, scrutiny has evolved in Tower Hamlets in response to changing executive attitudes towards scrutiny. The recent experience of the previous Mayor not attending scrutiny committee meetings, save under threat of formal notice, demonstrated that even though there are statutory duties and powers supporting the holding of decision-makers to account, the effectiveness of scrutiny relies on buy-in and commitment of the organisational leadership. Government intervention further highlighted the importance of effective governance arrangements.

### Changes from 2015

2.3.3 The newly re-elected Executive Mayor of Tower Hamlets, John Biggs, (Executive Mayor) spent 16 years as a London Assembly member and therefore brings with him an enthusiasm for improving scrutiny. In 2015, the Executive Mayor published a Transparency Protocol and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee established a Transparency Commission. Recommendations and actions from these pieces of work led to a review of scrutiny arrangements, which were then implemented in the municipal year 2016-17.

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<sup>13</sup> London Councils [website](#)

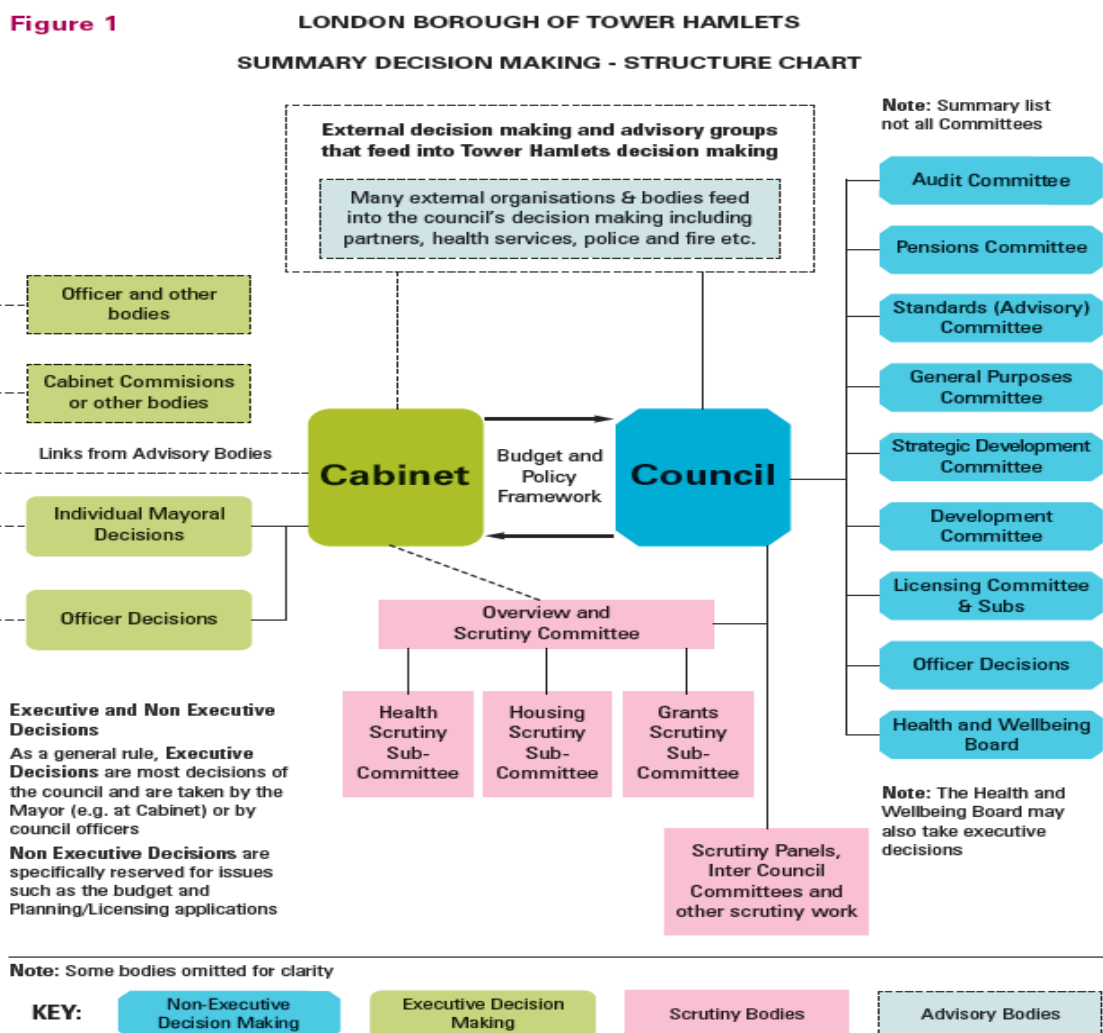
- 2.3.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has developed several ways of holding the Executive to account, which include call-in of Cabinet decisions, pre-decision scrutiny, monitoring and challenge of performance and budget on a quarterly basis and spotlight sessions focused on specific areas or Cabinet portfolio areas. During 2017-18 there has been a real focus on pre-decision scrutiny. To facilitate this, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings were moved before Cabinet meetings. Further, an agenda slot was scheduled on every Cabinet meeting for the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide feedback on pre-decision scrutiny of Cabinet papers. In addition, Cabinet Members are invited and attend all meetings and task and finish groups related to specific scrutiny reviews in their portfolio areas.
- 2.3.5 Also, to raise the profile of scrutiny, an Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit (Toolkit) has been developed, in consultation with the CfPS, which provides guidance on scrutiny roles and processes.

