

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE BEST VALUE ACTION PLAN WORKSHOP

HELD AT 13.30 ON TUESDAY, 17 JANUARY 2017

6TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM, MULBERRY PLACE

Present:

Max Caller	(Commissioner)
Chris Allison	(Commissioner)
Will Tuckley	(Chief Executive)
Zena Cooke	(Corporate Director Resources)
Aman Dalvi	(Corporate Director Place)
Graham White	(Interim Corporate Director Governance)
Andreas Christophorou	(Divisional Director, Communications & Marketing)
Sharon Godman	(Divisional Director, Strategy, Policy and Equality)
Afazul Hoque	(Service Manager, Strategy and Performance)
Ann Sutcliffe	(Divisional Director, Property and Major Programmes)
Louise Stamp	(Elections Manager)
Louise Fleming	(Strategy Policy and Performance Officer, Corporate Strategy and Equality)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Sir Ken Knight, Lead Commissioner.

1. WELCOME AND PURPOSE OF THE WORKSHOP

The Chief Executive welcomed those present and outlined the purpose of the workshop was to update on progress since the workshop on 6 December 2016; and ensure that the Commissioners have all the evidence they require to make their recommendations to the Secretary of State on the conclusion of the current Direction period.

The Commissioners added that they would need to write to the Secretary of State with their report by mid-February 2017. Therefore all the evidence would need to be in place by that point. For example, the timetable for the appointment of the Corporate Director

Governance would need to be brought forward in order that the longlisting exercise had taken place by mid-February.

The Chief Executive advised the workshop that the Secretary of State had written on 16 January 2017 discharging the Direction relating to Procurement and asked those present to focus on the remaining actions in the workshop.

ACTION:	LEAD:	DEADLINE:
Review timetable for recruitment to Corporate Director Governance to ensure that longlisting had taken place by mid-February	Interim Divisional Director HR and Transformation.	24 January 2017

2. APPOINTMENT OF MONITORING OFFICER – UPDATE

The Chief Executive advised that the recruitment timetable was being revised following comments previously received from the Commissioners to ensure that there was some flexibility in March. The Commissioners requested an update on the timetable to the Best Value Board on 24 January 2017.

ACTION:	LEAD:	DEADLINE:
Finalise timetable for recruitment to Corporate Director Governance; and report to the Best Value Board on 24 January 2017	Interim Divisional Director HR and Transformation.	24 January 2017

3. ELECTIONS

The Chief Executive and Returning Officer advised that the Secretary of State had stated in his letter that he did not feel able to discharge the Direction relating to the appointment of the RO and Deputy RO at this time. This arose because of the timing of the Whitechapel by-election.

The Government produced their response to Sir Eric Pickles' review in December 2016. Government supported Sir Eric's suggestion that pilot schemes should take place in local authority areas which had previously experienced significant cases of electoral fraud or which are considered to be at high risk of fraudulent activity. Tower Hamlets is one of the authorities identified in the response.

The pilots will look at how ID at polling stations could be implemented to test the impact of voter ID schemes on protection against fraud.

In evidence to the Pickles review the Council had previously argued that voter identification should be seriously explored. A meeting would be taking place with the Cabinet Office on 28th Feb 2017 to discuss the form that the pilot would take and what role the Council could play. The Council will also be attending the Electoral Integrity Summit in February 2017.

The Elections Manager tabled a briefing note setting out the preparatory work for the 2018 Mayoral and Council elections, including bespoke training and looking into options for pre-folded and colour coded ballot papers.

The Commissioners suggested that one option would be for a proposal be drawn up for a resident card or similar scheme, such as those operating successfully in other Boroughs, in preparation for the meeting with the Cabinet Office as there could potentially be Cabinet Office funding for such a scheme, which could be used in an ID pilot.

ACTION:	LEAD:	DEADLINE:
For the meeting with the Cabinet Office on 28 February 2017, prepare proposals for a scheme for use in an ID pilot.	Chief Executive / Elections Manager	Mid-February
Early engagement with new Met Police Commissioner to ensure continued Police support for the election planning and delivery.	Chief Executive / Elections Manager	tbc

4. COMMUNICATIONS

The Divisional Director Communications and Marketing presented on the progress against the remaining actions in the Communications Business Plan: a completed team structure; determining the cost of publications; ensuring the effective delivery of campaigns; and the resolution of the future of statutory public notices. All actions had been completed.

The Commissioners felt that it would be helpful to set out for the Secretary of State how the Council maintains editorial control over the columns submitted by the Group Leaders to ensure that they comply with the Code of Practice.

ACTION:	LEAD:	DEADLINE:
Include the guidelines for	Divisional Director	24 January 2017

political group leader columns as part of the Communications Update to the Best Value Board on 24 January 2017	Communications and Marketing	
Include the timeline for procurement for publication of statutory notices in the Communications Update to the Best Value Board on 24 January	Divisional Director Communications and Marketing	24 January 2017

5. PROPERTY

The Corporate Director Place gave a presentation setting out the progress against the remaining actions in the Property Best Value Action Plan.

ACTION:	LEAD:	DEADLINE:
Email timeline for redevelopment of Mellish Street to Commissioners	Divisional Director Property and Major Programmes	31 January 2017
Review the timetable for the governance review to ensure that evidence is available for Commissioners by mid-February	Divisional Director Property and Major Programmes	31 January 2017
Review timetable for asset reviews and service delivery plans and advise Commissioners, setting out what will be completed, by when and actions already completed	Divisional Director Property and Major Programmes	31 January 2017

6. GRANTS

The Corporate Director Resources advised that the Secretary of State had written to the Council on 16 January 2017 issuing a new Direction which handed decision making powers back to the Council, with Commissioner oversight of the process. The form which this oversight would take would be agreed between the Council and the Commissioners.

ACTION:	LEAD:	DEADLINE:
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Further discussion take place with the Commissioners to agree the form the oversight of the Grants Determination Sub-Committee process would take.	Corporate Resources	Director	31 st January 2017
Further discussion take place with the Commissioners on the restructure of the Third Sector Grants Team.	Corporate Resources	Director	31 January 2017

7. ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

The Interim Corporate Director Governance gave a detailed presentation on the progress made with the Organisational Culture Best Value Action Plan.

ACTION:	LEAD:	DEADLINE:
Develop a Memorandum of Understanding between Group Leaders and Chief Whips to drive up standards of behaviour	Interim Corporate Director Governance	31 March 2017
Ensure that the recruitment consultants collate information and make recommendations within an agreed timescale to ensure longlisting can take place by mid-February for the Corporate Director Governance role.	Chief Executive / Interim Divisional Director HR and Transformation	24 January 2017
Factor in a Lessons Learnt report into the Clear Up Team schedule, to report to the appropriate Council committee(s) at the end of the process.	Interim Corporate Director Governance	June 2017
Prepare a position statement on the Clear Up Team work for mid-February	Interim Corporate Director Governance	Mid-February
Guidance document on the Clear Up Team to be circulated to the	Interim Corporate Director Governance	20 January 2017

Commissioners		
Consideration be given to an annual reminder for Members to review their Declaration of Interest form.	Interim Director Governance	Corporate Governance May - annually

8. NEXT STEPS

The Chief Executive thanked those present advised that the notes of the workshop would be circulated ahead of the Best Value Board on 24 January 2017.

ACTION:	LEAD:	DEADLINE:
Circulate action notes	Divisional Director, Strategy, Policy and Equality	24 January 2017

Workshop finished at 3.04pm