

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.30 P.M. ON MONDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2018

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

Members Present:

Councillor Abdal Ullah (Chair)

Councillor Marc Francis (Vice-Chair)	– Lead for Resources
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 Mohammed Pappu	– Lead for Governance
Councillor Victoria Obaze	
Councillor Val Whitehead	
Councillor Bex White	
Councillor Andrew Wood	

Co-opted Members Present:

Joanna Hannan	– Representative of Diocese of Westminster
Dr Phillip Rice	– Church of England Representative
Khoyrul Shaheed	– Muslim Faith Community
Fatiha Kassouri	– Parent Governors
Neil Cunningham	– Parent Governors
Ahmed Hussain	– Parent Governors

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Danny Hassell

Apologies:

Councillor James King
Councillor Kyrsten Perry

Officers Present:

Alison Arnaud	– Tower Hamlets College Borough Principal
Elizabeth Bailey	– Senior Strategy, Policy and

Jill Baker	Performance Officer
Richard Baldwin	– Principal - George Green's School
	– (Divisional Director, Children's Social Care)
Janet Fasan	– (Divisional Director, Legal)
Juanita Haynes	– (Senior Research Officer, Strategy & Performance)
Stephanie Marshall	– Interim Vice-Principal (Education)
Christine McInnes	– (Divisional Director, Education and Partnership, Children's)
Tracy Smith	– CEO Tower Hamlets Education Partnership
Mike Wojcik	– CEO and Managing Director

1. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were received.

2. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

2.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 25th June, 2018

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

RESOLVED

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25th June, 2018 to be approved as a correct record of the proceedings.

2.2 Minutes of the meeting held on 11th July, 2018

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

RESOLVED

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11th July, 2018 to be approved as a correct record of the proceedings.

2.3 Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd July, 2018.

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

RESOLVED

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd July, 2018 to be approved as a correct record of the proceedings.

3. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

No requests to submit petitions were received.

4. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE QUERY AND ACTION LOG 2018/19

The Committee received and noted the Query and Action Log 2018/2019.

5. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

Nil items

6. SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION IN TOWER HAMLETS

6.1 Overview of the Council's Work

The Committee received and noted a presentation from Councillor Danny Hassell Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Young People on the Council's vision and the work to support children's educational aspirations.

The main points of the discussion may be summarised below:

The Committee noted that:

- (i) In Tower Hamlets healthy life expectancy 10 years less than average (ii) There is a Low birth weight and high infant mortality (iii) 42% of children are in low income households (iv) 76% of children have English as an additional language (v) Good Level of Development increased from 46% to approximately 69% in 4 years (vi) Key Stage 2 performance is at 71% which is the expected level in Read Writing and Mathematics (RWM) against 64.4% in England as a whole (vii) The higher level, RWM 11.8% against 9.9% across England (viii) Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (GPS) is at 42.1% against 34.4% nationally (ix) KS5 16% went to Russell Group Universities as against 12% inner London and nationally;
- Ofsted outcomes amongst the best nationally 100% of nursery, primary and special schools Good or Outstanding and 90% of secondary schools Tower Hamlets Education Partnership is delivering school improvement SEND strategy driving earlier identification and better pathways to adulthood;
- The 14 to 25 strategy is under development to improve choices, pathways and opportunities into employment and Further/Higher Education;
- The Key priorities for 2018/19 are (i) continue raising standards, improve progress and narrow the gap for the lowest attainment (ii) stretch for the most able (iii) intervening quickly when needed (iv) ensuring good value for money in all spending and continuing to invest

in school improvement (v) securing standards and making schools financially sustainable including through the primary place review;

- The position with regard to Key Stage 2 (i) Improvement in all subjects (ii) Pupil premium pupils achieved 65.7% in Reading, Writing and Mathematics expected standard as opposed to 46% for England (iii) In Mathematics, Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling and Reading, Writing and Mathematics students perform better than all pupils nationally;
- The number of A Levels taken per A Level Student increased to 2.9 entries (up from 2.7), increases in the proportion of students passing A Levels graded A* to E.

6.2 Research Data

The Committee received and noted a presentation from Juanita Haynes (Senior Intelligence and Performance Manager) on the analysis of the data with regard to attainment and progress.