### **Constitutional powers**

- 2.3.6 In addition to the legal powers set out above, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a mandatory consultation role on all items that are the responsibility of full Council to agree rather than the Executive, including the budget. Article 6 of Tower Hamlets' Constitution specifies the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's policy and development powers as follows:
- Assisting the Council and the Executive in the development of its budget and policy framework by in depth analysis of policy issues.
  - Conducting research, consultation with the community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options.
  - Considering and implementing mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options.
  - Questioning members of the Executive and/or Committees and chief officers about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area.
  - Liaising with other external organisations operating in the area, whether national, regional or local, to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working

## Scrutiny structure

- 2.3.7 The Council now has a main overarching Overview and Scrutiny Committee with three sub-committees, consisting of Health Scrutiny Sub Committee, Grants Scrutiny Sub-committee to ensure cross party pre-decision scrutiny of grants decision-making and Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee, reflecting the local priority on housing.
- 2.3.8 In addition to three sub-committees, the Constitution establishes Lead Scrutiny Members for Children’s Services, Governance, Health, Adults and Community, Place and Resources.
- 2.3.9 The Council also held the rotating chair in 2016/17 and 2017/18 for the inner North East London Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC). The JHOSC is tasked with scrutinising health and social care plans and/or decisions that may affect one or more member authority.
- 2.3.10 The governance structure of the Council, including the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its three sub-committees are detailed below:



## 3. Effectiveness

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### 3.1 What is effective scrutiny?

3.1.1 The Select Committee Report notes that “at its best, scrutiny holds executives to account, monitors decisions affecting local residents and contributes to the formation of policy”<sup>14</sup>.

3.1.2 The CfPS sets out four principles of good scrutiny, as follows:

- Provides a constructive “critical friend” challenge;
- Amplifies the voices and concerns of the public;
- Is led by independent people who take responsibility for their role;
- Drives improvement in public services

3.1.3 For scrutiny to be effective it needs to be seen as a ‘critical friend’, rather than an adversarial confrontation. ‘Critical friend’ challenge can then help identify where decisions or policies can be improved and prevent mistakes being made or repeated. The Casey Report provides a useful description of what effective critical challenge means. “The notion of challenge has been misunderstood and misinterpreted as bullish questioning. Challenge means setting aspirational targets, knowing how far to stretch the organisation, asking searching questions, drilling down into information and data, ensuring targets are kept to and agreed actions implemented. It also means recognising organisational inertia and doing something about it; identifying when people are struggling, finding out why and getting alongside them, overcoming barriers and working out solutions”<sup>15</sup>.

### 3.2 Scrutiny in Tower Hamlets in 2017-18

3.2.1 In assessing the effectiveness of scrutiny arrangements during the 2017/18 municipal year, this report reflects on the following:

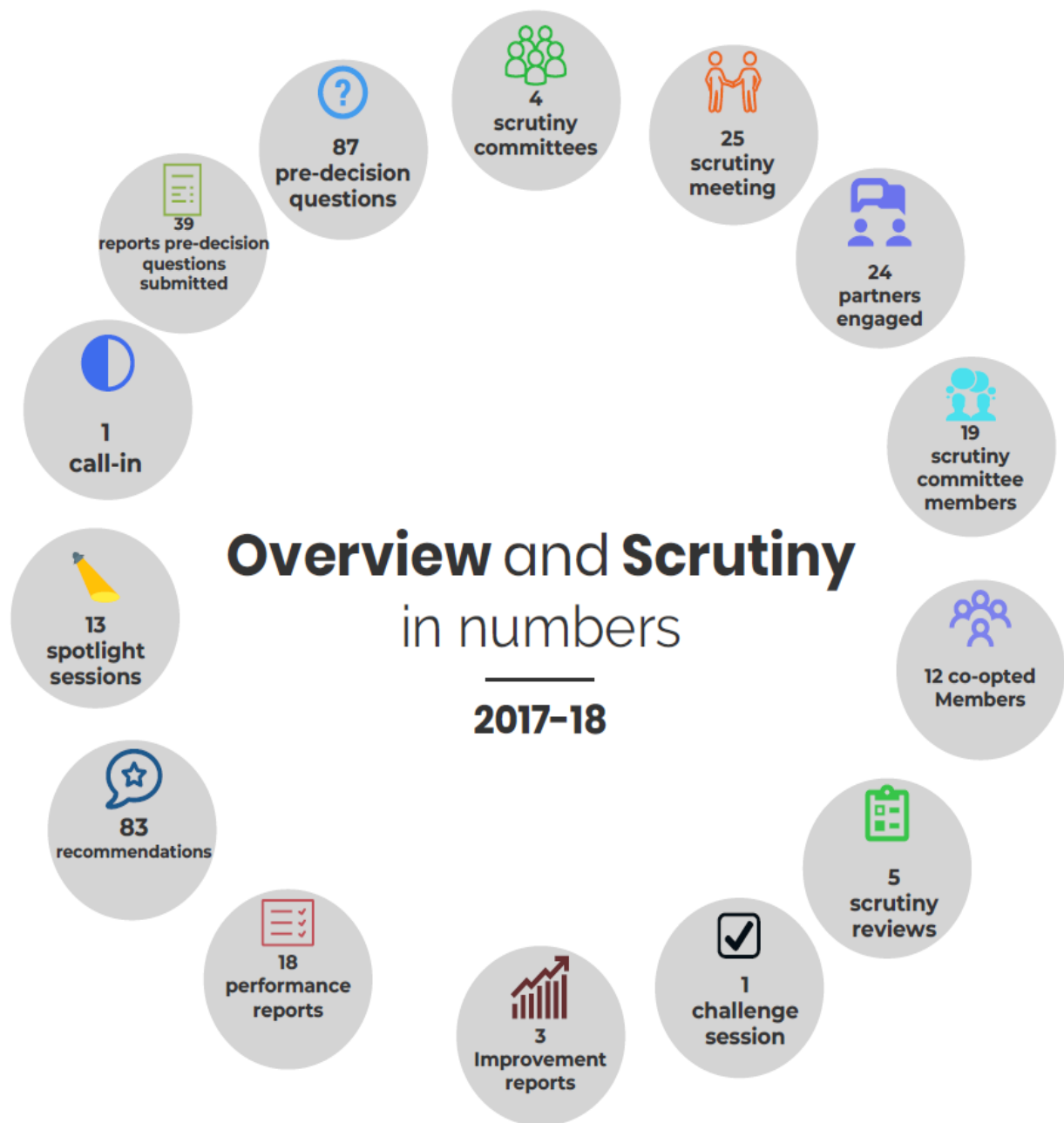
- Key overview and scrutiny numbers
- Feedback from Members, officers and partners
- Overview of the impact of scrutiny in Tower Hamlets.

