

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

RECORD OF THE DECISIONS OF THE CABINET

HELD AT 5.32 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 29 JULY 2020

ONLINE 'VIRTUAL' MEETING - [HTTPS://TOWERHAMLETS.PUBLIC-I.TV/CORE/PORTAL/HOME](https://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home)

Members Present:

Mayor John Biggs	
Councillor Sirajul Islam	(Statutory Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing)
Councillor Rachel Blake	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing)
Councillor Asma Begum	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Youth and Equalities)
Councillor Sabina Akhtar	(Cabinet Member for Culture, Arts and Brexit)
Councillor Danny Hassell	(Cabinet Member for Children and Schools)
Councillor Candida Ronald	(Cabinet Member for Resources and the Voluntary Sector)
Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman	(Cabinet Member for Work and Economic Growth)
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	Cabinet Member for Planning and Social Inclusion (Job Share) - Lead on Social Inclusion
Councillor Asma Islam	Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Realm (Job Share) - Lead on Environment
Councillor Eve McQuillan	Cabinet Member for Planning and Social Inclusion (Job Share) - Lead on Planning
Councillor Dan Tomlinson	Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Realm (Job Share) - Lead on Public Realm

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Peter Golds	(Leader of the Conservative Group)
Councillor Denise Jones	Older People's Champion
Councillor James King	

Others Present:

Susmita Sen	Chief Executive, Tower Hamlets Homes
Neil Wilson-Prior	Interim Capital Delivery Manager
Neil Isaac	Interim Director of Finance, Tower Hamlets Homes
William Manning	Director, Tower Hamlets Homes

Officers Present:

Magdalene Bannis-Roy	Youth Services Strategic Transformation Development Lead
Stephen Bramah	(Deputy Head of the Mayor's office)

Terry Bryan	(Head of Pupil Services and School Sufficiency)
Ann Corbett	(Divisional Director, Community Safety)
David Courcoux	(Head of the Mayor's Office)
Lucy Fordham	Senior Communications Officer
Jonathan Fox	Legal Services
Sharon Godman	(Divisional Director, Strategy, Policy and Performance)
Afazul Hoque	(Head of Corporate Strategy & Policy)
Asmat Hussain	(Corporate Director, Governance and Monitoring Officer)
Ronke Martins-Taylor	(Divisional Director, Youth & Commissioning)
Christine McInnes	(Divisional Director, Education and Partnership, Children's)
Neville Murton	(Corporate Director, Resources)
Denise Radley	(Corporate Director, Health, Adults & Community)
Rachael Sadegh	(Service Manager Substance Misuse, Community Safety)
Judith St John	(Divisional Director, Sports, Leisure and Culture)
Joanne Starkie	(Head of Strategy and Policy - Health Adults and Communities)
Ann Sutcliffe	(Corporate Director, Place)
Karen Swift	Divisional Director, Housing
Will Tuckley	(Chief Executive)
Keith Williams	(Head of Health Borough Programme)
Matthew Mannion	(Head of Democratic Services, Governance)
David Knight	(Senior Democratic Services Officer)
Farhana Zia	Senior Committee Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of James Thomas (Corporate Director, Children and Culture) for whom Christine McInnes (Divisional Director, Education and Partnership) was deputising.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

Councillors Sabina Akhtar and Asma Islam declared 'Other Interests' in Agenda Item 12.1 as they had been appointed to the Board of Tower Hamlets Homes. Councillor Sirajul Islam declared an 'Other Interest' in the same item as a leaseholder. All members took part in the discussion on that item.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

DECISION

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 24 June 2020 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE MAYOR

See the minutes.

5. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**5.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions**

Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were tabled in respect of the following agenda items:

- 6.1 Understanding the impact of COVID-19 in Tower Hamlets
- 6.3 Medium Term Financial Strategy Refresh & 2021-22 Budget Planning
- 6.4 Financial Outturn for 2019/20
- 6.5 Budget Monitor as at Period 2 for 2020/21
- 6.6 Oaklands School – Use of Raines School Lower Site
- 6.7 Safe and viable re-opening of leisure centres
- 6.8 Update on Youth Service Delivery Model
- 6.9 Contingency Fund – additional COVID-19 support for the voluntary and Community Sector
- 6.11 CCTV Modernisation

These were considered during the discussions on the relevant items.

