

Meeting of the

# CABINET

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Wednesday, 24 November 2021 at 5.30 p.m.

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## PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY QUESTIONS AND OFFICER RESPONSES

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	<b>PAGE NUMBER</b>
<b>5. OVERVIEW &amp; SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	
<b>5.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions</b>	
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) to report on any issues raised by the OSC in relation to unrestricted business to be considered.	<b>3 - 12</b>

If you require any further information relating to this meeting, would like to request a large print, Braille or audio version of this document, or would like to discuss access arrangements or any other special requirements, please contact:

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## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PDSQS 22.11.2021

Questions	Response
<b>Item 6.1 Tower Hamlets Digital Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan</b>	
<p>1. What happened to the plan to have extra trained staff in Ideas Stores using hubs etc to help people access Council services?</p>	<p>Idea Store frontline staff are trained to assist customers who use Digital Hubs in Idea Stores to access online Council services. In most cases customers just need minimal assistance and the transaction is completed within a few minutes. When staff interact with customers in the Digital Hub they take the opportunity to make them aware that the same online services can also be accessed through people’s own smart devices, the advantage being that the transaction can be done 24/7 and from the comfort of one’s home, but if residents say they prefer to come to an Idea Store, staff reassure them that they are still very welcome to do so.</p> <p>Occasionally customers using the Digital Hubs have very limited or no IT skills, which means they need additional support - in this case they are referred to a telephone line, where a Customer Service Advisor will help them with their query. In most cases the transaction is completed over the telephone, but on the rare occasions when this is not possible, the customer is offered a face-to-face appointment with a Customer Service Advisor at their nearest Idea Store, where a specially trained member of staff will attend to assist or carry out the transaction on behalf of the customer.</p> <p>“There are 3 types of visits to the Digital Hubs at the Idea Stores.</p> <p>(1) General visits: Customers sometimes walk in and ask general question (e.g. how I register to vote or how can I apply for a permit). Idea Store colleagues give general advice based on our website. For</p>

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those kind of visits, no appointments necessary.

(2) Visits to use one of the Digital Hub computers: Customers need to book the PCs and that can be done on the spot, subject to availability.

(3) Customers who are unable to use a computer at all: We have been able to support most customers remotely. We do see customers at the Idea Stores where necessary (e.g. where someone is unable to fill a paper form or needs documents to be copied). This is on an appointment basis. So, we receive the referral, assess, and then make appointments where necessary.

(4) There are also 2 web links that can be followed to submit a referral to request support:

Tower Hamlets Website: [Digital Hubs \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](https://towerhamlets.gov.uk)

Idea Store Website: [Idea Store - Save Time Go Online](#) “

Idea Stores and Idea Stores learning work collaboratively with the Work Path teams to ensure receive information and support with regards to accessing learning to help with digital skill also.

2. Noting the census results - do we have any data on wider families access to the Internet? For example how many households without internet access have family members in the area who do it for them - therefore overstating those without internet access?

The census did not collect data on the use of family members or proxies to access the internet, nor does the Tower Hamlets Annual Residents' Survey. Without commissioning specific research, it is difficult to get detailed data on digital exclusion at a very local level.

Ofcom undertake a UK-wide annual Adults' Media Use and Attitudes report. The results of their most recent research, undertaken in autumn 2020 and winter 2020/21, reports the emergence of 'proxy internet' users. They state 6% of household, around 1.5m homes, remain offline.

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	<p>Of those not using the internet at home, 60% have asked someone to do something for them online in the past year. The most common request was help in buying something (57%).</p>															
<b>Item 6.2 Liveable Streets Brick Lane review outcome report</b>																
<p>1. Where is the air quality analysis of the scheme?</p>	<p>There are no air quality sensors on Brick Lane. No air quality analysis was undertaken for this scheme.</p>															
<p>2. How many FPN were issued via the ANPR cameras, can we have some analysis of what type of vehicles drove through, where registered, how much income was raised?</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 5</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Camera location</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Total PCNs issued</th> <th style="text-align: center;">income</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Brick Lane (Hanbury to Quaker)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">43</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£1300.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Brick Lane(Quaker to Bethnal Gn Rd)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">12</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£585.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Brick Lane(Wentworth to Hanbury)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">929</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£34,775.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grand Total</td> <td style="text-align: center;">984</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£36,660.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The above figures are based on PCN's issued before the 1 October, which was the date that the Mayor announced the restrictions would be lifted from.</p> <p>Unfortunately, we are unable to give an analysis of vehicle types and where they are registered, as this would require a large amount of officer time having to review each individual PCN information.</p> <p>Currently there is 406 outstanding tickets that are going through the statutory process. There have been 64 cancelled upon appeal and 73 whereby there are not keeper details registered with DVLA, therefore these will not progress any further.</p>	Camera location	Total PCNs issued	income	Brick Lane (Hanbury to Quaker)	43	£1300.00	Brick Lane(Quaker to Bethnal Gn Rd)	12	£585.00	Brick Lane(Wentworth to Hanbury)	929	£34,775.00	Grand Total	984	£36,660.00
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<p>3. Where is the vehicle count data on the affected roads and surrounding roads during and outside of the road closures?</p>	<p>Data for traffic counts for roads on or surrounding Brick Lane is available on request from the Liveable Streets team. Please email</p>															