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<sup>14</sup> Select Committee, [Effectiveness of local authority overview and scrutiny committees](#), page 9 paragraph 8

<sup>15</sup> Louise Casey, [Report of Inspection of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council](#), page 65

## Key Overview and scrutiny numbers



## Feedback from Members

3.2.2 Below is some of the feedback from Committee Members:

*The Gangs Scrutiny work provided members not only with an opportunity to make recommendations to improve services and the safety of residents but also helped to increase the knowledge of members in relation to complex issues around child exploitation and county lines. This will help to ensure members are able to be more proactive in seeking solutions to these issues and have a wider appreciation of issues around the supply of drugs.*

*Scrutiny provides an opportunity to listen to the voice of people in Tower Hamlets to guide service delivery improvement.*

*Scrutiny makes a valuable contribution towards policy development and decision-making by promoting transparency, holding decision-makers to account and improving services for the people of Tower Hamlets.*

*It was beneficial for members to discuss case studies and to hear from the Young Mayor and Deputy Young Mayor so that we can appreciate more fully the experiences of young people in our borough.*



## **Overview of the impact of scrutiny at Tower Hamlets**

3.2.3 A range of scrutiny committee members were interviewed about their views on the areas highlighted in the Select Committee Report and the CfPS provided feedback on scrutiny arrangements at Tower Hamlets in 2017/18. The following areas were discussed:

- Organisational culture
- Parity of esteem between scrutiny and the executive
- Political impartiality and Independence
- ‘Critical friend’ challenge
- Driving service and budget scrutiny
- Mechanisms
- Member training and skills
- Resident engagement

### **Organisational culture**

3.2.4 The Select Committee Report notes that each local authority will deliver scrutiny in different ways, depending on local needs. However, a common theme of local authorities with effective scrutiny arrangements was the culture of the organisation recognising the value and supporting scrutiny processes as part of the organisation’s governance arrangements.

3.2.5 Overall scrutiny members felt that the Council has a positive attitude towards scrutiny, which is supported by the Mayor’s attendance and commitment to improving scrutiny. In its feedback, the CfPS noted an emerging scrutiny culture but one which requires sustaining. This was echoed by scrutiny members, with one member highlighting that, despite the current supportive climate towards scrutiny, it is still possible to miss matters, such as the ‘inadequate’ Ofsted rating in Children’s Services. Members suggested further embedding and formalising scrutiny processes by developing clear role descriptions for scrutiny chairs and leads, updating toolkits and providing ongoing training to raise awareness of scrutiny processes for all members (including the Executive).

3.2.6 One member suggested that the function of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer and the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could be further developed to advocate for scrutiny to lead officers to sustain a positive organisational culture.

## **Parity of esteem between scrutiny and the executive**

- 3.2.7 The Select Committee Report highlighted that there is a risk that, with centralised executive decision-making powers, scrutiny can be seen as a less important branch of the Council's structure and therefore not supported by adequate resourcing. Scrutiny should have parity of esteem with the executive, including proportionate allocation of resources to produce independent and impartial policy advice.
- 3.2.8 Members commented that generally scrutiny enjoys good parity of esteem and is respected by the Executive. Members noted that scrutiny was adequately resourced for committee meetings and highlighted the useful development of key lines of enquiry. However, members also commented that officers supporting scrutiny reviews/challenge sessions could have additional support as Democratic Services does not currently support this function.
- 3.2.9 Further, members commented that it is important that officers maintain independence after the upcoming organisational restructure and concerns were raised about the recent high turnover of staff.

## **Political impartiality and Independence**

- 3.2.10 The Select Committee Report notes that "scrutiny committees must have an independent voice and be able to make evidence-based conclusions while avoiding political point-scoring<sup>16</sup>". This is particularly relevant for scrutiny chairs, who must be seen to be independently minded and take full account of the evidence considered by the committee so there is no perception of impropriety. To safeguard scrutiny's independence:
- scrutiny must be sufficiently resourced
  - there should be an assumption of transparency so scrutiny members have access to information, particularly around financial and performance information,
  - scrutiny members, particularly chairs, operate in an apolitical, impartial way.
  - Scrutiny members review data from multiple sources and external advisors
- 3.2.11 The CfPS found that scrutiny committees mostly displayed cross party working and 'one team' behaviours. Further, adopting an evidence and risk-based approach to work programming, the development of Scrutiny Lead

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<sup>16</sup> Select Committee Report, page 13, paragraph 24

roles (aligned to key service and Council priorities) and the inclusive nature of the chairing of committees also assists in promoting political impartiality.