5.2 Any Unrestricted Decisions "Called in" by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Nil items.

6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**6.1 Understanding the impact of Covid-19 in Tower Hamlets**

The Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were noted.

DECISION

1. To note the report.

Action by:

CORPORATE DIRECTOR, HEALTH, ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES (D. RADLEY)

(Head of Strategy and Policy – Health, Adults and Communities (J. Starkie)

Reasons for the decision

To provide evidence and insight in order to inform strategic planning. The report is part of the council's approach to recovery and reconstitution.

Alternative options

This is a noting report.

6.2 Renewed Strategic Plan

The recommendations were amended and then approved.

DECISION

1. That the refreshed Strategic Plan 2020-23 be approved in draft form and agree that further changes to create the final document must be made following consultation with the Mayor.

Reasons for the decision

The 2020-23 Strategic Plan was agreed by the Mayor on 25 March 2020, after the UK was placed in lockdown by the government in response to the coronavirus pandemic. This report follows previous reports to Cabinet setting out the Council's response to the pandemic and our approach to recovery. The pandemic has meant the Council had to reprioritise and reshape quickly and do whatever it takes to respond to the needs of our local residents and stakeholders.

It has been refreshed in light of the far-reaching impact of the pandemic, as identified in the 'Understanding the Impact of COVID-19 in Tower Hamlets' report. It also considers the financial impact on the council both from loss of income and expenditure to support our local response to the pandemic. It considers feedback from local people through the COVID-19 resident survey ensuring their priorities are reflected in the plan.

Alternative options

The Strategic Plan could remain as agreed in March 2020. This means the council's planned activities would not be reflective of the impact of the COVID-19 (both pandemic and subsequent lockdown in response) on Tower Hamlets residents and communities, or the necessary recovery efforts in place, and planned.

The Mayor and Cabinet may choose to further amend the Strategic Plan. If the Plan is amended, regard would need to be given to the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, as well as any impact arising from the changes.

6.3 Medium Term Financial Strategy Refresh & 2021-22 Budget Planning

The Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were noted.

DECISION

1. To note the updated draft budget position for 2021-22 to 2023-24, and specifically that a further gap has arisen in 2021-22 since this was last reported to Cabinet.
2. To note the need to set a balanced budget over the whole of the MTFS period and that prompt and decisive action is required

urgently to address the challenging financial position outlined in the report as highlighted by the now increased budget gaps.

3. To Note the issues and actions set out in this report that are informing the development of the MTFS for 2021-24 which will include the following recommendations: -
4. To remove the previously agreed growth item in the MTFS relating to Early Help, in the sum of £0.475m (see paragraph 3.72); and
5. To approve the revised policy for management of the New Homes Bonus specific grant so that it fully supplements the revenue budget going forward.
6. To note the indicative timeline of formal budget consultation with residents, businesses and other key stakeholders and to receive feedback on the consultation at Cabinet in December.

Action by:

CORPORATE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES (N. MURTON)

(Interim Divisional Director, Finance, Procurement and Audit (K. Bartle))

Reasons for the decision

The country, indeed the world, has experienced a period of massive turbulence; in response to the pandemic the UK government has borrowed heavily, increasing the national debt to never before seen levels in order to fund the nationwide response to the pandemic and to protect the economy in preparation for the time when the virus subsides. Alongside our key partners, Local Authorities have been at the forefront of responding to the needs of local residents, taking on new responsibilities as well as continuing to deliver a range of existing services in a situation of heightened demand. The cumulative impact of those matters requires a change in approach from that set out and agreed in February when the Council approved its budget.