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	<p><a href="mailto:Liveablestreets@towerhamlets.gov.uk">Liveablestreets@towerhamlets.gov.uk</a> to request this data.</p>
<p>4. At what time of day were the onsite surveys done on Saturday 9th October and Friday 15th October - did the surveyors ask people whether they lived locally or were visitors?</p>	<p>They were held between 12:30pm and 3:30pm. They were asked a stakeholder type question to determine if they lived or worked in Brick Lane. 38 respondents were residents and 43 were visitors.</p>
<p><b>Item 6.3 Strategic delivery and performance reporting – Q2 2021/22</b></p>	
<p>1. 47 percentage of annual infrastructure target expenditure achieved - what would these results be without the Town Hall as building a replacement town hall would not be considered by many residents as infrastructure?</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 6</p>	<p>General fund total budget at the start of the year was £199.0m, of which £51.7m was allocated to the new Town Hall (NTH).</p> <p>GF spend to end of Q2 was £40.9m, of which £20.8m was on the NTH.</p> <p>Against a budget of £147.3m (excluding NTH), the £20.1m spend (excluding NTH) represents 13.6%</p>
<p>2. 73 Percentage of top 5 % of earners from black and minority ethnic communities - what % of staff earning more than £60k per annum are BAME?</p>	<p>% of staff paid over £60k that are BAME (Sept 2021)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30.7 percent of staff earning £60k+ are BAME</li> <li>• FTE: just under 49 full time equivalent staff.</li> </ul> <p>For comparison</p> <p>Top 5% of staff that are BAME (Sept 2021)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 48.8 percent of staff in the top 5% of earners are BAME</li> <li>• FTE: 70 full time equivalent staff.</li> <li>• Top 5% salary: ca. £55k. Top 5% can vary slightly over the course of the year and from year to year.</li> </ul> <p>Note - the percentage figure uses a denominator of all BAME and non-BAME employees and excludes those where records are missing, or an employee has declined to state their ethnicity (215 missing records out</p>

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	of 4,748). (same methodology as Q1 response).
<p><b>Outcome 3 – Measure No 16:</b></p> <p>People who are more independent after being supported through reablement services.</p> <p>The service seems to have been effected by covid-19 and therefore what measures have been put in place to clear the backlog of cases?</p>	<p>During the peaks of the pandemic, we were unable to offer a full reablement service of up to 6 weeks however the service is now back to providing this.</p> <p>Some staff shortages were experienced during the pandemic which resulted in some contingency responses, including utilising commissioned care providers if necessary. Reablement Services only have a very small waiting list at this time, with the longest wait being 2 weeks. This is a significant improvement in position and enables us to ensure we meet the needs of residents, promoting prevention and independence.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 3 – Measure 22</b></p> <p>Number of people who are signposted to find appropriate advice and support in the wider community that helps them to maintain their independence</p> <p>When do we expect the data for the above measurement to be available?</p>	<p>The new Tower Connect service started in late July and performance data for this indicator will be available from Quarter 3 which is the first complete quarter during which the service has been fully operational.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 4 – Measure 25</b></p> <p>Residents’ self-reported level of health for groups experiencing health inequalities - BAME residents</p> <p>The measurement has been affected by the lack of normal annual residents' surveys, however, considering how important this indicator is, could any further details regarding the results of the mid-pandemic residents' survey or comments around the outcome be shared with the report?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Of 1,108 residents, 825 or 74% of respondents indicated they have 'good' health</li> <li>- Of 523 BAME residents, 399 or 76% of respondents indicated they have 'good' health</li> <li>- Of 566 White residents, 416 or 76% of respondents indicated they have 'good' health</li> </ul> <p>Confidence intervals for full survey response (1,108) and BAME only (523) are included below</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full survey All responders   1,108   CI = +/-2.6%   result between</li> </ul>

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	<p>71.4% and 76.6%   mid-level = 74%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White only   566   CI = +/- 3.7%   result between 72.3% and 79.7%   mid-level = 76%</li> <li>• BAME only   523   CI = +/- 3.7%   result between 69.3% and 79.6%   mid-level = 76%</li> </ul>
<p><b>Item 6.4 Additions to the Approved Capital Programme 2021-22 to 2023-24</b></p>	
<p>1. What is the Flat Recycling Package?</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 8</p>	<p>This project is intended to improve resident access to sufficient, appropriate and standardised recycling and waste infrastructure in existing purpose-built flats across the borough, through joint working with landlords and managing agents. It includes the following intervention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appropriate recycling and refuse capacity. Extra bins or collections were needed.</li> <li>• appropriate apertures on recycling bins big enough to accept plastic bags of recycling and with locked reverse lids</li> <li>• ensuring clear and visible signage on and above all bins</li> <li>• convenient location of recycling bins for residents and clean and well-maintained bins and bin areas</li> <li>• annual recycling leaflet</li> <li>• posters highlighting recycling messages displayed in a central location (where possible)</li> <li>• residents informed of what they should do with bulky waste items (via signage)</li> </ul> <p>The benefits of this project are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase in recycling quantity and quality</li> </ol>