- 3.2.12 Members acknowledged the importance of the role of the chair in supporting impartiality and independence, such as ensuring all members' questions are reflected on, questions material to decisions are posed at Cabinet and sufficient time is allocated to scrutinise agenda items fully (particularly Cabinet Papers), which may require pushing back on requests to sign off urgent matters.
- 3.2.13 A number of members also recognised the merit of both statutory and non-statutory co-opted members on all scrutiny committees in strengthening independence and adding local people's voice to scrutiny. For this reason, it was also suggested that co-opted members have greater voting rights.

#### **'Critical friend' challenge**

- 3.2.14 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee chose to dedicate a significant portion of its time and attention to the Council's improvement work on Children's Services, given the Ofsted rating in April 2017 of 'inadequate'. A number of sessions were held with the Mayor, Chief Executive, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Corporate Director of Children's Services and other officers on the Council's work to address the Ofsted Report's recommendations. Alongside this, the Committee also heard from the Independent Chair of the Children's Safeguarding Board, Independent Chair of the Children's Services Improvement Board and an Improvement Partner appointed by the Department of Education. Members recognised that scrutiny has an important role to play in providing challenge and support to this process in the future.

#### **Driving service delivery improvement and budget scrutiny**

- 3.2.15 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee held three sessions in January 2018, including a training session and two Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings, to consider and challenge the budget proposals. Training focused on questioning techniques, focusing on the impact on residents and whether the budget represents value for money. The CfPS also developed key lines of enquiry to assist Committee members provide effective scrutiny.
- 3.2.16 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted that parents were not applying for free school meals due to the universal free school meals provision, leading some schools to lose funding (in particular the pupil premium). The Committee has since welcomed the Council's change in policy around Free School meals, requiring all parents to complete forms, to ensure schools receive funding and can continue to provide this service.

3.2.17 Following the budget scrutiny training sessions, Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended incorporating budget scrutiny into the scrutiny subcommittee's work programmes throughout the year. Further, the CfPS highlighted that in 2018/19 scrutiny committees should maintain a focus on improving an outcomes based approach, cross referring this against performance outcomes and extending scrutiny to other areas (beyond budget and children's services issues).

### **Mechanisms**

3.2.18 Scrutiny uses a range of mechanisms to hold the executive to account, including pre-decision scrutiny of cabinet papers, cabinet members scrutiny spotlight sessions, call-ins and in-depth reviews of service areas. However, concerns were raised that insufficient time was given to pre-decision scrutiny due to very full agendas and that this should be addressed in the work programming for 2018/19.

### **Member training and skills**

3.2.19 The Select Committee Report notes that it is incumbent on councils to ensure that scrutiny members have enough prior subject knowledge to prevent meetings becoming information exchanges at the expense of thorough scrutiny. Listening and questioning skills are essential, as well as the capacity to constructively critique the executive rather than following party lines.

3.2.20 Members recognised the benefit of training to assist effective questioning and requested that effective questioning, performance and budget scrutiny be provided earlier in the year. Some scrutiny chairs also took up one to one training or feedback sessions to develop their chairing techniques. A support programme, delivered by the CfPS, is proposed to develop skills in new Council members and further develop skills for both new and existing scrutiny members, such as scrutinising public services delivered by external organisations.

### **Resident engagement**

3.2.21 "By involving residents in scrutiny, the potential for a partisan approach lessens and committees are able to hear directly from those whose interests they are representing"<sup>17</sup>. The Select Report notes that to promote public engagement, local authorities should commit time and resources to effective digital engagement strategies.

3.2.22 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and sub-committees' members engage well with stakeholders, community advocates and our communities

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<sup>17</sup> Select Committee Report, page 32, paragraph 77

on particular elements of the scrutiny work programme. A good example is the review of the borough's approach to the application of the Prevent Duty, where members collected views and evidence from community groups, which informed the final recommendations. This included workshops with young people, school conferences and sessions with Prevent funded providers. Last year the scrutiny review of maternity services produced a video which included evidence submitted by local people and community organisations. This provided a different avenue to showcase the work of scrutiny and reach a different audience. However, members noted that more public involvement with opportunities for residents to contribute in regular committee meetings needs to be improved.

## 4. Developing Scrutiny at Tower Hamlets

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4.1 Based on feedback from committee members, officers, partners and the CfPS, the following key areas have been identified to strengthen scrutiny arrangements in Tower Hamlets in 2018-19:

- Clarifying roles and processes
- Remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its Sub-committees
- Developing the skills of committee members and officers
- Effective work programming to focus on priority matters
- Amplifying the voice of residents
- Independent expertise
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of scrutiny

### 4.2 Clarifying roles and processes

4.2.1 The Select Committee Report highlighted that organisational culture plays an important role in supporting scrutiny. “Council leaders, both politicians and officials have a responsibility to set the tone and create an environment that welcomes constructive challenge and democratic accountability<sup>18</sup>”. Feedback during interviews with scrutiny committee members indicated that both officers and members of scrutiny and the Executive would benefit from a better understanding of scrutiny roles and responsibilities to encourage buy-in of scrutiny arrangements.

4.2.2 In 2016/17, in consultation with the CfPS, the Council developed an Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit (Toolkit). The aim of the Toolkit is to provide officers, Members, stakeholders and local communities with guidance and advice on how the scrutiny function works at Tower Hamlets. Scrutiny practices have further developed over the last year, which need to be updated in the Toolkit.

4.2.3 In particular, the Scrutiny Leads have been assigned responsibilities to:

- take the lead in asking questions on Scrutiny Lead areas at scrutiny committee meetings
- take the lead in monitoring and scrutinising budget proposals and performance throughout the year.

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<sup>18</sup> Select Committee Report, page 11, paragraph 14.