Tower Hamlets now finds itself in a materially changed environment from that which existed in February 2020 when the budget and medium term financial strategy were approved by the Council. The priorities set out in its strategic plan were temporarily set aside in order to respond to the crisis. However, four months further on there is a need to re-evaluate the extent to which those priorities remain relevant in the context of the continuing uncertainty associated with CV-19 and, just as importantly, the financial position that the council now finds itself in.

The Council is under a duty to set a balanced and sustainable budget and maintain adequate reserves such that it can deliver its statutory responsibilities and priorities. A Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) covering the entirety of the resources available to the Council is considered to be the best way that resource prioritisation and allocation decisions can be considered and agreed in a way that provides a stable and considered approach to service delivery and takes into account relevant risks and uncertainty. The need to respond immediately to the pandemic and the impact

that this has had on the Council's finances means that a re-evaluation of the current year's financial position is the starting point for any changes.

The financial issues raised within this report and the complementary reports considering the Council's response to the pandemic and its impact, need to be considered together in order to reach a balanced and strategic view of the Council's future direction.

Alternative options

Whilst the Council will adopt a number of approaches to the identification of measures aimed at delivering its MTFs it must set a legal and balanced budget and maintain adequate reserves. The scale of the changes experienced mitigate against continuing on the basis agreed in February without a re-appraisal of both the financial and policy position.

6.4 Financial Outturn for 2019-20

The Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were noted.

DECISION

1. To note the Council's provisional outturn position against General Fund, Dedicated Schools Budget, Housing Revenue Account and the Capital Programme for 2019-20, based on information as at early June 2020.
2. After taking consideration of the reduced level of General Fund reserves as presented, to approve the drawdown of £11.7m from the New Home Bonus reserve into GF reserves, in order to maintain balances at £20m.
3. To note that there are no equalities implications directly resulting from this report, as set out in Section 4 of the report.

Action by:

CORPORATE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES (N. MURTON)

(Chief Accountant (T. Harlock))

Reasons for the decision

Council policy is to maintain General Fund reserves at a minimum level of £20m.

Alternative options

The regular reporting of Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring information through the year and the preparation of the provisional outturn position after the year end provides detailed financial information to Members, senior officers and other interested parties on the financial performance of the Council. It sets out the key variances being reported by budget holders and the management action being implemented to address the identified issues.

Further information across the Council's key financial activities is also included to ensure that CLT and Members have a full picture to inform their consideration of any financial decisions set out in this report and also their broader understanding of the Council's financial context when considering reports at the various Council Committees.

Set alongside relevant performance information it also informs decision making to ensure that Members' priorities are delivered within the agreed budget provision.

It is important that issues are addressed to remain within the approved budget provision or where they cannot be contained by individual service management action, alternative proposals are developed and solutions proposed which address the financial impact; CLT and Members have a key role in approving such actions as they represent changes to the budget originally set and approved by them.

6.5 Budget Monitor as at Period 2 for 2020/21

The Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were noted.

DECISION

1. To note the Council's projected outturn position against General Fund, Dedicated Schools Budget, Housing Revenue Account and earmarked reserves for 2020-21, based on information as at 31st May 2020.
2. To note that there are no equalities implications directly resulting from this report, as set out in Section 4 of the report.

Action by:

CORPORATE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES (N. MURTON)

(Chief Accountant (T. Harlock))

Reasons for the decision

The Council could choose to monitor its budgetary performance against an alternative time frame but it is considered that the reporting schedule provides the appropriate balance to allow strategic oversight of the budget by Members and to manage the Council's exposure to financial risk. More frequent monitoring is undertaken by officers and considered by individual service directors and the Council's Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) including approval of management action.

To the extent that there are options for managing the issues identified these are highlighted in the report in order to ensure that Members have a full picture of the issues and proposed solutions as part of their decision making.

Alternative options

The regular reporting of Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring information through the year and the preparation of the provisional outturn position after

the year end provides detailed financial information to Members, senior officers and other interested parties on the financial performance of the Council. It sets out the key variances being reported by budget holders and the management action being implemented to address the identified issues.

Further information across the Council's key financial activities is also included to ensure that CLT and Members have a full picture to inform their consideration of any financial decisions set out in this report and also their broader understanding of the Council's financial context when considering reports at the various Council Committees.