The main points of the discussion may be summarised below:

The Committee noted that:

- The progress a pupil has made from the end of primary school (Key Stage 2) to the end of secondary school (Key Stage 4) is Progress 8. This measures the progress that a student has made and a positive score indicates that the student has made greater progress than other students with the same attainment at Key Stage 2, whilst a negative score indicates that they have made less progress. With a score of zero being the national average;
- When considering the GCSE results for 2016/17 Tower Hamlets is at 47.2 points attainment which is higher than the national average (46.4 points) although lower than the London average (48.9 points);
- Whilst disadvantage pupils have a lower attainment than all other pupils the gap is smaller in Tower Hamlets (2.8 points) as against in London (9.8 points) and England (12.8 points);
- With regards to white British pupils they have the lowest Attainment 8 scores, 36.7, which is significantly below the borough average and their peers nationally. Whilst in respect to those young people not in education, employment and training (NEET) that around 10 per cent of young people aged 16-17 are NEET. The Committee indicated that it would wish to see the outcomes of the work being undertaken to address educational attainment, employment and training;
- The achievement of pupils across eight qualification including English and Mathematics is measured under Attainment 8;
- In 2015/16 there were 2,081 young people from Tower Hamlets in higher education, of which almost 50 per cent achieved an Upper second class honours degree. Whilst of those graduating in 2014/17 almost 50 per cent were in full-time employment;

- Findings from the 2017 Pupil Attitude survey showed that most pupils (primary and secondary) wanted to attend university; and
- Almost 47 per cent of primary and secondary pupils choose a professional career for example a doctor, lawyer, manager, teacher;

In conclusion, the Chair stated that he wished to look at amplifying opportunity for the next generation and it was **AGREED** that:

The Committee would:

1. Wish to see more details on what is being done for all those children and families from the communities within Tower Hamlets and how bridges are being built to help those who want to achieve;
2. Want the opportunity to look again at this issue to get a comprehensive oversight of what is being done to meet the aspirations of young people in Tower Hamlets;
3. Require to see the figures in both the regional and national context where ever possible to so as to provide a contextual analysis; and
4. The types of jobs/careers the data for example are students going into either full or part-time employment and is it career based employment or not.

6.3 Partnership work

The Committee received and noted three presentations on the partners' work which is summarised as follows:

1. Queen Mary University (Mike Wojcik, Chief Executive Officer of Queen Mary University of London Students' Union and Professor Stephanie Marshall, Vice Principal Education)
2. Tower Hamlets College, New City College Group (Alison Arnaud, Borough Principal)
3. Tower Hamlets Education Partnership (Tracy Smith, Executive Director)

1. Queen Mary University

The Committee noted that:

- The student voice is at the heart of Queen Mary's community life. The Students' Union (SU) is the voice of all students studying at Queen Mary University of London, and a critical friend;
- The SU has charity status, robust governance, and an entrepreneurial subsidiary trading company, surpluses are re-invested back into improving student lives';
- The SU works to improve the student experience, representing student views, supporting academic, personal and skills development and their welfare and well-being, and providing hundreds of student-led activities. For example nearly a 1000

- students are involved in community volunteering, over 6000 members of societies, and similar figure in sport and fitness;
- Queen Mary's is a Russell Group institution based in east London, teaching across the full disciplinary spectrum. Our curriculum is constantly changing to broaden the student experience, build social capital and enhance prospects on graduation, allowing graduates to make a positive societal impact.
 - The Russell Group were the first institution to deliver Degree Apprenticeship programmes and remain at the forefront of this type of delivery;
 - Queen Mary's sponsor two local Multi Academy Trusts, including the local Tower Hamlets St Paul's Way Trust School. In addition, they have developed positive links with a number of local organisations such as Tower Hamlets Youth Sports Foundation, Local Schools, Tower Hamlets Council, and the Mile End Community Project.
 - Queen Mary's new pilot Social Cohesion Project with community sport will provide university students training and key skills for young people in Tower Hamlets in order to improve their awareness of life style improvements, delivered by role models that Queen Mary's believe will inspire long term positive changes;
 - In addition to the significant support to St Paul's Way School Trust, and the Drapers Academy, Queen Mary's have partnered with the Phoenix School, Tower Hamlets Council, award winning skills and training charity Tower Project to deliver Project SEARCH. Project Search is an education-to-work programme for young people with learning disabilities and Autistic Spectrum Conditions, and provides 8-12 students full time internship opportunities for a year. The overall aim being long term employment;
 - Prospective students are increasingly considering Degree Apprenticeships over traditional study options with the promise of zero student debt, up to 4 year's work experience, a competitive salary and often a guaranteed job at the end of their degree;
 - Queen Mary's currently run a Digital and Technology Solutions Degree Apprenticeship in partnership with FTSE 100 and blue chip entities like IBM, Goldman Sachs & Bloomberg. Queen Mary's also deliver in partnership with a number of local SME's and act as a broke for any 10% employer transfers;
 - For 2019 entry Queen Mary's have submitted proposals to launch a Degree Apprenticeship for the Charity Sector which already has the backing of: The Scout Association, Mind, Age UK, Red Cross & National Union of Students among others;
 - Queen Mary's are an Anchor university partner in the Albert Island redevelopment in the neighbouring borough of Newham. Queen Mary's are expecting to deliver a series of transport

engineering degree apprenticeships from 2020 with the likes of Siemens and TFL;

- 20% of our Degree Apprentices are from Tower Hamlets.

