

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

**MINUTES OF THE TOWER HAMLETS TRANSFORMATION AND IMPROVEMENT
BOARD**

HELD AT 6.00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 18 DECEMBER 2018

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

Members Present:

Mayor John Biggs (Chair)	(Executive Mayor)
Sir Steve Bullock	(External Representative)
Will Tuckley	(Chief Executive)
Sharon Godman	(Divisional Director, Strategy, Policy and Performance)

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Danny Hassell

Officers Present:

Daniel Kerr	– (Strategy and Policy Manager)
Jonathan Fox	– Legal Services
Afazul Hoque	– (Head of Corporate Strategy & Policy)
Asmat Hussain	– (Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer)
Sam Nair	– (Principal Social Worker)
Antonella Burgio	– (Democratic Services)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sirajul Islam, Rachel Blake, Asma Begum and Abdal Ullah and from Kate Herbert of LGA.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

MINUTES OF TOWER HAMLETS BEST VALUE IMPROVEMENT BOARD

The Board noted that Tower Hamlets Best Value Improvement Board had been decommissioned following the withdrawal of the Secretary of State's Directions on 30 September 2018 and that the minutes were circulated for information to Members of Tower Hamlets Transformation and Improvement Board.

3. TRANSFORMATION AND IMPROVEMENT BOARD WORK PROGRAMME, TERMS OF REFERENCE & LGA ACTION PLAN

The Board considered the report which advised those present of the governance arrangements of the Board, its work programme and action plan arising from the LGA Peer Review which took place in June 2018.

The Board heard that their role was to:

- Drive sustainable transformation and improvement across the Council;
- Provide oversight, support and challenge;
- Challenge the pace and impact of the Council's transformation and improvement activity/plan;
- Take forward the recommendations made by the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge and other reviews as appropriate.

The Board noted that:

- The new work programme would take forward outstanding matters from the Best Value Improvement Plan and areas highlighted during the LGA Peer Challenge in June 2018. The improvement programme would be delivered under priority area headings.
- Progress on the implementation of the action plan would be reported quarterly in the following areas of focus; the Mayor's priorities, programmed service reviews, improvement programmes in Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care, and transformation programme. New areas of focus could be added where appropriate.
- The action identified arising from the LGA Peer Challenge focus on areas for organisational improvement.
- The historical context which has informed the establishment of the new Board and that it will continue the framework established in terms of monitoring and public accountability. Hence the Mayor's priorities are also included with the aim of making the borough a better place to live and work.
- The action plan would not only address service delivery and organisational culture to ensure a consistent approach between organisational and political priorities.

The Board requested that:

- The data reported indicate direction of travel and how services will be held to account.
- That public accountability be incorporated into the monitoring parameters.

RESOLVED

1. That the discussion be noted and actions requested by Board be taken forward
2. That the terms of reference (appendix 1) for the TIB be approved.
3. That the TIB work programme (appendix 3) be approved
4. That the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge action plan (appendix 2), be approved

4. CLEAR UP PROJECT WORKSTREAM CLOSURE

The Board heard from the Corporate Director Governance and Monitoring Officer who advised that:

- Actions which remained to be completed and had been reported at the Best Value Improvement Board of 17 September 2018 had been addressed and resolved. Details of the actions taken were reported and paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of the report.
- Referrals under the Council's Whistleblowing Policy were now monitored through the Council's Audit Committee.

The Board noted:

- 60 issues originally were referred for investigation and these had been reported to Best Value Improvement Board as each investigation was completed.
- The projects reported at paragraph 5 related to HR matters and had been addressed by the Divisional Director.
- The project reported at paragraph 4 concerned untrue grant applications in 2013. The complaint had been investigated and the results did not show evidence of subversion of the grants process. Therefore the complaint has been closed. The Board was advised that transparent and accountable arrangements around grant application and monitoring were in place which included cross-party scrutiny. Risk monitoring had recently been introduced into the monitoring framework. However because transparency of grant arrangements was uppermost, there were in some cases more bureaucratic grant making arrangements where funding was derived from S106 and CIL.
- The new audit and subsequent actions taken related to the project reported at paragraph 3.
- A City of London Police investigation was in progress related to issues not connected with the Clear Up Project. A report was expected in due course.
- Arrangements had been strengthened in relation to Children's Services investigations and directorate procedures.

The Board requested:

- That Whistleblowing monitoring reports be brought to TIB periodically for oversight.

- That since, in Law, there was no a precise definition of a grant, the arrangements should be reviewed to ensure that unnecessary bureaucracy was removed but that processes remained robust. The Council might utilise the expertise of LGA if necessary.

RESOLVED

That it be agreed that the Clear Up Project be closed since all outstanding actions were now complete.

5. IMPROVEMENT: CHILDREN'S SERVICE PROGRESS REPORT

The Board heard from the Cabinet Member for Children Schools and Young People. He informed Members that:

- The quarterly update would also be reported to CSIB and to Cabinet.
- An Ofsted monitoring visit had been undertaken earlier in the month and initial feedback had been favourable. Further feedback was awaited to inform how the Council could achieve its aim to ensure that all elements of the service was robust.
- The report had been scrutinised with challenge by Overview and Scrutiny and the matters identified would be taken forward and data required by OSC incorporated into future reports.
- That a qualitative review element had been introduced.
- There was also better monitoring and planning in place with all cases monitored and tracked.
- That the improvement journey had resulted in wider buy in from partners. Partners were now able to pick up child protection concerns and report this to the Council.

The Board also heard from the Principal Social Worker who outlined following matters:

- Staff needed to know and understand the local areas of concern relating to child issues.
- There was culture change which has led intelligence-based work to review serious cases involving close arrangements between the Council and its Partners to ensure that safeguarding is approached in robust manner with the well-being of children at the centre.
- Post Ofsted, the Service would need to ensure that it can achieve continued and sustained improvement. To this end there would be service user engagement in the form of audits with user input. This would inform the shape of future provision.

The Board observed:

- That safeguarding needed to be approached in a transparent manner. Where problems are identified it is necessary to ensure that the Council knows if they are isolated incidents or if they indicate a more structural problem. Officers would need to ensure there is joined up monitoring across services and the Partners.

- Learning from the Directorate would be used to examine and review practices in other parts of Council as a tool for service improvement.
- That self-assessment and improvement were tools which could be utilised to create a culture of excellence.

RESOLVED

1. That the progress made in delivering the Children's Services improvement Programme be endorsed.
2. That the report and comment on the report and progress for Quarter 2 be noted.
3. That it be noted that the report was considered by CSIB on 3rd December 2018.

6. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

Nil items

The meeting ended at 6.55 p.m.

Chair, Mayor John Biggs
Tower Hamlets Transformation and Improvement Board