

CABINET

Wednesday, 4 March 2015 at 5.30 p.m.

TABLED PAPERS

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10.3 Best Value Plan – Updated Plan

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Tel: 020 7364 4651, E-mail: matthew.mannion@towerhamlets.gov.uk

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Best Value Strategy and Action Plan

Introduction

- 1 On 17 December 2014 the Secretary of State issued directions to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets on 17 December 2014. Direction 1 requires the council: *Within 3 months from the date of these Directions [ie 17 March 2015] to draw up and agree with the Commissioners a strategy and action plan for securing the Authority's compliance with its best value duty (to include as appropriate complying with the specific directions set out below and putting in place robust and transparent arrangements for grant decisions), and to submit this to the Secretary of State.'*
- 2 In developing plans to comply with this Direction, the Council has reviewed the findings of the Price Waterhouse Cooper ('PWC') report which gave rise to the Directions and had a series of discussions with the Commissioners about their expectations for the strategy and action plan.
- 3 The Council has in place a range of robust processes for securing best value – information and evidence of the arrangements the Council currently has in place to comply with its Best Value duty, including our understanding of wider areas for improvement and how to address these, have been shared with the Commissioners. They are set out in Appendix 1 of the Plan.
- 4 The focus of our best value plan has therefore been on the issues covered within the PWC report and specific directions (outlined in Note i) below)ⁱ. We have developed Action Plans around the areas specifically referred in these.In a number of cases, action has already been taken to address the issues raised and these are identified in the Current Status sections of the attached plans. In other cases, further action is planned and proposed actions and deadlines are set out.
- 5 The Directions also addressed other issues which were not covered in the Best Value Inspection report, for example Elections. In addition, we have discussed with the Commissioners the need for an action plan which considers organisational culture to address some of the underlying governance issues and this is included. In particular, in a clear statement of openness and a desire to improve, the Council is proposing a Local Government Association facilitated forum to review and develop recommendations around elected member and senior officer relationships to address some of the issues which have emerged.
- 6 While the majority of action plans are informed by areas for improvement identified in the PWC report, they have also where appropriate been informed by local consultation, for example third sector organisations have been consulted about proposals in the

Grants action plan and a range of stakeholders have informed plans around election management. Further consultation in relation to the key actions within the plan will be undertaken as appropriate as they are progressed.

- 7 The Contents of this Plan therefore comprise the following and are included within numbered appendices:
 - 1. Overview of Best Value in Tower Hamlets Council
 - 2. Procurement Action Plan (already signed off by 1st Feb 2015 and included for completeness and future monitoring)
 - 3. Grants Action Plan
 - 4. Property and Disposal Action Plan
 - 5. Communications Action Plan
 - 6. Organisational Culture Action Plan
 - 7. Recruitment of statutory officers timeline
 - 8. Elections update and plans
- 8 This plan is the beginning of a process of improvement. It will be possible toadd additional actions to it over time, for example, as the Council engages further with the Commissioners or external support from the Local Government Association or others. As required in Direction 2) six monthly reports on progress in delivering the Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State with comments from the Commissioners. The first six monthly report, due in September 2015, will also identify some key outcome measures through which the success of the Plan in addressing the issues can be tracked. Progress in relation to these measures will thereafter form part of the 6 monthly progress reports.

Note i) Issues addressed in the best value plan

ⁱ A number of issues are raised in the PWC report and our policies and procedures have been reviewed to address these. The key issues which have been reviewed are the following:

A 1
Grants
Ensure clear needs analysis and strategic focus for grant giving
Governance and decision making around grants
 Role, terms of reference, conduct of Corporate Grants Programme
Board
 Standardised application and publicity about assessment/eligibility
 Role of member engagement
 Declarations of interest
 Documentation of rationale for changes
 Application of eligibility and quality thresholds
 Awards above requested amount
Grant management and monitoring procedures
 Formal agreements and record keeping
 Standardise monitoring requirements
Consider benefits of consolidation
Property
Clarity about processes for Property Disposal inc:
 Circumstances in which permitted to not accept highest offer and/or
accepting late offers
 Marketing approach period
 Documentation and maintaining records
 Delegated powers and decision making
 Declaration of interests – consider need to require from bidders
Third Sector/Community Building Allocation Process
Late offers
Record keeping
 Criteria/process for monetisation of community benefits
Briefing and training of staff
Publicity spend
Review of Communications Protocol to ensure Council publicity
appropriate
Appropriate role of Mayors' media advisors
Procurement

Improve compliance with existing procedures, <mark>including issues within Internal Audit reports</mark> ie

- Contracts register
- Use of Corporate Director Actions
- Documentation and record keeping
- Declaration of interests
- Local suppliers
- Evaluation processes and documentation
- Spot purchasing and aggregated spend

Delegation and appropriate member engagement

Governance and Culture

Proceed with permanent appointments to Statutory Officer decisions

Ensure openness and transparency in key decision making

Appendix 1

Part One: Overview of Best Value arrangements

- 1.1 The Council has in place a range of processes and compliance checks to meet its best value duty to secure continuous improvement with regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness. These arrangements are kept under review to ensure they remain fit for purpose and are improved as necessary on the basis of lessons learnt.
- 1.2 The bedrock of this is the Council's **Performance Management and Accountability Framework (1)** which establishes the strategic planning golden thread and a set of arrangements to embed this within the organisation. The framework was refreshed in 2013 and considerable work was done at that time to reiterate the core principles with staff and to demonstrate the link between processes and outcome improvement (**publicity materials 2a and b**). Performance management arrangements and performance data quality were subject to **internal audit review (3)** in July 2012. They were found to have substantial assurance and the one recommendation has been addressed.
- 1.3 The framework is based on a strategic and business planning framework built around the delivery of the elected Mayor's priorities through a golden thread of key plans and strategies, which are regularly reviewed and refreshed.
- 1.4 At the apex of the planning framework is the 4 year **Community Plan** (4a), developed jointly with our partners in the Tower Hamlets Partnership (our former Local Strategic Partnership) setting out a shared vision and targets for the local area. This Plan is currently being refreshed and considerable work has been done consulting with stakeholders and partners to inform the refreshed version (latest draft report 4b and c). A draft of the plan is currently being consulted on with residents and stakeholders and an action planning process with partners is underway to ensure that the aspirational vision for the borough is supported with robust delivery plans.
- 1.5 Within the Council the key business planning document is the **Strategic Plan** which is reviewed annually and sets out priority objectives, proposed actions and targets for agreed **Strategic Measures** (Strategic Plan 2014/15 5a; Outline Plan 2015/16 5b). Progress towards our strategic measures is reviewed quarterly by CMT, the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny. Monitoring reports (6a and b) identify areas where we are at risk of not achieving annual targets and what action is being taken to recover.
- 1.6 In addition to quarterly monitoring reports being made public within Cabinet papers, we also produce an annual performance report (7) to residents which provides detail on what progress has been made against priorities.
- 1.7 A key element of ensuring continuous improvement in our business planning is our robust annual target setting (8a,b and c) process whereby targets are set for all Strategic Measures which meet two key criteria, an improvement on last year's outturn and target, and aiming for top quartile performance where this data is available. For targets which do not meet these criteria, a rationale is provided and must be agreed by CMT and MAB.
- 1.8 Equality objectives and our approach to meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty are embedded within the strategic planning process through our Single Equality Framework (9a and b). This approach and our delivery of equality were recently reassessed as excellent through an LGA Equality Framework for Local Government peer

assessment (10a and b). We are responding to the areas for improvement identified from this assessment.

- 1.9 The Strategic Plan is cascaded through the organisation through **Service and Team Planning**. Every third tier service is required to have a team plan and well-established team planning guidance (11) is in place to ensure that team planning is meaningful, addresses key performance management requirements and engages all staff. Compliance with team planning guidance is tested annually through the **Team Planning Peer Review** (12) and lessons learnt from the review are used to update guidance and address any areas for improvement addressed.
- 1.10 The Council also has a number of key plans and strategies to deliver key aspects of the Community and Strategic Plans. Key ones include the Children and Families Plan (13), the Health and Wellbeing Strategy (14), the Community Safety Plan (15a and b) and the Employment and Enterprise Strategies (16a and b). These are regularly reviewed and monitored by appropriate partnership groups which oversee delivery the Children and Families Partnership, the Health and Wellbeing Board, Community Safety Partnership and Economic Taskforce.
- 1.11 Ensuring that our business planning and monitoring processes lead to actual improvement is a key role of the Council's monthly **Performance Review Group (PRG)** (terms of reference 17). This has been in place for nine years and is chaired by the Chief Executive or Head of Paid Service. Where regular monitoring indicates that there are areas for improvement, services are asked to attend PRG to set out any reasons for poor performance and their action plans to deliver improvement. PRG provides a key element of challenge to drive improvement. (Planning case study 18). PRG also regularly reviews benchmarking data from LG Inform and the London Councils Benchmarking Club to identify areas where we do not perform well in comparison with our neighbours and what we can learn to drive improvement.
- 1.12 There is a strong focus on ensuring the integrity of our performance information. Our **Data Quality Policy** (19a and b) sets our arrangements for ensuring that reported performance information is accurate, reliable and timely. As such, there is an annual programme of work to assess and test data quality. The most recent data quality internal audit (20a) and follow-up (20b) confirmed that our approach is robust with substantial assurance judgements.
- 1.13 In addition to reviewing progress on key performance measures, we regularly consult local residents about their views of local services. We annually conduct a borough wide **residents' survey** which we have been undertaking for 16 years (since 1998) and we use to track progress and satisfaction with Council services and delivery. The latest results (21) demonstrate that satisfaction is being maintained against the backdrop of ongoing savings delivery. The results of each survey are used to inform an action plan (22) to respond to areas of concern.
- 1.14 We also consult more widely with local people about their views. A key recent exercise has been the Your Borough Your Voice campaign (23a, b and c) which has sought views to inform the new Community Plan and our medium term financial planning.
- 1.15 The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee contributes to our approach to continuous improvement. At the beginning of each municipal year Committee members are provided with profile information (24a, b, c, d, e, f and g) about performance and challenges within their portfolio area. This, supplemented by members' own knowledge of local issues, is used to inform a work programming process which identifies areas for