- 4.2.4 Further, last year the Scrutiny Lead for Children’s Services played an active role in attending the Children’s Services Improvement Board Meetings to gain an independent perspective of improvement progress. In addition to the responsibilities listed above, Scrutiny Leads could benefit from the development of a role description, setting out clear guidance in how to lead in specific areas.
- 4.2.5 Similarly, the role of the Chair could be further developed to include last year’s introduction of Chair’s Actions to the agenda to ensure urgency decisions and other governance matters are reported and a more detailed role description, highlighting the importance of the chair’s independence to strengthen the legitimacy of the scrutiny process.
- 4.2.6 Additional processes were developed last year, including the introduction of key lines of enquiry on each agenda item to support committee members with strategic questioning. A map of scrutiny processes from initiating reports to questions to cabinet and following up action items after committee members could assist officers in service areas understand and further engage in scrutiny processes.
- 4.2.7 In addition to updating the Toolkit, it is important to publicise the Toolkit more widely to ensure members and officers are aware of the resource and understand scrutiny roles and processes.

<p><b>Recommendation 1</b></p> <p>That the Council update the Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit to clarify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the roles and responsibilities of the Chair and Scrutiny Leads</li> <li>• scrutiny processes for officers and members before, during and after committee meetings</li> <li>• how residents can get involved in scrutiny at Tower Hamlets</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendation 2</b></p> <p>That the Council widely publicise the updated Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit among Council members, officers, partners and local residents.</p>

### 4.3 Remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its Sub-committees

- 4.3.1 A mature scrutiny structure and function, recognised by external parties, will be essential to drive improvement across the organisation after the end of the current Directions in 30 September 2018. Further, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will need to sustain its scrutiny of Children’s Services to support the targeted trajectory of a ‘good’ Ofsted rating by 2019. Accordingly, it is essential that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee establish a key role in contributing to the Council’s Improvement Framework with the recognition and support of relevant service areas.

- 4.3.2 The Select Committee Report notes that scrutiny committees should be able to ‘follow the council pound’ and have the power to oversee all taxpayer-funded services. Feedback highlighted the need for greater scrutiny of external parties providing public services to ensure services are fit for purpose.
- 4.3.3 Last year, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee highlighted the importance of building internal capacity to manage the commissioning process, particularly around contract management. This was deemed particularly relevant for large contracts. For example, the Committee noted that better management of the recycling contract could have significantly improved service delivery at an earlier stage.
- 4.3.4 The Grants Scrutiny Sub-committee was originally set up to ensure that the overall objectives of the grants scheme were met, based on identified need, a fair geographical distribution of funding, and a full range of community needs. It aims to support an objective, fair, transparent and co-ordinated approach to grant funding across the Council. However, as highlighted in the Best Value Improvement Plan, the Council is moving towards a commissioning approach to replace current mainstream grants and ensure a clearer procurement process. Accordingly, feedback suggested that the Scrutiny Lead for Resources explores how to deliver best practice for grants and community commissioning scrutiny.

**Recommendation 3**

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and sub-committees are supported by the Executive to enhance their role in scrutinising improvement activities across the organisation.

**Recommendation 4**

That the Scrutiny Lead for Resources explores how grants and community commissioning scrutiny can be developed in 2018-19 to reflect the Council’s new focus on commissioning.

**4.4 Developing skills of Committee Members and officers**

- 4.4.1 Following the May elections, a scrutiny induction session will be held on 30 May for all members to introduce the role of scrutiny and its functions so that scrutiny Committee Members and the Executive are familiar with scrutiny arrangements in Tower Hamlets.
- 4.4.2 Over the past two years, the CfPS has provided a programme of support to develop members’ and officers’ knowledge and skills towards providing effective scrutiny. A new training programme for members is proposed to guide newly elected councillors to follow best practice and build on skills developed by more experienced councillors.



- 4.4.3 Last year, member training focused on developing key skills, such as effective questioning training, which resulted in a shift towards a probing, questioning scrutiny culture. This was combined with more strategic questioning in scrutiny of the Council’s budget setting process to focus on an outcomes based approach and service delivery. Due to the new make-up of scrutiny members, training on effective questioning and budget scrutiny is proposed to be scheduled at the start of the year to ensure scrutiny takes place throughout the year.
- 4.4.4 Further, as the Council moves towards embedding an outcomes-based approach, additional training can also be offered to Committee Members. The Select Committee Report highlighted the importance of “following the Council pound” with the power to oversee all tax-payer funded services. This has been flagged by members as an area where further support is needed. Accordingly, training will be offered on scrutinising partnerships, risk and audit.
- 4.4.5 Feedback from scrutiny leads and scrutiny committee chairs indicated that one to one support offered by the CfPS was valuable in building confidence and helping members develop their skills further. Accordingly, the CfPS are offering tailored similar support on a number of areas including effective chairing skills, outcomes focussed recommendations and personal performance for scrutiny leads.
- 4.4.6 Training will also be offered to officers supporting scrutiny functions to improve understanding of how they can support members more effectively by developing skills and political awareness.
- 4.4.7 Feedback suggested that training sessions for service area officers and managers would help to improve understanding of scrutiny and embed a scrutiny culture across the organisation.

**Recommendation 5**

That the Council develops and implements a training programme for members to include:

- An induction into the role and mechanisms of scrutiny (all members)
- Core skills for scrutiny members, such as effective questioning, budget scrutiny, reviewing the improvement framework, outcome based approach, scrutinising partners
- Tailored one to one training for scrutiny members, based on specific needs.

**Recommendation 6**

That the Council develops a training programme for officers:

- in service areas to improve understanding of scrutiny processes and embed a scrutiny culture across the organisation
- in scrutiny functions, to assist officers support scrutiny members more effectively.

