


Non-Executive Report of the:  <b>Standards (Advisory) Committee</b>  29 <sup>th</sup> June 2017	 <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Graham White, Acting Corporate Director, Governance & Interim Monitoring Officer	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted
<b>Clear Up Project Final Report</b>	

<b>Originating Officer(s)</b>	Paul Greeno, Senior Corporate and Governance Legal Office
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

### Summary

1. A report is being submitted to both Cabinet and Council to present the final report of the Clear Up Project. The Monitoring Officer has carefully considered this final report and where further action is required by the Council, the Monitoring Officer has allocated that action to various Corporate Directors and Divisional Directors.
  
2. The Corporate Leadership Team will monitor progress every other month until all the matters have been completed. Quarterly reports on progress will be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and, if required, to Cabinet. The Standards Advisory Committee will also receive regular reports as its terms of reference include: "To receive periodic reports on the Council's Ethical Governance arrangements, on whistle blowing arrangements and complaints". The matters raised during the Clear Up Project go across both Ethical Governance and Whistleblowing.

### Recommendations:

The Standards (Advisory) Committee is recommended to:

1. To note the report and that the Committee will be receiving regular reports relating to the progress of actions arising from the Clear Up Project with specific reference to Ethical Governance and Whistleblowing.

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

1.1 This is a noting report.

## **2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

2.1 This is a noting report.

## **3. DETAILS OF REPORT**

3.1 The Clear Up Project was launched in September 2016, and included a nominations window that closed on 8 December 2016. A total of 66 allegations were received during this period.

3.2 Since the New Year the independent project team has been considering each of the allegations: reporting progress and making recommendations regularly to the Clear Up Board comprising the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Corporate Director, Resources and a lead Commissioner (Chris Allison).

3.3 The Clear Up Board considered the final investigation reports and the draft final report at the final Board meeting on 27 March 2017. Following that meeting the report was amended to include the Board's decisions upon the final investigation reports and was finalised.

3.4 Following receipt of the Clear Up Project report the Monitoring Officer has carefully considered the report and has allocated that action to various Corporate Directors and Divisional Directors.

3.5 At the onset of the Clear Up Project, the Final Report and schedule was to be considered by Members and placed in the public domain. This will be achieved by way of reference to both Cabinet on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017 and Council on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017 respectively. A copy of both the Final Report and a spreadsheet setting out those allocations as well as appropriate comments where no action is to be taken will be submitted to the next Standards Advisory Committee.

3.6 The Corporate Leadership Team will monitor progress every other month until all the matters have been completed. Quarterly reports on progress will be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and if required to Cabinet. The Standards Advisory Committee will also receive regular reports as its terms of reference include: "To receive periodic reports on the Council's Ethical Governance arrangements, on whistle blowing arrangements and complaints". The matters raised during the Clear Up Project go across both Ethical Governance and Whistleblowing.

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

- 4.1 The cost of the project was £121,786 and has been met from the Council's corporate contingency budget provision.

#### **5. LEGAL COMMENTS**

- 5.1 The Clear-Up Team was established to conduct a review of any unconsidered or inadequately considered allegations of improper Council decision making or impropriety in the discharge of Council functions which took place between October 2010 and June 2016. The Team considered allegations submitted during a three (3) month window from 8 September 2016 to 8 December 2016.

- 5.2 The governance of the Clear-Up Team has been overseen by the Clear-Up Board consisting of:

- Three Statutory Officers of the Council (Chief Executive (Chair), Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer).
- One DCLG Commissioner (Chris Allison)

- 5.3 As the Interim Monitoring Officer had been a member of the Clear-Up Board, he has ensured that any recommendations are neither unlawful nor give rise to maladministration.

- 5.4 There are no immediate legal implications arising at this time and the Monitoring Officer will be monitoring actions taken and when a matter has been completed to ensure that all appropriate lawful steps are taken to comply with the recommendations.

#### **6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The Clear Up Project is a continuation of the Council's improvement to its organisational culture. It demonstrates a commitment to put the concerns of employees and local people first and for fair and transparent decision making and which contributes to the delivery of One Tower Hamlets priorities and objectives.

#### **7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Council 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.

- 7.2 By virtue of Directions made by the Secretary of State on 17 March 2015 the Council was required to draw up and agree with the Commissioners a strategy and action plan for securing the Authority's compliance with the best

value duty. Part of that plan included a recommendation that the Council set up a Clear-Up Team to ensure that any historic unconsidered allegations of improper Council decision making or impropriety in the discharge of Council functions are properly investigated and determined. A natural consequence of the investigation and determination is to consider the findings and implement recommendations so as to continue to demonstrate the Council continued commitment to the best value duty.

- 7.3 Pursuant to the Direction of 28 March 2017 progress upon this matter will be included in the quarterly reports to the Secretary of State upon the Best Value Action Plan and Best and Best Value Improvement Plan.

## **8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

- 8.1 None.

## **9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Ensuring a culture whereby persons feel empowered to raise concerns is an important part of risk management and should reduce risks.

## **10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 Ensuring a culture whereby persons feel empowered to raise concerns when there is a reasonable belief (and it is in the public interest) that a criminal offence or a miscarriage of justice is likely to occur and which involves the Council should assist in reducing crime.

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

### **Linked Report**

- NONE.

### **Appendices**

- NONE.

### **Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)**

#### **List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report**

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- NONE.

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

- N/A