scrutiny review and challenge over the course of the year (work programme 25). Reviews lead to a series of recommendations, responses to which are developed by services and full reports made to Cabinet. Follow-up reports (26a and b) are made to Committee to demonstrate that reviews are leading to the improvement outlined. The Committee has also followed up call-ins and references from Council in relation to a number of the areas being considered by Commissioners. These have sometimes become flashpoints for contentious issues. The key for the Committee going forward will be to ensure it remains a productive and non-partisan forum for addressing issues of significance for the local community and also for scrutinising the Executive.

- 1.16 At an officer level, the Council has a strong set of **Corporate Boards** which support the delivery of the authority's objectives, namely:
 - The People Board, which directs the management and leadership of the Council's workforce
 - The Competition Board, which oversees procurement and market testing of key Council services
 - The Strategic Partnership Board, which directs the management of transformation and business improvement projects
 - The Asset and Capital Delivery Board, which oversees the management of the Council's assets and the investment of capital
- 1.17 These boards derive their authority from the Corporate Management Team (CMT), which meets fortnightly. A Director-level Corporate Programme Board (CPB) has also been established in order to provide the required direction to the development and delivery of the Council's savings programme.
- 1.18 In April 2014 the Council was awarded Investors in People Silver Status (27). The IiP assessment identified a number of key strengths including leadership, management and development processes; high staff engagement and investment in learning and development. Areas for development are being addressed and the Council is actively working towards Gold Status accreditation. The People Strategy (28) sets out the framework for improvement including a renewed focus on fostering a Workforce to Reflect the Community (29a, b, c, d and e) and supporting our established Performance, Development and Review (PDR) scheme (30a, b, c and d).
- 1.19 Medium term financial planning is an important component of the Council's strategic planning framework. Key financial decisions are set in the context of a planning horizon which looks beyond the next financial year. The Council has a formal Budget setting procedure (31) which is part of the Budget and Policy framework and includes formal consultation with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet meetings to critically assess and challenge the makeup of the proposed Budget.
- 1.20 To underpin the budget setting process, the Council has a Medium Term Financial Planning process which establishes the growth and savings pressures faced by the Council over the subsequent 3 years. The **Medium Term Financial Plan** (32a and b) is considered by Overview and Scrutiny, Cabinet and Council as part of the budget setting process and reviewed in year. During 2014/15 a significant Service Challenge exercise was undertaken to identify savings required for the Council in 2015/16 and consider savings strategies for 2016/17. This was supplemented by public consultation through the Your Borough Your Voice (23) campaign which sought local people's views on savings and priorities. Cabinet reports for December (33) and January (32) set out the outcome of this process which has enabled the Council to set a balanced budget for

2015/16 and clarify additional savings required for 2016/17 and beyond, subject to Government spending commitments.

- 1.21 A corporate budget monitoring process is in place for reviewing spend in relation to budget. A quarterly report is prepared and submitted to CMT, Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee and where required, decisions are made to address risks ad shortfalls that may arise in the year.
- 1.22 The Council has a robust process in place to ensure benefits realisation of annual savings agreed in the budget, supported by regular monitoring reports (37a,b,c and d). A Corporate Programme Office collates regular updates.
- 1.23 The Council's Financial Regulations (38) provide the framework for managing the financial affairs of the Council, in respect of its own resources. These are currently being updated and will address some of the issues identified in the Best Value Inspection.
- 1.24 The Council has a strong track record of financial and budget management, having delivered over £100K of savings since 2010/11 whilst protecting frontline services and freezing the Council Tax. Prudent management and innovative service review has enabled us to set a balanced budget for 2015/16, identifying a further £23m of savings. Nevertheless, we are aware that there remains a real challenge for 2016/17 and 2017/18 where we envisage further savings required of £40m over the two years. To address this challenge, a Think Tank has been established to develop options for the longer-term which will support the Council to deliver key priorities with a significantly reduced budget. This forum, which is made up of Service Heads from all directorates, has established a broad framework for thinking about these opportunities, including a focus on understanding and projecting the local population, harnessing economic growth, preventing and meeting needs, resident-centred re-design, new delivery models, asset management and workforce efficiency.
- 1.25 The most recent Audit report, undertaken by KPMG, in relation to the Council's financial statements and VFM conclusion for 2013/14 has yet to be published. KPMG determined that they needed to consider the findings from the best value inspection undertaken by PwC. KPMG's interim report (39)noted that,based on their work completed in relation to their planned programme of audit work, they have not identified any matters that would impact adversely on their audit opinion of the Council's financial statements nor their assessment of the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. It is expected that the final report will be approved by the next Audit Committee.
- 1.26 The Council has an annual audit plan (40) developed through risk analysis and corporate intelligence. All audit report findings (41) are reported to CMT and the Audit Committee and progress with complying with audit recommendations is tracked and reported. CMT have agreed that the audit plan in 2015/16 should be informed by findings from the PwC inspection and areas where we needed to further test and monitor compliance.
- 1.27 The Council operates a risk management framework governed by a risk management policy (42) to allow all risks to be considered using a consistent model. The risk management cycle consists of the key steps for effective risk management and that is shown on the quick reference guide. The reporting of risks is carried out quarterly to the Corporate Management team and the Mayor's Advisory Board. Risks reports are also taken to the Audit Committee. The corporate risk register (43) for the end of September 2014 is attached with accompanying appendices (43a, b, c, d, e and f).

The following documents support our Best Value position statement and are available on the Council's website.

Ref	Document
1	Performance Management and Accountability Framework – November 2013
2a &b	Plan, Do, Monitor, Improve posters – November 2013
3	Performance management internal audit review – July 2012
4a	Community Plan 2011
4b	Community Plan MAB Cover report – November 2014
4c	Community Plan (draft v.6)
5a	Strategic Plan 2014/15
5b	Strategic Plan Outline Plan 2015/16
6a	Strategic Performance Measures monitoring report appendix – Q2, 2014/15
6b	Strategic Plan monitoring report appendix – Q2, 2014/15
7	Annual performance report to residents 2013/14
8a	Target Setting report to MAB – July 2014
8b	Target Setting report appendix 1
8c	Target Setting report appendix 2
9a	Single Equality Framework 2014/15
9b	Borough Equality Assessment summary 2014/15
10a	LGA EFLG peer review report – February 2014
10b	LGA EFLG self-assessment – February 2014
11	Team Planning Guidance
12	Team Planning Peer Review report 2014 to CMT
13	Children and Families Plan 2012/15
14	Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013/16
15a	Community Safety Plan 2013/16
15b	Community Safety Plan Strategic Assessment 2013
16a	Employment Strategy – April 2011
16b	Enterprise Strategy – May 2012
17	Corporate Board: Performance Review Group Terms of Reference February 2014
18	PRG improvement case study – planning performance
19a	Data Quality Policy – November 2014
19b	Data Quality approach – note to PRG – July 2014
20	Data Quality internal audit report
21	Annual Residents Survey results 2014
22	Annual Residents Survey Action Plan 2014
23a	Your borough, your voice campaign
23b	Your borough your voice savings proposals summary of responces
23c	Your borough your voice survey questions
24	Overview & Scrutiny Profile Information per portfolio area:
21	24.a Adults, Health & Wellbeing
	 24.b Communities, Localities & Culture
	 24.c Children, Schools & Families
	 24.d Law, Probity & Governance Resources
	 24.e Development & Renewal
	 24.e Development & Renewal 24.f Resources
25	24.g Resources
25	Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme (v2.11)
26a	Overview & Scrutiny Review: removing barriers to youth employment OSC Report – June 2013 & Update report – November 2014
26b	Overview & Scrutiny Review: removing barriers to youth employment Update report – November 2014
27	Investors in People report – April 2014
28	People Strategy 2012/15 – 2014 update
29a	Workforce to Reflect the Community update report to MAB – 2013/14 and October 2014