Set alongside relevant performance information it also informs decision making to ensure that Members' priorities are delivered within the agreed budget provision.

It is important that issues are addressed to remain within the approved budget provision or where they cannot be contained by individual service management action, alternative proposals are developed and solutions proposed which address the financial impact; CLT and Members have a key role in approving such actions as they represent changes to the budget originally set and approved by them.

6.6 Oaklands School – Use of Raines School Lower Site

The Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were noted.

DECISION

1. To authorise the Corporate Director of Place to undertake negotiations with the London Diocesan Board for Schools and/or Raine's Foundation Trust for a licence agreement (see Exempt Appendix 3) followed by a lease (see Exempt Appendix 4) for the Lower Site in Old Bethnal Green Road, E2. It is intended the license will commence on 1st September 2020 for four months for a peppercorn rent, to enable the expansion in school places in the Oaklands Community Secondary School and ensure the LA meets its duty to provide sufficient school places;
2. To authorise that the Corporate Director of Place to agree a rent (see Exempt Appendix 2a to the report), for the larger portion of the site (76%), for a two-year lease period with suitable break clauses, conditional on the negotiated valuation of the Lower Site that will be agreed by September 2020. If the purchase concludes sooner with the authorised owner of the Lower Site;
3. To authorise the Corporate Director of Place to undertake negotiations with the London Diocesan Board for Schools and/or Raine's Foundation Trust for the purchase of the Raine's Foundation School Lower Site in Old Bethnal Green Road, E2 based on a joint valuation between LBTH and the Diocesan Board (see Exempt Appendix 2 b to the report); and

4. To authorise the Corporate Director of Place to undertake negotiations with the Raines Foundation Trust to agree a lease for their part of the Lower Site for a two-year period and also to agree a suitable purchase price.

Action by:**CORPORATE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN AND CULTURE (J. THOMAS)****CORPORATE DIRECTOR, PLACE (A. SUTCLIFFE)**

(Divisional Director, Education and Partnership (C. McInnes)

(Divisional Director, Property and Major Programmes (M. Rourke)

Reasons for the decision

With the gradual increase in applications to secondary schools in Tower Hamlets, Cabinet agreed at its meeting in February to increase the PAN of Oaklands Community Secondary School ('Oaklands') from 120 to 180 for the start of the 2020/21 school year as part of a wider plan to ensure there are sufficient secondary school places to meet demand. The school is rated as Good and is a popular school.

The current accommodation at Oaklands does not have capacity to take the additional 60 pupils per year group and a separate site is required. With the closure of the Raine's Foundation School on the 31st August, the Lower Site would provide the additional accommodation required as is very close to Oaklands.

The Lower Site was recently refurbished for use by Raine's 6th form, it is proposed that the site is used for Oaklands' pupils in Years 11, 12 and 13.

Alternative options

The capacity of the existing Oaklands site provides for just over 4 forms of entry. The site is very compact, and it is not possible to increase its capacity to the model size of 6 forms of entry. The school has very limited external recreation space, which already includes the use of roof space, and even so is below that set out in the government's guidance (Building Bulletin 103) on school recreation play space. During the academic year 2019-20, the school has managed overcrowding of existing pupils by making use of the school hall as a base for the sixth form.

Three options were considered for the expansion and two were not deemed suitable. There are currently no other suitable buildings or sites nearby, other than the Raine's Lower Site which can provide for the additional 420 secondary school places needed.

The use of the Professional Development Centre ('PDC') was considered, but the school would not initially have exclusive use and this could create Safeguarding risks. The PDC would need significant capital investment to be usable as a secondary school building, for example to install science laboratories and sports facilities. There is also very limited outdoor space. It is not possible to make adaptations by September 2020 and uncertainty about the future use of the PDC building is also a risk.

The potential for using other existing sites has been explored. School sites that might become available for use in the future are not likely to be available before September 2021, but would require significant capital investment to adapt them for use as a secondary school.

