

TRANSFORMATION IMPROVEMENT BOARD 18 December 2018	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Asmat Hussain – Corporate Director Governance and Monitoring Officer	Classification: [Unrestricted]
Clear Up Project Workstream Closure	

Originating Officer(s)	Mark Norman
Wards affected	None
Key Decision?	No
Forward Plan Notice Published	N/A
Reason for Key Decision	N/A

Executive Summary

The Council initiated the Clear Up Project in order to investigate various complaints. This formed part of the Best Value Improvement Plan. The progress of each of the work streams under the Clear Up Project was reported regularly to the Best Value Improvement Board as was until such time as the matters were complete.

This report provides the final updates to two work streams CU41 and CU 55.

Recommendations:

The Transformation Improvement Board is recommended to:

1. Agree that the Clear Up Project be closed as successfully complete.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The recommendations relating to the remaining 7 clear up projects have been implemented
- 1.2 All the original work streams under the Clear Up Project have been completed
- 1.3 The new Transformation and Improvement Action Plan incorporates the necessary work to address any outstanding actions of the Clear Up Project as detailed in Paragraph 5

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

2.1 None

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT – CU41

3.1 **CU 41** related to the veracity of an audit of the Council's Youth Services and the recommendations that were made.

3.2 A new audit report was carried out and the following service improvements have been made:

- Young residents (aged 12-19) have free access to activities including sport, games, arts, music, along with state of the art facilities including music recording studios, hair salons, climbing walls and ICT suites. For older children, there are sessions to help them learn about the dangers of drink and drugs, bullying, social media and sexual health matters.
- Eighteen youth hubs have been introduced which includes eight locally commissioned youth hubs; two specialist commissioned providers; and one specialist internal team. Also, February 2019, for a period of one year, two projects will also be delivering an 11 year old youth activities programme; and a youth innovation fund programme.
- There has been a substantial internal governance refresh to respond to failings detailed by the Commissioners to support the delivery of the services in a way which meets the Council's Best Value Statutory Duty
- New systems to track performance have been introduced.
- Performance targets have been reviewed and new targets introduced to drive up standards.
- The introduction of increased training and support for staff

4 DETAILS OF THE REPORT – CU55

4.1 The original complaint suggested that:

- a number of organisations had submitted untrue grant applications in 2013
- therefore grant funds had been used for purposes for which it was inappropriate that public funds be used and in any event not in line with the original grant applications

4.2 The process was reviewed and the investigation did not show any evidence of subversion of the grants process:

- The grant criteria had been applied correctly to the application
 - Monitoring of the use of the grant funds showed that it had been used for the purposes shown in the grant application
 - There was no evidence that the terms and conditions of the grant had been breached.
- 4.3 In the absence of any evidence at all, legal advice suggested that it would not be reasonable for the Council to pursue any of the groups further and in itself could lead to the Council being challenged under administrative law
- 4.4 However, in any event the Council has taken and is taking a number of steps to ensure that the grant process is considerably more robust under the Local Community Fund scheme. This includes:
- the inclusion of procurement related best practice to the grant application process in terms of application procedure, evaluation and award
 - a thorough over-haul of the specifications and scheme objectives
 - a move towards a stronger agreement with increased monitoring powers

5. DETAILS OF THE REPORT – CU15, CU27, CU31, CU35, CU57

- 5.1 The relevant recommendations all related to the Council's Human Resources policies and procedures.
- 5.2 The Council has undertaken the following measures:
- The Human Resources Policy Working Group has been formed
 - A number of the policies in question have been reviewed by the Group
 - The Human Resources division has been restructured to better match the organisation
 - 4 subject matter experts are now included in the structure which allows for better management of case work
 - The Council is now implementing the Transformation and Improvement Action Plan. Recommendation 5 (paragraph 15) provides for the further transformation work as may be required