Ref	Document
29b	Workforce to Reflect the Community update report to MAB October 2014
29c	Navigate Initiative Q2 report 2014 for People Board
29d	Talent Management Framework
29e	Workforce Planning Framework
30a	PDR guide to the scheme – May 2013
30b	PDR guide to completing online – October 2014
30c	Employee Engagement Framework
30d	Core Values Leadership & Management Framework
31	Budget setting procedure
32a	General Fund Capital and Revenue Budgets, Medium Term Financial Plan 2015-2018 and Strategic Plan 2015-16 – January 2015 Cabinet report
32b	General Fund Capital and Revenue Budgets, Medium Term Financial Plan 2015-2018 and Strategic Plan 2015-16 – January 2015 Cabinet report appendices
33a	General Fund Capital and Revenue Budgets, Medium Term Financial Plan 2015-2018 and Strategic Plan 2015-16 – December 2014 Cabinet report
33b	General Fund Capital and Revenue Budgets, Medium Term Financial Plan 2015-2018 and Strategic Plan 2015-16 – December 2014 Cabinet report appendices
34a	Strategic performance and corporate revenue and capital monitoring Q2 2014/15 (month 6) Cabinet report
34b	Capital control budget 2014/15
34c	Corporate monthly budget monitoring v3
34d	Corporate monthly budget monitoring v4
34e	HRA
34f	Capital monitoring
34g	Request for adoption of capital estimates
34h	Strategic Plan monitoring
34i	Strategic Measures monitoring
35	Corporate budget monitoring timetable 2015/16
36	Internal Audit report on corporate budgetary control
37a-c	Transformation Savings update period 9 final plus appendices
38	Financial regulations
39	LBTH Interim report ISA260 report to Cttee
40	Revised audit plan CMT report
41	Quarterly assurance report to CMT
42a	Risk Management policy
42b	Risk Management guide
43a	CMT Q2 risk report
43b	Appendix 1 - Corporate risk movement report
43c	Appendix 2 - Corporate risk and control
43d	Appendix 3 - Pending approval
43e	Appendix 4 – De-escalated risks
44f	Appendix 5 – Risk matrix

Procurement Action Plan				
Recommendation	Current Status	Action Ass	signed to Tir	neframe
1. Strategy and Vision New Procurement Strategy	Existing Procurement Policy Imperatives – expires end of 2015	 New three year Procurement Strategy to go live from January 2016. 	Chris Holme / Zamil Ahmed	Sept 2015
New Supplier Ethical Code of Conduct	Existing ethical code of conduct is outdated.	 New Ethical Code of Conduct to be updated to reflect legislative changes, Council policies and procurement best practice. 	Chris Holme / Zamil Ahmed	Sept 2015
2. Organisational Developm	ient			
Leadership and strategic alignment of procurement with Finance Director/s151 Officer, Executive and elected member champion for procurement	 Quarterly contracts forward plan report to Cabinet. 	 An annual procurement report to senior managers, Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny on procurement practices, outcomes and developments across the organisation. New procurement training programme for elected members. 	Chris Holme/ Zamil Ahmed	Dec 2015
Central monitoring of contracts and compliance to Council's Procurement Procedures	 Existing procurement model is being reviewed to strengthen the compliance role of central procurement service. Centre Led model with contracts and commercial management role is being developed. 	 Business case for increasing compliance through procurement re-organisation to be developed. New operating model to go live from September 2015. 	Chris Holme / Zamil Ahmed	Sept 2015
New procurement training programme to develop procurement knowledge and skills across the organisation	 Bespoke training has been piloted in D&R /CLC / THH Seven workshops held with 107 attendees. 	 New procurement training programme to be launched to build better procurement competencies across the organisation by ensuring staff are equipped with the knowledge, training and practical skills needed to derive maximum benefit from procurement practices. Completion of training to be mandated for all officers with procurement and 	Chris Holme / Zamil Ahmed	Sept 2015

		commissioning responsibilities.		
 Governance, Systems and A central register of all contracts 	 Contracts over £25k recorded centrally No corporate visibility of contracts below £25k RCDA process and guidelines has been updated. 	• New central contracts register linked to contract award being developed to capture all contracts above £25,000, including all RCDA and linked to spend to increase compliance and minimise use of RCDA.	Chris Holme / Zamil Ahmed	Apr 2015
Reconciliation of contracts listing to financial data	 Annual spend analysis completed and presented to Competition Board All transactions over £25k channelled to procurement category managers for review and approval Resources Procurement dashboard completed. 	 Implementations of directorate Procurement dashboards to identify opportunities for collaboration and identify drive further savings from Councils third party spend Improved Finance and Procurement controls to increase compliance and transparency of spend across the organisation. 	Service Head Financeand Procurement	May 2015
Clear audit trails in place for all procurement activity in accordance with the Procurement Procedures.	 Full audit trail available for contracts above £25k No corporate visibility or assurance on below £25k procurement activity Standard Toolkit introduced but does not address compliance issues 	 Review of existing Procurement thresholds to comply with Transparency Code requirements. Automate all procurement over £5k through the e-tendering portal and publish as part of Transparency Code Link to central contracts register Declaration of interest from staff involved in the procurement process centrally captured. 	Chris Holme/ Zamil Ahmed	Jan 2016
Availability of signed contracts	 Absence in a significant number of cases of signed contracts 	 Undertake a review of the current status on signed contracts. Explore the possibility to deliver contracts by electronics means (e-tendering) to create a central repository of signed contracts. 	Legal Services/ Procurement	Apr 2016
Delegation and appropriate Member Engagement	 Review of contracts award approval process completed and presented to CMT 	 New guidelines and executive member engagement in contracts award to be presented to MAB. New procurement training, reflecting new guidelines, programme for 	Chris Holme/ Zamil Ahmed	Apr 2015

		executivemembers (as per timescale set out in action 2).		
4. Category Management				
Review of third party and commissioned spend	 A full category management analysis of the Councils third party spends is underway. 	 Complete spend analysis to Identify key categories of third spend and have a clear category management strategy in place to ensure value for money (VFM) for these categories of spend, reduce costs and oversupply. Directorate and corporate spend dashboards to be developed to support savings challenge programme. 	Chris Holme/ Zamil Ahmed	Sept 2015
5. Commercial, Contracts&	Risk Management		1	
Partnering and Collaboration	A Procurement Gateway Process (Tollgates) is in place which ensures appropriate challenge in the procurement process for collaboration and partnering.	All significant procurements are assessed pre-procurement to identify the optimum route to market.	Competition Board / Zamil Ahmed	March 2016
Develop a corporate approach to contract management to ensure best value and effectiveness from supply chain through better relationship management.	 No standard corporate approach to contract and commercial management. Workshops with officers from across organisation completed and findings have been presented to Competition Board. 	 Integrate contract management within the Councils procurement and commissioning models Implementation of a contract management procedure /toolkit to facilitate contract monitoring to ensure consistency on contract management, performance and raise the standard of contract management across the Council. 	Chris Holme/ Zamil Ahmed	Jan 2016
Supply Chain Risk Management to be integrated into Procurement processes.	 Assessment of new tool to monitor financial risk management of key contractors is currently underway 	 High value and strategic contracts to be identified and monitored centrally to minimise failure of Councils Supply Chain. Supply Chain resilience risk (pre and post appointment) to be introduced and monitored through Competition Board. 	Chris Holme/ Zamil Ahmed	March 2015

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Grants Action Plan

Strategy and Delivery Recommendation	Action	Assigned to	Timeframe
Ensure service continuation pending agreement of new Mainstream Grants Programme	 Obtain Commissioners approval for a process and timescale for extending the 2012-15 Mainstream Grants (MSG) programme Review all existing MSG grants in accordance with the agreed project delivery and risk process and undertake appropriate Equalities assessments Commissioners consider evaluations and determine project extensions Service agreements with additional outputs and outcomes for length of extension Monitoring processes agreed and implemented Review of 2012/15 reported to Corporate Management Team, Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S) Develop communications plan to keep voluntary and community sector informed throughout process 	Dave Clark	April2015
Deliver 2015-18 Mainstream Grants Programme	 Review the MSG programme to take account of emerging community and Strategic Plan plan priorities and rationalise "themes" accordingly Criteria, desired outcomes, process and timescales agreed Report on outcomes of appraisals Commissioners decision on grant assessments Completion of service agreements with providers 	Chris Holme/ Dave Clark	Sept 2015
Bi-Annual Update of Community and Voluntary Service	Review all existing grant regimes (and other forms of aid) and their alignment to emerging Community Plan and Strategic Plan priorities, MTFP, voluntary sector compact and other key		