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Better partnership working and better facilities</li> <li>3. Improved service and resident experience with a similar standard provided for all reducing inequality</li> <li>4. Reduction in carbon emissions which will contribute to tackling the climate emergency. By managing waste further up the waste hierarchy e.g., sending packaging for recycling rather than to incineration, greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced</li> <li>5. Improvements to the quality of recycling collected through a decrease in contamination</li> <li>6. Helping to build the green economy and make waste a resource</li> </ol> <p>Improved neighbourhood cleanliness with better managed waste and less fly-tipping to the benefit of the entire community</p>
<p>2. Regarding the statement on page 176 'Whilst the market should level out in time, in the medium to long term, the cost of capital projects are expected to increase over the period of the next three-year capital programme' how has the risk of the market levelling out been assessed and can this be shared as part of the report to Cabinet?</p>	<p>This statement is based on market intelligence and is expected to be beyond the capital programme period.</p>
<p><b>Item 6.5 Budget monitoring report 2021-22 as at 30th September 2021 (period 6)</b></p>	
<p>1. Income Position total return on the entire portfolio was 1.70%. Given that CPI-H is now 3.8% as at October what is the estimated loss in our reserves this year?</p>	<p>1.70% was the return on the investment portfolio and one key factor influencing the rate of return is the prevalent interest rate in the economy. The Bank of England interest rate remains unchanged, despite the level of inflation having increased. If market expectations view that high inflation is to persist in the economy, the Bank of England may raise interest rates as some point in future, and rates of return across investments would likely rise as a result. Any shortfall in investment returns would form a budgetary pressure that feeds into the</p>

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	<p>overall council's budget monitoring position.</p> <p>In-year impacts and movements in revenue reserves are forecasted within Section 5 of the Period 6 Budget Monitoring Report where no additional loss is anticipated as a result of the inflationary increase.</p>
<p><b>Item 6.7 Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Plan – Validation of Submission</b></p>	
<p>1. How will the council ensure any campaign by those for and against the Roman Road Neighbourhood Plan is factually accurate?</p>	<p>Under Regulation 5 of the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012, the Council is able to publish press notices during the referendum where the sole notice of the publication is to refute or correct any inaccuracy in material published by another person. However, this needs to be in response to a direct factual error in a statement and cannot be used to dispute different interpretations of the impact of a neighbourhood plan. Beyond this, the conduct of election campaigns is regulated by law, and violation of the election rules would be a matter for the police</p>
<p><b>Item 6.9 Planning for School Places 2021/22 Review and Recommendations</b></p>	
<p>1. Given that the closing date for applications for the operator for the new Wood Wharf primary school was on the 24 May 2021 and that it opens in just over 9 months' time why has there been no update on the process either to the public or to the relevant scrutiny committee given that this will be the first new school to be opened by LBTH in over a decade and the first using the free school process?</p>	<p>Following the closing date for applications in May, the council concluded its competition for the appointment of the new school provider in September. It then provided its assessment and scoring of each application to the Secretary of State, who is still in the process of making the final decision. The Secretary of State's decision is expected to be received by the end of November, following which we will publicise the decision through the council website.</p> <p>The process for the appointment of the new school provider is a matter for the consideration and decision-making powers of the Secretary of State. It is therefore not subject to local scrutiny procedures.</p>
<p>2. Why is no budget nor mention in Appendix 5 of the Westferry Printworks secondary school site?</p>	<p>The main cabinet reports states that the council has now transferred its interest in Westferry Printworks to the Department for Education (DfE), who will develop the site to provide permanent accommodation for</p>

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	<p>Canary Wharf College 3 Secondary School. The DfE will therefore meet the full cost for the project, which is estimated to be £50m. Appendix 5 sets out the developments costs for school capital projects that are to be delivered by the council.</p>
<p>3. Will the Council or the Department of Education now compulsory purchase the Westferry Printworks site given that the planning permission is over 5 years old and that it looks unlikely that Richard Desmond will sign the lease?</p>	<p>The DfE has identified Westferry Printworks as the site to provide permanent accommodation for Canary Wharf College Free School. Securing permanent accommodation for an open free school is the responsibility of the DfE. The council therefore looks forward to receiving an update from the DfE in respect of its plans for the Westferry Printworks site.</p>

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