In contrast, the Raine's Lower Site already has already benefitted from capital investment and refurbishment so is a functional school building.

The distance of any new site from the Oaklands main site is also a key issue. It would be difficult for Oaklands leadership team to manage a site that was not within walking distance of the main site, both with regard to enabling student's use of the main school facilities and the added staffing costs. For this reason, potential sites further away from Oaklands were not considered.

Primary school sites which do become available can, when disposed of, be used as a capital contribution towards the purchase of the Raine's Lower site.

Since 60 additional year 7 pupils have been offered and accepted a place at Oaklands school for the 1st of September, provision will need to be made for these pupils by Oaklands. The Local Authority cannot lawfully withdraw the offers or disperse the pupils to other secondary schools which have vacancies. The School Admissions Code paragraph 2.12 states 'An admission authority **must not** withdraw an offer unless it has been offered in error, a parent has not responded within a reasonable period of time, or it is established that the offer was obtained through a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application.' The Local Authority, in order to meet its statutory duties, must provide temporary accommodation nearby or on site if possible.

6.7 Safe and Viable Re-opening of Leisure Centres

The Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were noted.

The recommendations were amended and then approved.

DECISION

1. To authorise the Corporate Director Resources to negotiate and agree a management fee sum of up to £181k for Poplar Baths.
2. To authorise the Corporate Director Resources to negotiate and agree the removal of the Leisure Management service element from the main Poplar Baths PPP agreement, to bring it in line with the main leisure management contract or as a continuation of the current arrangements between LBTH and Folera.
3. To approve a contract variation to the main leisure management contract to provide a management fee of up to £593k to GLL, pending further negotiation of the repayment schedule and share of surplus and following further consultation with the Mayor and Lead Member.

4. To approve the proposed pricing schedule at paragraph 3.2 of the report.
5. To approve the phased restoration of safe and viable leisure centre activities in three phases with decisions upon implementation of each phase to be determined following a review of guidance, implementation, demand and lessons learned and following consultation with the Mayor and Lead Member in advance of each phase of restoration.
6. To note that a detailed Equalities Impact Assessment has not been conducted at this stage, however, if the leisure services were to cease, or some centres not to reopen, there would be loss of service provision for protected characteristics including single sex provision, older people and disability

Action by:**CORPORATE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN AND CULTURE (J. THOMAS)**

(Divisional Director, Sports, Leisure and Culture (J. St John))

Reasons for the decision

On 20 March government announced the closure of all leisure centres as part of its strategy to mitigate COVID-19. The closure of facilities has serious financial implications for Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL), the borough's leisure operator.

Following the loss of its income stream, but with continued building and staff related costs, there is a danger that GLL, and other leisure operators in the country will go into administration without financial assistance from partner local authorities. The impact of this scenario would be devastating for the leisure industry and ultimately put the future of quality leisure centre provision nationally at risk. Due to the sub-regional and national risk associated with this outcome, the twelve local authorities in London that have GLL as its operator are working collectively in a client group to agree principles across all local authority areas to increase the likelihood of a successful outcome for leisure operator survival but also to mitigate risks for the local authorities concerned.

Alternative options

A high level options appraisal has been conducted, which has identified the following options:

- Option 1: Do nothing (not recommended)
- Option 2: Bring the leisure centres in-house (not recommended)
- Option 3: Provide GLL with a grant (not recommended)
- Option 4: Provide GLL with an interest bearing loan within the existing contract duration to end in 2022 (not recommended)
- Option 5: Provide GLL with a loan (interest to be determined) to be repaid over an extended contract period up to 2 years in duration (not recommended)

- Option 6: Execute a contract variation for a management fee of £593k to cover GLL's immediate cash-flow difficulties (recommended)

More details are set out in the report.

6.8 Update on Youth Service Delivery Model (Commissioned and In-house)

The Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were noted.