Strategy	 strategies Consultation and engagement on priorities for 3rd sector Market assessment for alternative service providers Report to Commissioners/ Cabinet (post Directions) 	Louise Russell/ Dave Clark	March 2016
Governance Arrangeme Recommendation	Action	Assigned to	Timeframe
Identify all key grant streams, timelines and existing governance and award arrangements	 Report to Commissioners with proposed approach to ongoing decisions for all streams 	Dave Clark	July 2015
Improve grant approval processes	 Ensure clear specifications, outputs and outcomes in advance, which differentiate between capacity building, innovative pilots and mainstream service delivery Codify all grant appraisal and approval processes in one compact compliant framework 	Dave Clark/ Everett Haughton	July 2015
Ensure and embed open and transparent of decision-making	 Publish arrangements for Commissioner executive decision-making relating to grants Publish forward plan for decision-making and timetable review programme for O&S Committee Develop Mayor and cross-party consultation and review forum Ensure all grant "contracts" over £5,000 are included in the Council's contracts register Publish all grant awards on the Council's website 	Chris Holme/ John Williams	May 2015
Develop robust evaluation of impact of grant programmes	 Annual review of approvals, outcomes and developments to CMT, Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee for all grant supported activities Programme evaluations commissioned for all grant regimes 	Dave Clark	March 2016
Review arrangements	Establish cross party working group to develop proposals for	Chris Holme	December 2015

post Commissioners for future executive decision-making • Management Arrangem	 future arrangements Discuss proposals with Commissioners Agree proposals through Cabinet Briefing and training of members in relation to new proposals 		July 2016 November 2016 Nov/Dec 2016
Recommendation	Action	Assigned to	Timeframe
Ensure cost-effective management structures in place for new grant arrangements	 Consolidate all 3rd Sector grant giving, monitoring and evaluation into one service 	Chris Holme	April 2015
Improve Monitoring Arrangements	 Update grants manual monitoring arrangements in line with internal audit recommendations Training and development of staff on standard procedures and sign-off of monitoring visits Management review process of all monitoring activity to ensure consistency Undertake ongoing risk-based audit in conjunction with monitoring 	Dave Clark/ Everett Haughton	Sept 2015

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Appendix 4 Property Action Plan

Recommendation	Action	Timeframe	Assigned to	Status
Immediateissuesand agreementofworking	arrangementswith Commissioners			
Outline(explaintocommissioners)core operationalestaterequirementsfor the next five years and upcomingdisposal rationale.	Earlymeetingwith Commissioners the work of the service area, the lookahead and some of the key challenges. This would include a discussion on the scope of anypre disposal protocol	Jan-15	AnnSutcliffe	100%
Agree with Commissionersscope and clarification of role - Whatqualifies asdisposal - Clarification rediscretionaryand statutoryfunctionsandobligations - Communicationand relationship protocol - Feedback on initial improvement plansand whetherfurther areas they want addressed	Earlymeetingwith Commissioners	Jan-15	AnnSutcliffe	100%
Establishwhat if anyadditional checks/referencesareneededbybidders on conflict checks (commercial bidders declaringinterestwhen puttingproposalsforward to buyasitewithin a sealed bid process.)	Discussiontobehadwith Legal and Risk team AMCB discussion required. Discussionandagreement with the Commissioners	Mar-15 Apr-15 May-15	AnnSutcliffe	
Policyand processesfor PropertyDisposal	reviewedand updated			
Updated 'Asset Disposal' policyas partof the Council'sfinancialregulations to be	1. TobereviewedbytheAssetManagementand Capital Board (AMCB)	Jan -15	Ann Sutcliffe	100%
approvedbyS151 Officer as part of statutoryduties. To include how disposal method will be determined (on a site-by- site basis)	2. Approved and issuedbys151 Officer	Feb-15	Chris Holme	

Recommendation	Action	Timeframe	Assigned to	Status
Disposal and Lettingmanual used by Asset Managementofficers updated to align with the Council'sfinancial regulations.Tobe approved andadopted byCabinet. To include how disposal method will be determined (on a site-by-site basis)	 Approved bytheAMCB Commissioners reviewandinputsought CMT MAB Cabinet 	Jan-15 Feb-15 Feb-15 Mar-15 May-15	AnnSutcliffe	100% 100% 50%
 Dissemination ofrevised protocolsto: Asset Managementstaff Financeand Legal(lead staff) Members briefing 	 Briefingthrough AssetManagementteam meeting Briefingthrough1:1 meetings with keyfinance and legal staff Guidance to be published inmembers bulletin 	May 15 Jun-15 Jun-15	Ann Sutcliffe/Chris Holme/David Galpin	
Compliance testingwith revised protocols	 Undertaken throughthe planned audit process As partofthe reportingprocessoneach project confirmationof compliance with revisedguidance. 	May 15 Ongoing	AnnSutcliffe	
Reviewand clarification ofCommunityBuil	dings allocation policy	• • • • • •		
CommunityBuildingsPolicy-Lettings and ChargingPolicy(draft status)	 Draftdocumentbeingconsultedonwith Legal and Finance. Report toAMCB. Lead Member/Commissionerreviewand input Cabinet/other approval 	May-15	AnnSutcliffe	
 Dissemination ofnewprotocolsto: Asset Managementstaff Financeand Legal (lead staff) Third sector team Members briefing 	 1.Briefingthrough Asset Managementteammeeting 2.Briefingthrough 1:1meetings with keyfinance and legal staff 3.Guidancetobepublished in membersbulletin 	May 15 Ongoing	AnnSutcliffe	
Compliance testingwith newprotocols	 Undertaken through the planned auditprocess As partofthe reportingprocessoneachproject confirmation of compliance with revised guidance. 	May 15 Ongoing	AnnSutcliffe	

Action	Timeframe	Assigned to	Status
 Draftprogramme tobe agreed withAMCB. Consultation/agreement with Commissioners on proposedprocess CMT/MAB consideration Cabinet/other approval 	Feb-15 Feb-15 Apr-15 Jun-15	AnnSutcliffe	100% 100%
As above	Jun 15 Ongoing	AnnSutcliffe	
 Consider paper at AMCB Consult directorates Report to CMT (and MAB, Cabinet if appropriate) Report back to Commissioners 	Sep-15 Nov-15 Dec-15 Dec-15	AnnSutcliffe	
Documents currentlyunder reviewand tobe considered bythe Board andthe Group.	Apr-15	AnnSutcliffe	
	1. Draftprogramme tobe agreed withAMCB. 2. Consultation/agreement with Commissioners on proposedprocess 3. CMT/MAB consideration 4. Cabinet/other approval As above 1. Consider paper at AMCB 2. Consult directorates 3. Report to CMT (and MAB, Cabinet if appropriate) 4. Report back to Commissioners	1. Draftprogramme tobe agreed withAMCB.Feb-152. Consultation/agreement with Commissioners on proposedprocessFeb-153. CMT/MAB considerationApr-154. Cabinet/other approvalJun-15As aboveJun 151. Consider paper at AMCBSep-152. Consult directoratesNov-153. Report to CMT (and MAB, Cabinet if appropriate)Dec-154. Report back to CommissionersDec-15	1. Draftprogramme tobe agreed withAMCB. Feb-15 AnnSutcliffe 2. Consultation/agreement with Commissioners on proposedprocess Feb-15 Apr-15 3. CMT/MAB consideration Apr-15 Jun-15 4. Cabinet/other approval Jun-15 AnnSutcliffe As above Jun 15 AnnSutcliffe 1. Consider paper at AMCB Sep-15 AnnSutcliffe 2. Consult directorates Nov-15 Dec-15 3. Report to CMT (and MAB, Cabinet if appropriate) Dec-15 Dec-15 4. Report back to Commissioners Dec-15 AnnSutcliffe

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Appendix 5

Communications Action Plan						
Recommendation	Current Status	Action	Assigned to	Timeframe		
1. Strategy Critical appraisal of all communications functions, resources and activities leading to refreshed approach based on VFM principles for 2015/16	 Evidence gathering and consultation commenced Comms managers assigned evaluation tasks 	Complete review and incorporate results and recommendations in strategy and costed publicity plan	John McDermott	Early March 2015		
New Communications Strategy	 Aligning Comms strategy with Community plan and undertaking budget analysis 	Communications Strategy completed	John McDermott	Mid March 2015		
New Communications protocol and style guide	• Existing protocol in use, under review in particular to develop mechanisms to ensure compliance	 Develop a revised protocol combined with style guide providing clarity and support to all communicators Re-launch and mandatory training of all relevant staff about requirements of revised Code Establish programme of testing to 	John McDermott Kelly Powell Internal Audit	April 2015 By Dec 2015		
		ensure compliance with Code				
2. Digital Focus			-			
Delivery of digital communications strategy	 Existing content management system and hardware coming to the end of its life and business case for procurement developed My Tower Hamlets consultation tool under review to ensure VFM 	 New system to go live in May. Digital communication strategy developed to underpin and enable channel shift in range of Council customer facing activity including communication 	John Hoang Oda Riska	June2015		
New web-based print and design management system	 Procurement processes complete Plans for roll-out under development 	 Internal awareness / training programme to be launched to build better print and design procurement competencies across the organisation. Mandatory training for all staff with 	John Hoang Oda Riska	April 2015		