2. Tower Hamlets College, New City College Group

The Committee noted that:

- Tower Hamlets College Ofsted Graded 'GOOD with outstanding Features';
- Tower Hamlets College send more learners to university than any other institution in the Borough;
- The College is funded approx. 20% less than any school;
- The Colleges learners are hardworking, well behaved and aspirational;
- The average 16-18 year old college learner comes from within a 4 mile radius (78%+ are Tower Hamlets) residents); they not have both GCSEs English and Mathematics grade C; will be funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency; they will be on free school meals; have at least one workless parent;
- Students from the College careers paths are varied such as Goldman Sachs; KPMG; East London Hospital Trust; West Ham; Tottenham Hotspurs; and Employment Law and Bar Association;
- Tower Hamlets College faces a number of challenges as (i) it is linked to 'solving' social issues; (ii) reputational issues such as: ASB; (iii) not in media spotlight like schools; (iv) due to the many functions delivered by the College means that it can be received as having no clear identity; (v) funding often does not comes until mid-year and it is therefore difficult to plan effectively; (vi) whilst the College has received funding for buildings (Mayor's £82 Skills Development Fund), it has not got extra funding for the teaching staff which makes it difficult to attract and retain the best for learners who need it most.

3. Tower Hamlets Education Partnership

The Committee noted that:

- Tower Hamlets Education Partnership [THEP] is a schools' company established by school leaders to deliver high quality school improvement to all Tower Hamlets schools. It is rooted in the highly successful collaboration that has characterised and underpinned education in the Borough over the last two decades. The schools operate as a family to support, challenge and encourage each other in their determination to do the very best for every child. The member schools have access to a rich membership and a strong model of school improvement. The Partnership is independent of the Local Authority, but works closely with it and is supported by it. It also works closely with a range of

other local organisations who are determined to give local children and young people the best possible start in life;

- The Partnership team works with member schools and other key organisations to negotiate and broker solutions to meet improvement priorities;
- To bring about the Partnership's vision the Company will promote, facilitate and drive school-led improvement through which the schools themselves are in control of and responsible for school improvement and have a collective say in its development and delivery. Performance and results are rigorously analysed and challenged to support continued improvement;
- Trusted networking opportunities enable good practice to be shared and new developments and solutions to be planned and delivered.
- Schools support, challenge and learn from one another and from trusted partners to spread effective practice;
- Schools actively collaborate to design and access the support they need to ensure improvement;
- A culture of innovation for continuous improvement is encouraged and supported. With the best schools extending their reach so that all improve;
- Effective interventions are brokered quickly where there are issues of concern so that targeted outcomes are achieved.
- Leadership Consultants have been allocated to every member school and whilst the THEP has a role to play in monitoring and challenging schools, it is essential that the Leadership Consultancy visit supports school leaders with their agenda for school improvement;
- THEP has developed a suite of leadership development programmes that support staff from middle to senior leader and offers the LEAD (Leadership Exploration and Development) programme for middle leaders.

7. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

7.1 Children's Services Improvement Report

The Committee received and noted a report that will be considered at Cabinet on 26th September 2018 that provides an update on progress in delivering improvements to Children's Services in response to the report published by Ofsted in April 2017 which rated the Council's services 'inadequate'. The Council's improvement plan aims to achieve a standard of at least 'good' in summer 2019, when it is likely to be next inspected, which is the minimum our children and families deserve. The council has now had four monitoring visits from Ofsted. The main points of the discussion are summarised below.

The Committee noted that:

- The most recent visit, on 15-16 August 2018, had focused on Permanency Planning and the Public Law Outline (PLO), i.e. how the

council performs its obligations as a corporate parent. Inspectors evaluated the quality of care planning for children in care, in particular the achievement of timely permanence for all children who are unable to live with their birth parents. They assessed progress since the last inspection and focused on areas of practice that had required significant improvement. The Monitoring Visit letter was published on 10th September;