DECISION

1. To approve the proposed model for delivery of commissioned and in-house youth activity provision.
2. To approve the commissioned contract value for centre based youth activity; detached youth projects; and specialist youth provision for the period 2021-2024 (CS5678).
3. Following tender, delegate authority to the Corporate Director Children's and Culture to award contract CS5678.
4. To authorise the Divisional Director, Legal Services to execute all necessary contract documents in respect of the awards of contract CS5678.
5. To approve a up to 4-month extension to the exiting providers 1-year contract due to potential delays in engaging with stakeholders during the Covid 19 pandemic.
6. To approve the additional MTFS savings of £100,000.

Action by:

CORPORATE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN AND CULTURE (J. THOMAS)

(Divisional Director, Youth and Commissioning (R. Martins-Taylor)

(Youth Service Strategic Development Lead (M Bannis-Royer)

Reasons for the decision

At its meeting on 26th February 2020, Cabinet requested that an update report be presented on proposed changes to the Youth Service delivery model before any changes are implemented

The need to achieve Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) within the Youth Service.

Alternative options

The alternative options which were not recommended were to:

- Do nothing and retain the status quo
- Provide a service that meets the statutory requirements only

- Outsource the entire Youth Service
- Deliver all youth activity in-house

Details on each option are set out in the report.

6.9 Contingency Fund – additional Covid-19 support for the Voluntary and Community Sector

The Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were noted.

DECISION

1. To agree recommendations to replace the existing transitional element of the Contingency Fund with the Covid Community Fund.
2. To agree to reduce the maximum award of the emergency element of the contingency fund from £20,000 to £10,000.

Action by:

CHIEF EXECUTIVE (W. TUCKLEY)

(Senior Strategy and Policy Manager (E. Fieran-Reed)

(Programme Assessment and Monitoring Officer (A. Ahmed)

(Programme Analysis and Review Officer (R. Mee)

Reasons for the decision

Replacing the existing Transitional element of the contingency fund to create a Covid Community Fund is necessary to help use our resources in the best way to enable the VCS to continue to support our residents around covid and the recovery from it.

Alternative options

Keep the current funding as it is and to not provide additional VCS support in response to Covid. This would see us providing a fund which was no longer relevant to the new environment that we are now in due to the pandemic.

6.10 Metropolitan Police Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panels Action Plan

DECISION

1. To note the report of the scrutiny challenge session on Metropolitan Police Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel and agree the action plan in response to the report recommendations.

Action by:

CORPORATE DIRECTOR, HEALTH, ADULTS AND COMMUNITY (D. RADLEY)

(Divisional Director, Community Safety (A. Corbett)

(Corporate Strategy and Policy Officer (F. Miah)

Reasons for the decision

During the 2019/20 Municipal Year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's annual work programme had identified the need to examine reasons for low participation and engagement from seldom-heard residents with Met Police safer neighbourhood ward panels and how this can be improved.

The Council's annual resident survey (ARS)¹ (surveyed 1,104 residents). Findings suggest that crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) has remained for 2018 – 2019² the top personal concern for the borough's residents.

The enquiry remains consistent with the Mayoral priority and Council's strategic plan³ e.g. priority 2 – A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in; outcome 7 – People feel safer in their neighbourhoods and anti-social behaviour is tackled.

Implications of low engagement suggest that it can lead to a loss of public confidence in the police. The challenge it leaves for the police is that it will be difficult to predict changes to the community profile, needs and priorities. Additionally, there will be increased vulnerabilities around threat, risk and harm, services becoming less responsive and unrealistic public expectations.

Ward panel engagement influences the design and delivery of services from the outset. This supports the police to deliver and meet the priorities set by the ward panel. Ward panel engagement should be considered as a core element of local community policing activity. Effective engagement can also operate as an enabler for fostering social responsibility.

This report seeks the endorsement of the Mayor in Cabinet for the Metropolitan Police safer neighbourhood ward panels challenge session recommendations and its related action plan. Through the implementation of the action plan many of the issues identified in the challenge session will be targeted and improved.

Alternative options

To take no action. This is not recommended as the scrutiny challenge session provides an evidence base for improving seldom-heard resident engagement with Met Police safer neighbourhood ward panels.

To agree to recommendations highlighted. All recommendations are achievable within existing resources as outlined in the action plan.