		print and design responsibilities.		
3. East End Life review Review of options for East End	Review of functions of EEL	Alternative methods and channels	John	April 2015
Life refreshing value for money assessment and including options for revised frequency	begun	 identified and costs explored in light of Digital Strategy above Compliance with Publicity Code re- tested 	McDermott Helen Watson	
		 Alternative provision arrangements considered Benchmarking and review of other boroughs Fully costed options for delivery Provide all elected members access to 		
4. Refreshing internal communic	ations	the review		
Align activity to HR strategy and develop knowledge-sharing culture	 Phased plan agreed Roll out of quarterly directorate newsletters commenced 	 Complete plan for suite of products and activities to improve and raise profile of internal communciations Develop evaluation and feedback mechanisms 	Kelly Powell John Hoang	August 2015
5. Campaign planning and delive	ry			
Deliver timely, cost effective and high impact campaign programme with the council's 50 th anniversary as a centrepiece	 Forward planner being developed with directorates 	Delivery and financial planning delivering, where possible, cost neutral activities	John McDermott	April 2015
Campaign partnerships established with other boroughs	 Talks in progress with London councils collectively and on resource sharing with specific boroughs 	Campaigns delivered taking advantage of economies of scale and broader reach and impact	John McDermott Sharan Ahmed	August 2015
A detailed thee year plan established as a flexible tool for forward planning and proactive	 Forward planner first draft underway Media targets being evaluated 	 Fully planned and costed projects wrapped around key events Resources more effectively used 	John McDermott Kelly Powell	April 2015

media work		when reactive media work required		
6. Income optimisation				
A robust business plan identifying new revenue streams, maximising existing income activities and providing a clear growth plan	 Assessment of resources, markets and potential income streams underway 	 Review to consider options fortrading Business plan for communications revenues stream complete and approved Review opportunities and approach to use of Council poster and other advertising sites 	Sharan Ahmed (with CLC as required)	September 2015
7. Promoting Cohesion and Equa	-		I	
Maximise reach and penetration of minority communities to support Community Plan and One Tower Hamlets objectives	 BME media work well- established Significant gaps in media activity with other diversity streams 	 Advisory group/s established 	John McDermott	September 2015
8. Accountability and performance	ce			
Produce highly effective management information and data to enable robust evaluation of Comms activity and informed forward planning	 Retrospective reporting being replaced with high quality data (e.g to include social media) Comms working with CMT to assess needs 	 Detailed, timely reporting that meets the needs of corporate and directorate business plans 	John McDermott Raju Miah	May 2015
9. Supporting colleagues				•
Communications training and support programme developed	 Ad hoc training offered on request 	 A suite of learning and development products aligned to organisational needs 	John McDermott Kelly Powell	August/ September 2015
10. Mayor's Media advisors				•
Ensure Mayor's office media support offers value for money and complies with Communications Protocol	 Commissioning exercise undertaken to test market for media support Specification clarifies that appointed contractors will be 	 Robust arrangements for monitoring activity of advisor contracts to be implemented including ensuring activity relates to role of Mayor and not in his political role 	Service Head Democratic Services	March 2015
	subject to Council's terms of employment to include Publicity Code and Communications Protocol	 Induction for Mayor's Media Advisors and training re Code and Protocol Regular audit of media advisors' 	John McDermott	March 2015 By Dec 2015
	 One post appointed to, one to be filled 	activity to be undertaken and reported to Audit Committee	Section 151 Officer	

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Appendix 6 : Organisational Culture

Introduction

There is a real desire, amongst all those involved as Councillors and officers in Tower Hamlets, to deliver continuous improvement for the residents of Tower Hamlets. Other sections of this plan set out the processes we have to achieve this and these will be maintained through the lifetime of this plan. The impact of Government funding cuts, felt across local government, makes achieving our goals even more challenging and there will continue to be legitimate political differences about how best to meet this objective with dwindling resources. Against this backdrop, we also need to ensure that the culture of the organisation continues to be one which strives for continuous improvement and in which relationships between groups of members and between members and officers are professional, respectful, open and honest. The best value plan seeks to rebuild trust in the areas where this has, or is perceived to have, broken down.

This will be a staged process – there are some things we can and are already doing and all the actions within the full best value plan will impact on organisational culture as they are implemented and embedded. In addition, we suggest some specific activities in the remainder of this plan which will further support the development of a best value culture.

	Recommendation Action			Assigned to	Timeframe
Inves	sting in People				E 1 0045
	Publication of quarterly, printed Directorate Newsletters (Your Directorate, Your Voice)	•	Council wide initial newsletter to launch the project Finalise first edition for each directorate and issue in the first week of March 2015 Agree quarterly publication schedule	Simon Kilbey	Feb 2015 March 2015
	Develop an interactive area on the intranet (Your Workplace, Your Voice) for staff to engage, comment and ask questions	•	Develop, test and consult on content Demonstrate site at focus groups and key stakeholder meetings Engage managers to use the site to collect baseline information	Simon Kilbey	March 2015

	Launch site		
Develop Continuous Improvement Groups	Identification of group membersCreation of work programme for each group	Simon Kilbey	April 2015
Create a staff suggestion scheme	Launch of interactive site including e-form	Simon Kilbey	March 2015
Create Your Voice Ambassadors to convey key messages and feedback staff views	 Agree training package Recruit Ambassadors Launch project 	Simon Kilbey	April 2015
Refresh the Staff Recognition Scheme	 Hold focus groups to gather views and suggestions Launch video clips on the intranet and test the level of engagement Present proposals to staff forums Launch new scheme 	Simon Kilbey	May 2015
Relationship Management and build	ling consensus around improvement		
Rebuilding elected member relationships	 LGA facilitated forum to review elected member and senior officerrelationships annual for 3 years Mayor and elected member engagement in design of LGA support 	Steve Halsey/ Mayor/ Group Leaders	May 2015; May 2016 and May 2017
	 Develop an action plan to respond to recommendations of above review Deliver and monitor action plan 		
Ensure Executive is open to scrutiny	 Mayor to attend and answer questions at a public meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at least once year 	Mayor	By March 2016
	 CE/HOPs and Corporate Director drop-in sessions 	CMT	From April 2015

	 open to all Councillors – twice a year for each Councillors to be informed through Members'Bulletin of activities and events in their wards Establish arrangements for annual performance appraisal of CE/HOPS and Corporate Directors to include accountability to Executive and Council 	John McDermott Simon Kilbey	From April 2015 By July 2015
Develop cross party member working groups on key issues	 Review model and lessons learnt from Members Diversity and Equality working group Agree 1-2 areas to trial approach, linked to key priorities within Community Plan Set up initial time limited project groups Evaluate and review 	Louise Russell/ John Williams	March 2015 April 2015 May 2015 December 2015
Ensuring member and officer relations are appropriately conducted and constructive	 Review, strengthening and clarifying the Officer / Member protocol and scheme of delegations Re-iterating within protocol requirement for officers to provide impartial advice to Mayor and all elected members Refresher training for members and key staff Annual independently commissioned review and report on Officer/ member grievances for review by HoPS and the respective Group Leaders making recommendations specific to minimising instances of officer member grievances. 	Monitoring Officer	May 2015 June 2015 December 2015 December 2016
Development of refreshed Community Plan setting out key priorities	 Community, partner and cross party engagement and consultation Consultation with Mayor Agreed throughCabinet and full Council 	Louise Russell	October to March 2015 March 2015 July 2015

Progress activity emerging from Constitution review	 Progress reported to General Purposes Committee Sept 2014 and constitution updates made Governance review working group established to progress further constitutional issues Review terms of reference to include consideration of role of Speaker and elected member access to information 	Monitoring Officer	Sept 2014 March 2015
Embedding best value Ensuring all decisions are informed by best value requirements	 All Cabinet and Committee papers to incorporate an explanation of how the recommended action reflects the Council's best value duty – template to be devised and disseminated Delivering key actions in respect of Procurement, Grants, Property and Communications as set out in the remainder of this Plan 	Louise Russell/ Matthew Mannion As per respective plans	April 2015 As per plans

Statutory Officer Recruitment Action Plan (Director of Law, Probity and Governance, Corporate Director Resources and Head of Paid Service/Chief Executive)