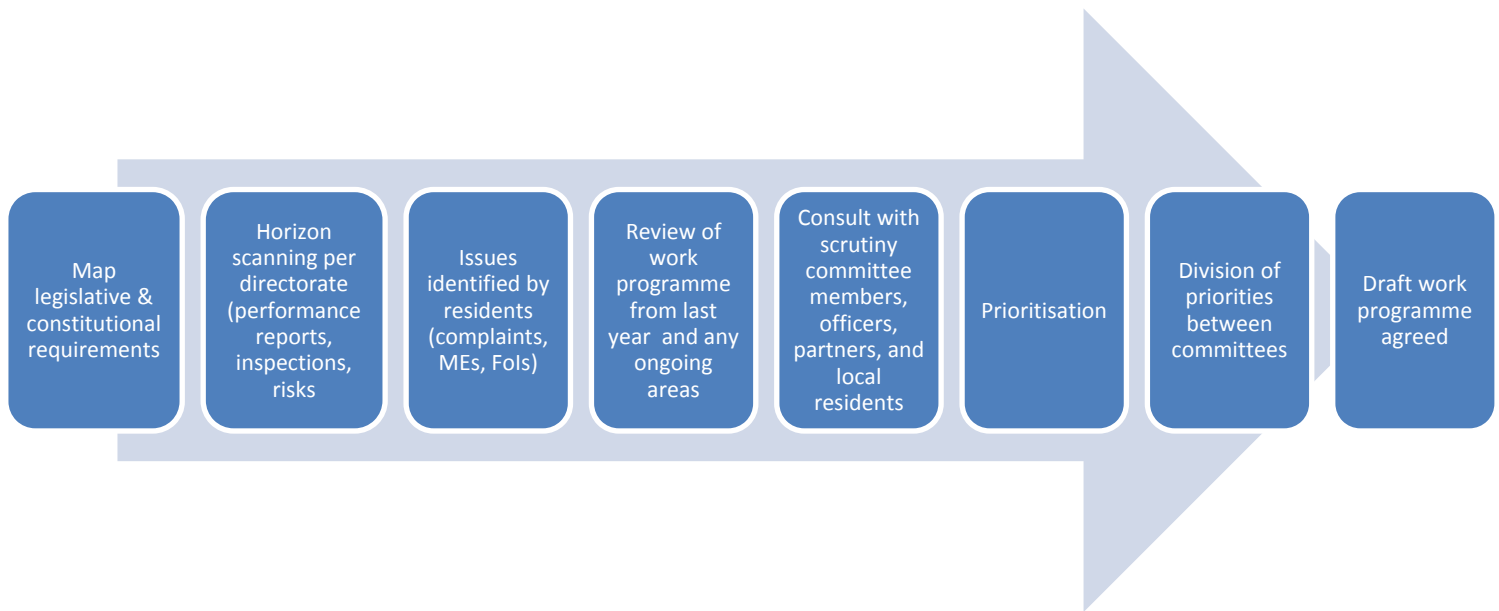
## 4.5 Effective work programming to focus on priority matters

4.5.1 Effective scrutiny helps to drive improvements in service delivery to local residents by undertaking a thorough targeted review of the Council's service provision and policies. Work programming therefore plays a crucial role in determining the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's area of focus.

4.5.2 It is therefore proposed that the work programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its sub-committees focus on priority issues, such as the Improvement Framework, strategic plan priorities, performance and budget scrutiny through the following different scrutiny mechanisms:

Item	Purpose
<b>Scrutiny Spotlight Sessions</b>	To hold the Executive to account with spotlight sessions of all Cabinet members' portfolio to look at key risks.
<b>OSC Reports</b>	To consider additional items, which are either requested or referred to the committee
<b>Budget &amp; Policy Framework Scrutiny</b>	To review and comment on the Council's budget and policy framework items, which includes a mandatory consultation role to scrutinise all items that are the responsibility of full Council to agree.
<b>Strategic Performance Monitoring</b>	To review and challenge the performance of the Council on delivery of the strategic plan, budget and review areas of resident complaints
<b>Scrutiny reviews and challenge sessions</b>	To carry out an in-depth review on a focus service area to improve service delivery
<b>Tracking Recommendations</b>	To monitor implementation of recommendations from previous scrutiny review/challenge sessions.
<b>Pre-decision Scrutiny</b>	To inform the Cabinet decision-making process
<b>Call-ins</b>	To consider whether decisions made but not yet implemented are appropriate

4.5.3 To map out specific areas within these priority areas, scrutiny members and service areas will need to consult on the development of the work programme. Further, to avoid duplication, priority areas should be clearly divided between the scrutiny sub-committees. The key work programming stages are set out below:



4.5.4 Scrutiny Leads also suggested that early and regular meetings with service heads would help feed into ongoing work programme development and address key issues as they arise. Discussions at the Mayoral Advisory Board have supported this and also suggested regular engagement with Cabinet Members to ensure Scrutiny Leads are fully briefed on work in progress.

4.5.5 Members repeated that an area of improvement for the 2017/18 work programme was the large number of agenda items, which left inadequate time to look at areas in depth, decreased flexibility to address issues as they arise and reduced time for greater community engagement. It is therefore proposed that scrutiny sub-committees play a larger role in budget and performance scrutiny throughout the year to free up the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s work agenda and allow for more effective scrutiny.

**Recommendation 7**

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and scrutiny sub-committees develop a work programme, focusing on priority areas such as:

- The Council’s Improvement agenda
- Delivering the strategic plan
- Linking performance and budget scrutiny.

