

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

**MINUTES OF THE BEST VALUE PROGRAMME REVIEW BOARD QUARTERLY
MEETING**

HELD AT 6.10 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 12 JULY 2016

MP702, 7TH FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, LONDON E14 2BG

Members Present:

Mayor John Biggs (Chair)	(Executive Mayor)
Aisling Lyon (Member)	(Local Intervention and Europe Local Government Policy, Department for Communities and Local Government)
Alex Powell (Member)	(Deputy Director, Audit, Intervention & Improvement, Department of Communities and Local Government)
Max Caller (Member)	(Commissioner)
Chris Allison (Member)	(Commissioner)
Will Tuckley (Member)	(Chief Executive)

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Rachael Saunders	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services)
Councillor David Edgar	(Cabinet Member for Resources)

Officers Present:

Aman Dalvi	– (Corporate Director, Development & Renewal)
Steve Hill	– (Head of Benefits Service)
Kevin Kewin	– (Interim Service Head, Corporate Strategy and Equality)
Denise Radley	– (Director of Adults' Services)
Louise Stamp	– (Electoral Services Manager, Chief Executive's)
Stuart Young	– (Interim Head of HR and Transformation)
Zena Cooke	– (Corporate Director, Resources)
Antonella Burgio	– (Democratic Services)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Sir Ken Knight and Alan Wood.

An apology from the following invited Members and officers was also noted:
Councillors Rachael Saunders, Josh Peck, Shiria Khatun, Whitelock-Gibbs,
Sirajul Islam, Danny Hassell and John Pierce, Melanie Clay and Minesh Jani.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2016 were agreed and approved as a correct record.

4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Elections Update

A presentation was made by the Chief Executive as the Counting Officer for the EU Referendum and the Head of Electoral Services concerning the delivery of the poll, informing all that:

Concerning how the Council would ensure that it was able to supply an up-to-date register at a polling station in the event of an emergency or at short notice, Commissioners heard that:

- only experienced staff would be asked to carry out this task ensuring that all CML checks had been properly completed.
- the Council completes all required checks and runs a mock register before the poll.
- the Returning officer and Electoral Services will have regard to unforeseen errors in their plans.

Commissioner Allison encouraged the authority to use debriefs to ensure that partners were reminded to retain focus.

RESOLVED

1. That the feedback and discussion be noted.
2. That Commissioners' feedback be noted

4.2 Best Value Plan Update

The Chief Executive introduced the item which asked the Board to consider the current draft Best Value Action Plans update prior to its submission to the Secretary of State in September 2016.

Grants - the Board noted:

- a report proposing transitional arrangements for the return of grants to the Council had been presented at the recent Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting (CDMM) and would be discussed at a future Best Value Programme Review Board. Commissioner Caller noted that the report should provide detailed steps and expressed concern that the

Grants Service should have the necessary skills to carry out the process.

- the transfer of decision making to the elected CDMM members overseen by Commissioners would be incorporated into the current schedule of CDMM meetings.
- Mayor Biggs advised that grant making, when returned to the Council would be undertaken in a public manner with clear record keeping. Commissioner Caller noted that the directions concerning grants covered many types of payments and it would be necessary for to 'grants' to be properly identified.

Communications - the Board noted:

- significant work on the this element of the action plan while recruitment of a new Head of Communications was carried out
- the Interim Head of Communications was overseeing the redesign of the Communications Team in accordance with the LGA review and staff consultations were currently underway.
- a permanent appointee would take up this post at the end of July.

Property - the Board noted:

- compliance testing using revised protocols was completed at the end of June.
- some further recommendations were being made in relation to HRA and a report presented to Cabinet in September 2016.
- community buildings remained an area outstanding. Commissioner Caller expressed concern that the Council had yet to adopt a corporate approach in managing property and wished to see evidence that all service areas were consulting on property matters with the Corporate Property Team who were appropriately qualified to engage with the management of all property arrangements. It was agreed that processes of the Council would be examined to ensure that the principles were applied consistently across all areas involving property. A report back would be made in September 2016.

Organisational Culture - the Board noted:

- further progress would be made on the structure of the Clean Up Team. Commissioner Caller requested a more detailed description of the matters that this team would address.
- proposals relating to changes to delegations would require a change of the Council's constitution. Detailed discussions in this area were pending and a report back would be made to BVRB in September 2016. It was acknowledged that the Council's constitution required strengthening. Commissioner Caller referred to the Secretary of State's letter of 11 April 2016 which indicated that delegation of powers would mark a turning point. Additionally concerns elsewhere had been expressed to the Secretary concerning a lack of progress in this regard. Officers acknowledged the areas of concern that had been identified, these would be investigated and addressed

- a programme of Chief Executive's Roadshows had been initiated to widely promote the organisational culture being worked towards and to receive staff feedback.
- a report with proposals for revised governance would be presented to General Purposes Committee in September 2016.

RESOLVED

1. That the comments on the draft six-monthly Best Value Plan progress be noted.
2. That matters highlighted be incorporated into the forward plan
3. That it be noted that the progress update will be updated and submitted to Cabinet on 6 September 2016 prior to submission to the Secretary of State

4.3 Best Value Plan Themes and Milestones Forward Plan

The Interim Service Head, Corporate Strategy and Equality introduced the report. He informed the Board that the action plan hitherto to enforce was complete and invited members to consider what matters should be added to the new plan.

The following were discussed:

- Relevant reports to include proposals for the removal of the directions
- Spotlight Sessions to look at the elements of the Culture Plan, Property Plan and Communications Plan
- Completed client brief for the New Town Hall, Whitechapel

RESOLVED

That the suggested matters be incorporated into the new Forward Plan.

The meeting ended at 7.20 p.m.

Chair, Mayor John Biggs
Best Value Programme Review Board Quarterly Meeting