Post	Current Status	Action Ass	igned to Tir	neframe
Recruitment of Director of Law, Probity and Governance (Monitoring Officer) and Corporate Director Resources (S151 Officer)	Commissioners, in conjunction with the Head of Paid Service, Service Head HR&WD and with the assistance of Penna have reviewed the process carried out so far and given clearance to proceed with Penna's recommended list of candidates to be invited to final interview.	Following Commissioners' clearance, steps to re-start recruitment process instigated	Steve Halsey/Simon Kilbey	11.02.15
		Formal decision to resume recruitment process, confirm further stages in process with timescales.	HR Committee	Target date 19.02.15
		ASC receive Penna's recommendations for candidates to be invited to final interview. Commissioners to attend and have the opportunity to challenge any representation by Members to vary from the recommended list.	AppointmentsSu b Committee	Shortlisting 04.03.15 – Shortlisting for both DLPG and CDR
		ASC to carry out final interviews with short- listed candidates, receive results of any psychometric tests and select preferred applicant. References to be available to ASC. Commissioners to attend ASC as observers and potential advisors on technical suitability of candidates.	Appointments Sub Committee	10 th March (DLPG and CDR)
		Review with Commissioners, Head of Paid Service and Service Head HR&WD. Commissioners to be given opportunity to discuss any areas of concern or confirm their	Steve Halsey/Simon Kilbey	Ideally to coincide with Mayor and Executive

	and the Secretary of State's satisfaction with process and selection of candidate.	'opportunity to object' period.
	Opportunity for the Mayor and the Executive Democratic Services	Two working days (max). <i>Target date</i> 13 th March (DLPG) Target date 16 th March (CDR)
	In event of an objection, ASC to consider the objection. Commissioners to attend ASC as observers on process of determining the objection.	Target date 23rd March (if needed)
	Letter to Commissioners and Secretary of State informing of the outcome of the recruitment processes. Commissioners to carry out any final consultation necessary with Secretary of State.	Target date 26 th March
	Following agreed appointments formal offer to be confirmed to candidates. Simon Kilbey	Target date 27 th March
Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service	Active discussions within the Council taking place to develop an appropriate process to achieve an appointment to meet the requirement of the Directions.	Timeline to meet Secretary of State Directions

Appendix 8

Best Value Action Plan - Elections Recommendation **Current Status** Action Assigned to Timeframe 1. Planning and Management Capacity Joint working with partner January 2015 Project group established including Joint project group to meet fortnightly John Williams/ • Louise Stamp and ongoing agencies relevant Council services: Met January – April 2015, more frequently as Police (Tower Hamlets & Scotland required immediately prior to election. Yard): and Electoral Commission John Williams/ Enhance management Bv end Acting Returning Officer (ARO) Procurement of experienced external • • Louise Stamp Februarv expertise and capacity supported by Head of Electoral resource as consultant to oversee key 2015 Services (to be DARO) and aspects of the plans including verification/count and postal voting CMT/Council managers as required. Nomination of dedicated Facilities • Keith Fraser March 2015 Management resource Louise Stamp March/April AEA professional count service to support • 2015 planning work. Performance Standards Full information provided to the John Williams 27 February Tower Hamlets has been selected • 2015 and monitoring Commission in relation to election by the Electoral Commission as one planning and contingency/risk register. further of the authorities for detailed monitoring in connection with milestones to May 2015 national RO performance standards Integrity Measures 2. Enhancement of integrity 26 February Local protocol used in May 2014 Revision and strengthening of local John Williams • measures around registration 2015 under review protocol, to enhance the Electoral and election, clear statement Enhanced '6+'/ targeted registration Commission's own revised Code for 2015 • of standards of conduct Louise Stamp 20 February checks on addresses, using tablets • Joint RO/Police bid to Cabinet Office 2015 required to update register. Also enhanced funds available to 17 high risk authorities Police resource on polling day to address integrity Efficient reporting and Louise Stamp March 2015 Joint planning group to agree Continuation of dedicated e-mail account • effective investigation of any reporting arrangements for any complaints of possible fraudulent allegations/concerns re: fraud activity. One working day turn round and referral if necessary to Police SPOC 3. Staffing and Training Adequate numbers of quality Recruitment underway - Presiding All staff required to confirm that they are Seema Shahnaz Feb – May • • assured staff at polling 2015 Officers, to be followed by Poll not a member of any political party. stations, count, PV openings. Feb – May Clerks, Count Supervisors and Polling station staff where possible to Seema Shahnaz • 2015 Assistants, Visiting Officers and work at a PS that is not in constituency Postal Vote Opening Assistants. where they live.

Staff fully trained on process and all potential scenarios	•	Training material under review and programme of dates set.	•	Enhanced mandatory training before taking up roles. To include practical role-play scenarios.	Louise Stamp	April 2015
			•	Polling staff to be trained alongside Police Officers who will be on duty at their PS.	Louise Stamp	April 2015
			•	Count training enhanced including 'dress rehearsal' in situ approx. 3 hours before the start.	John Williams/ Louise Stamp	April/May 2015 015
4. Verification and Count						
Eliminate delays whilst continuing to ensure integrity of the count. Enhance	•	Plans for the verification and count developed, building on EC report and improvements introduced at	•	Enhanced security measures inc photo ID checks at entry; non-Council security staff; non-transferable security wristbands	Louise Stamp	April 2015
procedures including response to Electoral		Blackwall & Cubitt Town ward election (July 2015), and have been	•	Attendees to be required to sign Code of Conduct as condition of entry.	Louise Stamp	7 May 2015
Commission recommendations	•	published for consultation. Count venue for both constituencies to be ExCel Centre, E16.	•	CCTV operational in the venue Additional staff to be used, in particular a higher ratio supervisors:count assistants.	Louise Stamp Louise Stamp/ Seema Shahnaz	April 2015 March/April 2015
		Verification to start immediately after close of poll. Projected declaration time (based on 70%	•	Full review of count procedures and paperwork in consultation with external resource/AEA	John Williams/ Louise Stamp	April 2015
		turnout) by 4.30 a.m.	•	In the event that the general election is combined with a TH mayoral election (see 'risk management' below), the mayoral count will be held over until 8 th May, p.m.	John Williams/ Louise Stamp	7/8 May 2015
5. Polling Districts and Polli	ing	Places				
Efficient and convenient division of constituencies into polling districts; accessible	•	Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places completed by 31 January. Final list of polling places	•	Polling Stations to be agreed with a view to security and convenience of the voting process, and efficiency at the count.	John Williams/ Louise Stamp	March 2015
and suitable polling places		published and shared with Police for planning purposes.	•	Register to be amended in accordance with new PDs	John Williams/ Louise Stamp	March 2015
Ensure integrity of the process and good order at	•	Procedures and instructions under review, including addressing any	•	Joint training for Presiding Officers and Police/PCSOs	Louise Stamp	April 2015
polling stations.		issues raised after May 2014 elections	•	CCTV/bodycams in use at polling stations Police/PCSOs on duty throughout the day including accompanying PO/ballot box at	Louise Stamp/ MPS	7 May 2015
			•	the close of poll to the count venue. Investigation of marked 'clear' areas	MPS	7 May 2015
			•	outside polling stations Investigation of additional poll clerk to	John Williams	April/May 2015

			•	'meet and greet', assist with order. Continuation of RO instruction re: staff to speak only English in PS	John Williams/ Louise Stamp John Williams	April/May 2015 7 May 2015
6. Postal Voting						
Efficient and convenient despatch of postal voting packs.	•	Contracts in place with secure print contractor (FDM – experienced company) for the production of PV packs	•	Royal Mail to deliver packs. Discussions to be held regarding measures to ensure security, all packs delivered through individual doors etc	John Williams/ Louise Stamp	March 2015
Ensure integrity of the process and good order at postal vote opening sessions	•	Procedures and instructions under review Seven PV opening sessions have bene arranged between 21 April and 7 May.	•	Scanning 100% of personal identifiers. Dedicated DARO to oversee PV openings. Training for all involved in adjudication on EC forensic handwriting guidance. Review procedures and restrictions on PV opening observers' conduct.	Louise Stamp John Williams John Williams John Williams	April 2015 March/April 2015 April 2015 March/April 2015
7. Candidates and Agents I	lee	lings				
Ensure full understanding of the process and rules; brief re: Code of Conduct etc	•	ARO has kept communication with all known agents locally, including planning updates and consultation on key issues	•	Three Candidates and Agents meetings to be held. To cover the process, election offences, code of conduct, polling station and count arrangements, adjudication etc	John Williams/ Louise Stamp	26.02.15 01.04.15 (prov); Mid- April 2015
8. Communications Plan						
Ensure effective communication of key messages re: election and in particular security/integrity.	•	Draft plan developed by Comms team inc. objectives, key messages, audiences and proposed activity.	•	Publicity to be co-ordinated with partner agencies East End Life &other channels to include clear messages re: secrecy (inc. in community languages, graphic material)	John Williams/ John McDermott	Feb – May 2015
9. Pre-election Guidance						
Ensure full understanding of the rules, compliance with Code of Recommended practice for LA Publicity	•	Guidance material under review	•	Revised guidance to be issued to Members and officers in advance of the pre-election period	John McDermott/ Meic Sullivan- Gould	March 2015
10. Risk Management			1		Γ	1
Ensure all potential risks identified and contingency measures put in place.	•	Detailed contingency planner/risk register has been prepared and will be maintained and updated.	•	Risks, contingencies, milestones and key actions to be updated weekly. Contingency planning takes into account possible outcome of Election Petition Trial to hold mayoral election combined on 7 May 2015 or shortly afterwards.	John Williams/ Louise Stamp	Feb – May 2015

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TOWER HAMLETS PUBLICITY PLAN 2015-16

INTRODUCTION

The Council recognises the importance for local residents, staff and the democratic process that there is full understanding of and confidence in all aspects of its operation. It is our duty to ensure that residents, staff, key stakeholders, media and the wider public have a clear understanding of the council's role, the services we provide and the way in which we deliver continuous improvement and value for money.