**Recommendation 8**

That scrutiny sub-committees lead on budget and performance scrutiny throughout the year for relevant service areas.

**Recommendation 9**

That the directorates ensure regular engagement between scrutiny leads and relevant corporate and divisional directors and Cabinet members.

**4.6 Engaging residents**

- 4.6.1 Scrutiny currently has good engagement with residents, community groups and partners in its scrutiny challenge and review sessions and has held meetings outside the Town Hall to encourage local participation. However, this could be further strengthened by inviting local residents, community representatives and voluntary organisations onto challenge or review panels.
- 4.6.2 Although Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings are now broadcast on the website, public attendance and viewing rates remain low. To make scrutiny more accessible, residents and community groups need to be aware of the role of scrutiny and how to get involved. It is proposed that greater communications, including the use of social media, is used to highlight scrutiny events and promote the Toolkit. A key opportunity to promote partner and resident participation will be during the development of the scrutiny work programme. Accordingly, it would be useful for residents, community groups and partners to be able to suggest ideas for the scrutiny work programme on the Council website.
- 4.6.3 In particular, feedback indicates that recruitment of both statutory and non-statutory co-opted members to all scrutiny committees helps to strengthen local people's voice in scrutiny and is a key part of ensuring resident involvement in setting the scrutiny work programme.

**Recommendation 10**

That the Council recruit statutory and non-statutory co-opted members to all scrutiny committees to strengthen local people's voice in scrutiny.

**Recommendation 11**

That the Council explore how local residents, community representatives and voluntary organisation representatives can be co-opted into scrutiny challenge/review panels.

**Recommendation 12**

That the Council develops a scrutiny communications and engagement plan to promote the role of scrutiny and facilitate local residents, community groups and partners to engage in scrutiny activities, including contributing to the development of the work programme.

**4.7 Independent expertise**

- 4.7.1 The Select Committee Report highlights that "few committees make regular use of external experts and call on councils to seek to engage local

academics, and encourage universities to play a greater role in local scrutiny”<sup>19</sup>.

4.7.2 Seeking external expertise is an integral part of evidence gathering in scrutiny challenge and review sessions. However, feedback noted that greater use could be made of the proximity of universities in the borough, as a source of independent expertise.

4.7.3 In 2017/18, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee invited the Independent Chair of the Children’s Safeguarding Board, Independent Chair of the Children’s Services Improvement Board and an Improvement Partner appointed by the Department of Education to provide their insights and views on progress. The meetings were valuable in highlighting potential challenges to the Improvement Plan in Children’s Services and demonstrated how independent expertise can be used effectively.

**Recommendation 13**

That the Council explores where ‘independent expertise’ exists in the borough, taking account of existing networks and contacts, and how this could be used to assist independent scrutiny of services.

**4.8 Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of scrutiny**

4.8.1 To ensure scrutiny is as effective as possible, the impact of scrutiny arrangements should be monitored throughout the year. Based on key themes from the Select Committee Report, it is proposed that monitoring focuses on the following:

- Member training: Members are supported and have the requisite skills and resources to provide effective scrutiny
- Impact of ‘critical friend’ challenge: review the impact of recommendations adopted into policy or acted on by the Council
- Resident engagement in the scrutiny process: review the number of residents participating in scrutiny processes.

4.8.2 Monitoring and evaluation processes will be developed further with the CfPS.

**Recommendation 14**

That the Council develops a scrutiny monitoring and evaluation tool to evaluate the impact of scrutiny throughout the year.

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<sup>19</sup> Select Committee Report, page 43, paragraph 12

## 5. Action Plan

Below is an action plan setting out how the proposed recommendations will be implemented.

<b>Recommendation 1:</b>		
<b>That the Council update the Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit to clarify:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the roles and responsibilities of the Chair and Scrutiny Leads</li> <li>• scrutiny processes for officers and members before, during and after committee meetings</li> <li>• how residents can get involved in scrutiny at Tower Hamlets.</li> </ul>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
1. A detailed description of the role and expectations of the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and each sub-committees is updated in the Toolkit.	SPP Officer	July 2018
2. A detailed description of the role and expectations of the Scrutiny Leads is updated in the Toolkit, including how they can lead on budget and performance scrutiny for their relevant areas.	SPP Officer	July 2018
3. A process map is set out in the toolkit to clarify scrutiny processes before, during and after committee meetings.	SPP Officer	July 2018
4. Updating the Toolkit to clarify how residents can get involved in scrutiny at Tower Hamlets	SPP Officer	July 2018
<b>Recommendation 2:</b>		
<b>That the Council widely publicise the updated Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit among Council members, officers, partners and local residents.</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>

Set up a web page to publicise scrutiny activities and the Overview and Scrutiny toolkit	Communications Officer (in consultation with SPP Officer)	Oct 2018
Send out internal communications to publicise the updated Toolkit and where to find it for members and officers.	Communications Officer (in consultation with SPP Officer)	August 2018
<b>Recommendation 3:</b>		
<b>That the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and sub-committees are supported by the Executive to enhance their role in scrutinising improvement activities across the organisation.</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
1. Set up meetings with relevant directorates to horizon scan and discuss where scrutiny can add value	SPP Officer in consultation with service areas	July 2018
2. Map key dates and processes for improvement activities to include in the scrutiny work programme plan	SPP Officer in consultation with service areas	June 2018
<b>Recommendation 4:</b>		
That the Scrutiny Lead for Resources explores how grants and community commissioning scrutiny can be developed in 2018-19 to reflect the Council's new focus on commissioning.		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
1. Meet with the Resources Director to explore the work stream for grants and community commissioning	SPP Officer	TBD
2. Develop a Grants Scrutiny Lead role description and update the Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit accordingly	SPP Officer	TBD
<b>Recommendation 5:</b>		