- Ofsted had found that: “while there has been improvement in key areas since the last inspection, there are still considerable weaknesses in permanence planning and in assessments for children who cannot live with their parents. Overall, the quality of practice with these vulnerable children is improving, but it is still too variable. Senior leaders agree with inspectors’ findings. They are determined to accelerate the pace of change and are taking appropriate action to address the significant deficits in the children in care services.”;
- Some key improvements noted by Ofsted include:
 - Decisions about whether children should become looked after are now underpinned by effective and accessible legal advice;
 - Improved performance management arrangements mean that senior leaders and frontline line managers are very knowledgeable about service performance;
 - Long-term and short-term placement stability is beginning to improve;
 - Better sufficiency planning is leading to increasing availability and choice of placements. The revised sufficiency strategy has successfully focused on the development of existing foster carers to increase capacity;
 - The recently developed edge of care team (November 2017) has been instrumental in decreasing demand for placements, particularly for older adolescents, and in reducing overall numbers of children in care;
 - The head teacher of the virtual school provides strong leadership and a clear strategic vision for improvement across all key stages and for children leaving care.
- There was however a number of areas where improvement is needed, for example:
 - Management oversight of the permanence planning process is weak and options for permanence are not considered simultaneously, which prolongs uncertainty for children;
 - When children come into care, only 22% of initial health assessments are completed within timescales. This has not improved since the inspection in 2017; and
 - Assessments for children in care are not updated routinely and too often, when cases are in court, the assessments focus on the concerns about the parents.

- Ofsted noted that purposeful direct work with children to help them to understand why they are not living with their parents is improving but is not yet consistently good enough. In better cases, relationship-based direct work is tailored to children's needs and is age appropriate. This is a significant improvement;
- Staff recruitment and workforce stability remains a key priority, and senior leaders have recognised that this is a risk which requires ongoing monitoring during the final stage of the improvement journey. The Council has put in place a range of strategies and measures which are pointing to an improved picture;
- Workforce stability overall has improved during 2018. The annual rolling figure has reduced from a high of 23.3% turnover and 47 leavers in February to 19% and a further fall at the end of June to 16.9%. Within the teams there are also other signs of positive changes, with a significant decrease of turnover from 75% in January to 20% in June in the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) /Assessment and Intervention Team. It was noted that this is a very positive picture and reflects the focus on improving practice and support in the team;
- The reduction of staff turnover is one of most important aspect of workforce stability as it reflects disruption, cost and loss of experience when an experienced member of staff leaves the service. The improvements in the service, a good professional development offer and ongoing support are the most effective strategy to tackle turnover. Analysis has been undertaken to identify the career points at which exits occur and as a result those at the 3 and 7 year employment point are receiving a targeted career interview;
- At the end of June 2018, 61% of posts across the Children's Social Care service were filled by permanent staff. The Council are adopting a multi-channel approach to the increase in the permanent staff and a reduction in agency workers which is set out below; and
- Over 2018 the Council has worked hard on improving Social Worker recruitment and this is starting to yield results. Work is underway to ensure that the Council has the most attractive offer to attract potential candidates.

7.2 OSC Work Programme Report

The Committee received and noted a report that set out the draft work programmes for the Municipal Year 2018/19 for the following:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee
- Housing Scrutiny Sub-committee
- Grants Scrutiny Sub-committee.

The main points of the discussion on the report may be summarised as follows:

The Committee noted that:

- It was noted that the draft Overview and Scrutiny work programme has been informed by a workshop session for committee members (including co-opted members) and consultation with senior officers;
- In Paragraph 4 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;
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and scrutiny sub-committee work programmes include 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. Specific items to be covered by the Committee in 2018/19 in this area include: reviewing the borough's approach to supporting education and employment aspirations, reviewing implementation of the challenge session recommendations on cohesion and the Social Value Act;
- Key to addressing equalities issues is making scrutiny more accessible to residents. Accordingly, the October meeting is planned to be held in the community to providing greater opportunities for residents to contribute during meetings.

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. Noted and agreed the draft work programme
2. Noted the specific equalities considerations as set out in Paragraph 4 as referred to above.

8. CABINET FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received and noted the Forthcoming Decisions Plan (or 'Cabinet Forward Plan') that contained information on those significant decisions that the Council expects to take over the next few months.

9. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF UNRESTRICTED CABINET PAPERS

The Committee received and noted those questions to be presented at Cabinet by the Chair in relation to unrestricted business on the agenda – **See Appendix 1**

10. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS

The Committee received and noted a briefing from Councillor Marc Francis the Scrutiny Lead Resources that referenced the recent consideration of Anti-Community Commissioning for the year ahead.

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

Nil items

12. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

As the agenda circulated contained no exempt/confidential business and there was therefore no requirement to exclude the press and public to allow for its consideration.

13. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Nil items

14. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

Nil items

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

Nil items

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

Nil items

The meeting ended at 9.50 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Abdal Ullah
Overview & Scrutiny Committee