An effective communications plan for the Council has a number of key purposes. To achieve our Community Plan vision of improving the quality of life of all who live and work in the borough requires us to communicate with and engage local people. In addition, effective communications activity:

- promotes openness and transparency in the work of the council;
- promotes key messages to achieve policy goals around ways in which residents can live more healthily; improve their employment chances; help us tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and create a greener, more sustainable environment.
- underpins accountability and effective reporting to residents about our delivery in response to local priorities;
- engages residents in key activities and encourages their feedback and engagement;
- promotes cohesion and cultural interchange; and
- builds effective working relationships and ensures staff feel informed and motivated.

To achieve these aims, the Council has a detailed Forward Planner (Appendix 1) which sets out the wide range of communications activity planned on a monthly basis over the course of a year. In addition, this cover report highlights the key strategic and operational communication priorities which the council proposes to focus on over the next year to ensure that our communications and publicity activity is effective in achieving the above goals and delivers best value. These areas are set out in an action plan format within the Council's Best Value Plan to respond to the Secretary of State Directions of December 2014.

The key aim for the 2015/16 communications are to re-focus the Council's media profile around positive messages in pursuit of the key purposes outlined above. To achieve this, there are six key issues that we will focus on during 2015/16.

First, we will build our publicity activity around the **Community Plan**, currently the focus of widespread borough wide and stakeholder consultation. This will ensure our communications activity is focused around the areas agreed as priorities for the Council and its partners.

Second, we will focus on communicating **value for money** as we operate in an era of intense internal and external scrutiny. Third, the current **Communications Protocol**will be strengthened and further disseminated providing a robust, clearly understood mechanism to ensure that the work of, and relations between Communications, the Mayor's office, council officers and elected members is carried out transparently and appropriately at all times.

Fourth, in this **general election** year, work is underway with the Electoral commission, the police and other stakeholders to address difficulties which arose in previous campaigns. Communications will play a central role in ensuring the smooth, efficient running of the poll and count and build public confidence in our democratic processes.

Fifth, a new far-reaching **internal communications** function, in partnership with the Council's Human Resources, will shape organisational culture, delivering key messages and engaging with staff.

Sixth, we will build a stronger focus on **best value** in the way in which we deliver our communications function, challenging existing models, exploring the potential for new and existing revenue streams and considering the best use of the Council's overall spend on Communications to achieve objectives.

We will base our activities on available research such as media monitoring and resident and staff surveys. Above all the purpose of this plan is simple; to increase public awareness of the bread and butter services provided by Tower Hamlets and enable residents to have a real informed say and improve local accountability.

THE 2015 COMMUNITY PLAN

The developing Community Plan (2015 onwards) is well advanced following an extensive consultation process with a wide range of stakeholders. The plan will build upon existing partnership work retaining themes that partners have organised themselves around for some years. They are:

- A great place to live
- A fair and prosperous community
- A safe and cohesive community
- A healthy and supportive community

Tower Hamlets is a place of immense opportunity, but poverty and inequality can stop local people achieving their full potential. The community plan aims to bring different parts of the community together, encouraging positive relationships and tackling divisions between communities – as well as providing strong leadership, involving people and giving them the tools and support to improve their lives.

Partnership working to pursue these priorities is well embedded and overseen by a range of partnership bodies.

To build on and complement this work, the Community Plan sets out proposed cross-cutting partnership priorities for the 4 years from 2015. Using this plan, partners will work together to harness the efforts of all partners and accelerate progress in four important areas.

As the plan develops, communications activity will 'wrap around' it ensuring that our publicity reflects and informs residents' priorities. The communications forward planner at appendix 1 is the beginning of this process setting out as programme to support each of the four priorities.

Our approach will be to focus on long-term, solid, evidence based reputation building designed to build public confidence in the council and our services.

TEN NEW GOALS FOR 2015/16

The Tower Hamlets model of communications has, by necessity, been reactive and media relations driven. Much of our everyday work, supporting frontline services and promoting key messages to promote policy objective continues largely unheralded and it is our aim to develop and improve this service development role. We will continue to develop and improve our two-way communications in a linked, digital, tweeted world where power is flowing back to communities. A number of key activities are planned to further improve communications. They are described below and included within our best value action plan.

1. Strategic Review: A root and branch critical appraisal of the services provided by Communications will be undertaken. Along with our customers and other stakeholders, we will look dispassionately at how and why we provide services, analyse our relative performance and draw up plans embedded in best value principles.

To achieve this we will;

- challenge why, how and by whom a service is being provided

-secure comparison with the performance of others (including local authorities) across a range of relevant indicators, taking into account the views of both service users and suppliers -consultlocal residents, service users, elected members, partners and businesses in the setting of new performance targets.

We will use this to develop a new Communications Strategy alongside a refreshed Communications protocol.

2. Digital Focus:We will accelerate the delivery of our digital communications strategy. We want to improve the ability of people to interact efficiently with Tower Hamlets, reduce unnecessary transactioncosts and identify new ways of engaging with the community. Building on the learning from the Council's Digital Inclusion Strategy, we will target digital activity appropriately based on the different needs and motivations of sections of our community.

In doing this, we will consider whether we can move over time to digital communication methods to replace our existing paper based methods and East End Life. This would need to be a gradual and staged process, recognising the level of digital exclusion in elements of our current population.

Procurement of a new web content management system (CMS) will support our aims by providing a much more accessible, user-friendly web platform for engagement and transaction. Simple to use and content-rich, our digital offering will extend the reach and penetration of our messages and the quality and quantity of our stakeholder engagement.

3. East End Life review: The newspaper is currently the council's primary communication / community cohesion tool and is highly valued by local residents. East End Life continues to be the most cost-effective way for the council to communicate information about council services and community cohesion in Tower Hamlets, and at the same time fulfilling its statutory duties in relation to public notices and advertising. A review of East End Life review was conducted in 2011 which concluded that: *"Further to an analysis of advertising costs with alternative newspapers, the 2011 review referred to above, found that the closure of the publication would cost between £600,000 and £2.1million. The cost of placing statutory notices in the main local newspaper would be £635,007, rising to over £2.1m for a 'suite' of packages in a range of local newspapers to increase reach."We will revisit the findings of this review and a range of options around frequency, financing and delivery, including moving to digital platforms over time, will be explored.*

- 4. Refreshing Internal Communications: We will work with Human Resources to build team based communications structures enabling colleagues at all levels to improve communication within and across directorates. A network of communications champions will facilitate two-way communication up and down the council and Communications will support departmental newsletters, "road shows" and intranet activity. The primary aim is to build a knowledge-sharing culture across departmental and organisational boundaries
- 5. Campaign Planning and Co-ordination: The service has a detailed media Forward Planner a summary of the key campaigns planned is attached at Appendix a). The Planner, which is being extended to cover the 3 years ahead, is aa flexible and developing document linked to a new suite of media monitoring and engagement tools. A key campaign underpinning this year's work will be a 50thAnniversary Campaign. From April 2015a range of events will take place (independently and with London Council colleagues) to mark the founding of Tower Hamlets Council. Our plans will be self-financing or, where possible, revenue raising in partnership with appropriate organisations including the media.

A new web-based print and design tool will transform commissioning of materials for internal customers improving efficiency, reducing costs and ensuring uniformly high standards across the organisation. To ensure value for money, the Council has just completed the procurement of a new print and design frameworkwhich will enable the council to strategically manage all of its external print and design-related suppliers, and to ensure that all printed publicity and design output complies with procurement processes and the council's branding and communications protocols. In practice, the framework will be supported by a web-based print and design project management system, Panacea, which is being used to centralise and manage all communications jobs involving print or design in one system.

This will be supported by an improved Communications Protocol and Style Guide enabling greater freedom of action for specific services and specifying the roles and responsibilities of Communications staff, Mayoral Advisers, Officers and members

6. Income optimisation and value for money: The finances of the Communications function will be reviewed with a new emphasis on revenue generation. This will include development of options with the aim to make communications a self-financing function within three years. This means real new money from external sources eliminating costs to the council and therefore our residents. For example, we will explore opportunities for Tower Design, our in-house design agency which runs at a small-profit, to be put on a commercial footing to fully exploit opportunities and become a significant profit centre for the council. In addition, we will review Council wide spend on a range of publicity functions, including advertising and poster sites, to ensure a co-ordinated approach which supports our strategic objectives and priorities.

The Panacea system outlined above will also enable the council to interrogate prices from all suppliers in real-time for any given print job specification, to support continuous benchmarking of prices, stimulate competitive pricing and produce best value.