<p><b>That the Council develops and implements a training programme for members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>An induction into the role and mechanisms of scrutiny (all members)</b></li> <li>• <b>Core skills for scrutiny members, such as effective questioning, budget scrutiny, reviewing the improvement framework, outcome based approach, scrutinising partners</b></li> <li>• <b>Tailored one to one training for scrutiny members, based on specific needs.</b></li> </ul>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
1. Develop and hold a scrutiny induction into the role and mechanisms of scrutiny for all members, supported by the Centre for Public Scrutiny	SPP Officer	30 May 2018
2. Develop, in consultation with CfPS, a timetable of mandatory scrutiny training effective questioning, budget scrutiny, reviewing the improvement framework, outcome based approach, scrutinising partners	SPP Officer	July 2018
3. Discuss and plan with Committee members any specialised training required	SPP Officer	August 2018
<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b></p> <p><b>That the Council develops a training programme for officers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>in service areas to improve understanding of scrutiny processes and embed a scrutiny culture across the organisation</b></li> <li>• <b>in scrutiny functions, to assist officers support scrutiny members more effectively.</b></li> </ul>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
1. Hold a mandatory training session for service heads and managers designed to clarify scrutiny processes and highlight which mechanisms may be more effective in promoting 'critical friend challenge'.	SPP Officer	TBD



2. Develop, in consultation with CfPS and scrutiny officers, a timetable of training in scrutiny processes and effective ways of working.	SPP Officer	TBD
<p><b>Recommendation 7:</b></p> <p><b>That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and scrutiny sub-committees develop a work programme, focusing on priority areas such as:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Improvement agenda</b></li> <li>• <b>Delivering strategic plan</b></li> <li>• <b>Linking performance and budget scrutiny.</b></li> </ul>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
1. Conduct a review and horizon scanning with each directorate to clarify progress over the last year, areas of challenge/for improvement and what will impact service areas from 2018/19 on a national, regional and local level.	SPP Officer (in consultation with directorates)	30 June
2. Develop a website page so residents can contribute to the work programme for 2018/19	Communications Officer	July 2018
3. Develop a prioritisation tool with the Centre for Public Scrutiny to focus the work programme on priority areas	SPP Officer (in consultation with CfPS)	July 2018
<p><b>Recommendation 8:</b></p> <p><b>That scrutiny sub-committees lead on budget and performance scrutiny throughout the year for relevant service areas.</b></p>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
1. Meet with the Resources Director and CfPS to discuss how budget scrutiny could be better reviewed throughout the year and how sub-committees can focus on an outcomes based approach for their relevant areas	SPP Officer (in consultation with the Resources Director)	July 2018
2. Hold a budget training session for scrutiny members with the Resources Director and CfPS to build capacity in budget and performance scrutiny	SPP Officer, Resources	July 2018

	Director, CfPS	
3. Schedule budget scrutiny throughout the year into the work programme for OSC and its sub-committees	SPP Officer (in consultation with the Resources Director)	TBD
<b>Recommendation 9:</b>		
<b>That the directorates ensure regular engagement between scrutiny leads and relevant corporate and divisional directors and Cabinet Members.</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
1. Corporate directors and divisional directors set up quarterly meetings with relevant scrutiny leads to discuss areas of progress and challenge and mechanisms used to scrutinise particular areas. Scrutiny Leads to determine whether Cabinet Members attend.	Various	July 2018
<b>Recommendation 10:</b>		
That the Council recruit statutory and non-statutory co-opted members to all scrutiny committees to strengthen local people's voice in scrutiny.		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
1. Recruit and seek nominations for 6 co-opted members, including school governors, faith representatives, tenant representative, leaseholder representative, grants scrutiny representative and Health Watch representation.	David Knight	June 2018
<b>Recommendation 11:</b>		
<b>That the Council explore how local residents, community representatives and voluntary organisation representatives can be co-opted into scrutiny challenge/review panels.</b>		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Develop a protocol on co-opting local people into reviews	SPP Officer	August 2018
SPP Officers discuss with Scrutiny Leads which reviews may benefit from local representatives	SPP Officer	September 2018

<b>Recommendation 12:</b>		
That the Council develops a scrutiny communications and engagement plan to promote the role of scrutiny and facilitate local residents, community groups and partners to engage in scrutiny activities, including contributing to the development of the work programme.		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
1. Develop a scrutiny web page on the internet	Communications Officer and SPP Officer	September 2018
2. Develop a communications plan around the scrutiny work programme to advertise scrutiny activities and explore use of social media and technology	Communications Officer and SPP Officer	August 2018
<b>Recommendation 13:</b>		
That the Council explores where 'independent expertise' exists in the borough, taking account of existing networks and contacts, and how this could be used to assist independent scrutiny of services.		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
1. Set up meetings with relevant directorates to discuss potential contacts	SPP Officer (in consultation with directorates)	TBD
2. Research and approach local experts in priority areas to determine their appetite to get involved in scrutiny	SPP Officer (in consultation with directorates)	TBD
<b>Recommendation 14:</b>		
That the Council develops a scrutiny monitoring and evaluation tool to evaluate the impact of scrutiny throughout the year.		
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>

Research and discuss with other boroughs evaluation tools, with a focus on boroughs who have adopted an outcomes based approach	SPP Officer	TBD
Map processes, data collected to determine how best to monitor and evaluate impact of scrutiny	SPP Officer	TBD
In consultation with the CfPS, develop and trial an evaluation tool.	SPP Officer (in consultation with CfPS)	TBD