Budget information for 2014/15 is included at Appendix b). Costs and income will be reviewed to inform the strategic approach for the service for 2015/16 and beyond.

7. Promoting Cohesion and equality: We will explore ways of hearing from the local community and our staff to ensure our work actively promotes equality and diversity issues and builds community cohesion and engagement.

- 8. Accountability and performance: Current performance of the Communications function is measured against basic media monitoring data on a quarterly basis. The work of the team will be evaluated on a monthly basis with new key deliverables developed and reported on in a regular performance report. We will partner and benchmark with the best across the UK and internationally setting the standard for local government communications
- **9. Supporting Managers:** We will provide communications learning and development for managersto cover compliance with the Communications Protocol, and developing skills in areas such as presentation, broadcastand social media.
- 10. **Mayor's Media Advisors:** The Mayor appoints two media advisors on a flexible basis to advise him and the Cabinet on local community media including BME and Bangladeshi media and to work with him to raise the national profile and awareness of Tower Hamlets and highlight the borough's investment and development potential. The need for these advisors reflects the disproportionate national media interest in the Mayor in his role as Mayor as opposed to in the Council more generally. This support has been competitively tendered to ensure value for money. The appointees will as part of their induction, be fully briefed by the Interim Deputy Service Head for Communications in relation to the Council's Communications Protocol and their responsibilities. Safeguards are being developed to ensure that the appointees abide by the Protocol and that the work they undertake is formally recorded and signed off at Service Head or Corporate Director level within the Council to ensure that it represents legitimate local authority expenditure. Contract management of the Mayors' advisors will be the subject of audit by the Section 151 Officer and reported to the Audit Committee.

<mark>Appendix A</mark>

Planned Communications Activity

Communications activity is driven by the council's priorities, as outlined in the Community Plan. The Communications Team works closely with Corporate Directors and their Directorate Management Teams (DMTs) to develop communications planning documents which are collated and maintained by the Communications Service. These are updated regularly and reported to DMTs. They are also reported to the Mayor on a fortnightly basis as part of the Mayor's Briefing.

All communications activity is based upon the principles of openness and transparency and in line with the Communications Protocol and the Recommended Code of Practice for Local Authority Publicity.

The Communications Service follows a 'twin track' approach to communications planning in order to be responsive to external demand and service need, and in recognition of the fast moving news agenda. Our planning documents are designed to be flexible and are updated on a regular basis.

The full Communications planning document reflects the scale of the work the service undertakes. The current document (with details of work from February 2015 to January 2016) contains over 200 projects and work streams spanning all council directorates. This plan shows how work is linked to Community Plan themes and identifies lead officers within Communications and the relevant service. It outlines planned activity across all communications channels (including campaigns, marketing, consultation, social media and internal communications) and will continue to grow as the year goes on. A summary of the key upcoming campaigns is set out in this appendix.

Regular annual communications activity

There are regular communications activities that take place each year. These promote the excellent services provided by the council, detail how residents can access services, provide useful information and advice or celebrate achievements. They span all directorates and include (but are not limited to):

Education, Social Care and Wellbeing

- Regular Public Health campaigns, including National No Smoking Day, Dry January, New Year, New You, Cancer Screening promotions calls to action, information and advice.
- GCSE and A Level results coverage and school admissions figures.
- Mayor's Education Award (and MEA Ceremony) celebrations of achievement and promotion of award to young people.
- Holiday events/positive activities for Young People

Development and Renewal

- Updates on numbers of people helped into employment/apprentices and advice about how to access related council/partner services.
- Milestones for key developments including Blackwall Reach, Watts Grove.
- Mayor's Business Forum and work to support inward investment, plus partnership working with key organisations including Canary Wharf.

Communities, Localities and Culture

- Regular recycling and Clean/Green messages including 'calls to action'.
- Community Safety Walkabouts and related reassurance messages

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- Work of the THEOs
- Season of Bangla Drama and wider cultural offer.

Law, Probity and Governance

- Annual Update of the Register of Electors (and in election years detailed communications work around elections)
- Holocaust Memorial Day, Remembrance Sunday events
- LGBT History Month
- Leading on consultation and resident engagement

Resources

- Annual budget consultation including promotion of budget roadshows
- Regular updates on anti-fraud work.

Key campaigns and activities for 2015/16

As at February 2015, several projects/campaigns have been identified as priorities for the Communications Service for the year ahead.

Event/activity	Key messages/aims	Timeframe
Digital inclusion campaign	Becoming an 'online borough': enabling residents to access the benefits of being online.	Ongoing (continues from 2014/15)
Whitechapel Vision	Ongoing work on award-winning regeneration plans for Whitechapel with related information about new homes, facilities and jobs. To include interactive hoardings, promotion of new Civic Hub and event with Microsoft.	Ongoing April May
Care Act	Clarity about the changes in the way services are provided and what it means for local people. Related information, advice and signposts to support.	From March
Community Plan consultation	Encouraging residents' views in the development of the new Community plan	From March
Foster care campaign	Large scale marketing campaign to increase number of foster carers (link to National Fostering Fortnight)	April
Parliamentary	Maximising voter registration,	May 7

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Election	outlining process, being clear on anti-fraud messages, details of candidates, how to vote and clear messages around results. To include social media plan with partners including Police.	
Budget consultation	Longer term budget consideration in light of financial challenges for local government, including interactive budget planning tool.	From May
Blackwall Reach	Messages around new affordable homes to include promotion of topping out ceremony in May, and subsequent consultation on Phase 2 of the development. Additional promotion around opening of community centre.	May
BME Adoption Campaign	Large scale marketing campaign to increase number of BME families adopting.	March
School openings	Positive messages around school openings (Woolmore Primary School) and expansions (Stebon Primary) with related information about improved school places and facilities for local people.	From Spring onwards
Shop Local	Extension of the 'Small Business Saturday' campaign to promote local business and encourage inward investment	October – December 2016

Appendix b Budget overview

The proposed communications budget for 2015-16 is set out below.

Expenditure

	64 000 659 00		
Employees Total (salaries/fees)	£1,230,658.00		
Transport-Related Expenditure Total	£2,000.00		
Supplies & Services Total	£515,224.00		
Third Party Payments Total	£350,212.00		
Support Services Total	£456,334.00		
Expenditure Total	£2,554,428.00		
Income			
Transfer / Recharges	£1,3205,428.00		
EEL Income from external sales	£611,000.00		
EEL Income from internal charging	£618.000.00		
Income Total	£2,553,212		

THE CURRENT POSITION

The annual communications budget is based on the previous year's real income / expenditure figures adjusted to account for, for example, savings from the Council's efficiency programme. The trend over the past five years has seen a real-terms reduction in the budget of 3-5%.

Communications spend currently falls in four main areas:

- **Corporate communications** delivered by the media, internal communications and digital teams. Associated costs are almost entirely for staffing and equipment in this area
- Directorate communications. Publicity budgets are currently held and segmented across individual council departments and services and principally spent on publicity activity such as print, design, marketing and advertising services. In general, the communications department are commissioned to deliver this work. This work is largely funded from services' own budgets. Initial analysis indicates that spend on design, print and publicity not delivered via East End Life or commissioned through the Communications service represented £5-700K in 2014/15.
- **East End Life** (EEL) represents a significant proportion of this budget and is planned on a cost-neutral basis. That is, the print, production, distribution and other costs of £1.2 million are matched by income from external advertising sales and internal charges for statutory notices

and departmental publicity. **Statutory notices** are projected to yield **£228,000** representing **37%** of internal income or **19%** of total income generated by EEL

• **Mayor's media advisors:** The Mayor also commissions advisory support to advise him and the Cabinet on local community media including BMT and Bangladeshi media and to work with him to raise the national profile and awareness of Tower Hamlets and highlight the borough's investment and development programme. This includes training and supporting the Mayor and Cabinet Members in their roles as media spokespeople. This has been put out to tender to maximise value for money. It is envisaged that the cost for this support in 2015/16 will be £130K.

Budget review

A critical appraisal of all communications functions, resources and activities is proposed during the early part of 2015/16 as outlined in the best value plan. Improvements already planned include:

- Reviewing potential savings from increasing the digital focus of Council communications, including as alternative options for East End Life.
- Best value and cost-effective procurement driven through the council's new **print and design framework**, to be launched and embedded from April 2015. This will enable the council to strategically oversee all of its external print and design-related activity, including the estimated £5-700K currently being delivered outwith the corporate framework, and to ensure that all printed publicity and design is channelled through the Council's Communications team to ensure the output complies with procurement processes and the council's branding and communications protocols.
- All Directorate projects supported by a clear communications brief to ensure that any planned expenditure is fit for purpose in meeting the aims and objectives of the council and can be combined with other publicity projects where appropriate to reduce unnecessary print spend.
- Planning a steady reduction in the council's contribution towards its publicity and community engagement activities through the growing new and existing revenue streams from external sources.

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