6.11 CCTV Modernisation

The Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions and officer responses were noted.

DECISION

1. To endorse the direction of travel for modernisation of the CCTV service and note the interdependencies of the procurement,

¹ https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Borough_statistics/Annual_Residents_Survey_results_2018.pdf

² https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Borough_statistics/2019_ARS_Briefing_Paper.pdf

³ https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Strategy-and-performance/TH_Strategic_Plan.pdf

digitalisation / capital upgrade and relocation of the CCTV control suite to the new Town Hall.

2. To issue direct awards for a period of up to two years to the three organisations named to ensure continuity of service in the period prior to implementation of a new digital CCTV network.
3. To authorise a draw-down of the capital funds (£3.1m) currently in the Capital pipeline to upgrade the CCTV system to ensure the financial sustainability of the service.

Action by:

CORPORATE DIRECTOR, HEALTH, ADULTS AND COMMUNITY (D. RADLEY)

(Divisional Director, Community Safety and Substance Misuse (A. Corbett)
(CCTV Transformation Programme Lead (R. Sadegh)

Reasons for the decision

The CCTV service in Tower Hamlets is valued by residents and contributes towards outcome 7 of the Strategic Plan; *people feel safer in their neighbourhoods and anti-social behaviour is tackled.*

Existing analogue CCTV equipment is aging and becoming costly to repair and maintain. A digital upgrade is in line with LBTH 2020 vision around digitalisation and will ensure the future resilience of the service, reduce maintenance costs and facilitate a better quality of service.

Space in the new town hall has been identified for the CCTV suite. The space identified is sufficient to accommodate digital equipment only. The service must have been upgraded sufficiently in time for the move from Mulberry Place to ensure accommodation meets need and this is a critical interdependency.

Procurement

Average annual spends for each of these organisations are above threshold levels for procurement via the Request for Quote (RfQ) process and require a competitive tender or framework procurement.

The Tower Hamlets CCTV system is soon to be upgraded from analogue to digital equipment which will require significantly different services from 3rd party providers. A competitive tender exercise for such a short-term contract (approx. 18 months) is unlikely to provide best value and may increase costs.

As we currently have no formal contract with these organisations, there is a risk that any future GDPR breach with regards to the handling of highly sensitive information would be attributed to LBTH. This represents a financial and reputational risk for the Council and has been listed on the Corporate Risk Register.

The organisations concerned receive funding for services across several departments in LBTH. Work is required to determine what all of these

services are, how they integrate, how long they are required for and ultimately how they might be commissioned in a more strategic and integrated fashion across the organisation. A direct award is needed to allow time for these complex considerations and cross organisational working to take place prior to running a fully compliant competitive exercise.

Alternative options

Continue to procure via RfQs across the Council

This is not compliant with procurement legislation or the Council's constitution as spend is above threshold for RfQ and the need for these types of services is expected to continue for up to 2 years.

Procure via competitive tender.

Procurement via competitive tender is a lengthy process and would not represent best value for a 12-18-month contract. Prices charged may increase to cover the bidding costs to the supplier and competition may be limited by the short contract length. There would be a period of relative instability whilst contractors finished / commenced work as well as a lengthy TUPE process for staff involved. This could jeopardise the Council's ability to provide continuous CCTV services for its partners in the short term. Whilst this is inevitable with any contract handover, it would not be desirable to complete this process twice within two years.

Procure via a framework

Frameworks have been reviewed to seek out a suitable pre-procured route for these services. No such framework exists for the provision of CCTV Operators. The other services would require a combination of more than two frameworks, and this would still not offer the full spectrum of services.

CCTV Modernisation

The existing analogue equipment is now failing with an increasing frequency and repairs are becoming more costly. Without digital upgrade and replacement, the only options for CCTV are to significantly reduce or terminate the service.

6.12 Progress report of the Loneliness Taskforce

DECISION

1. To reconfirm that tackling loneliness and isolation is a strategic issue that the Council as a whole must address involving all service areas and resources.
2. To support the continued building of an alliance to tackle loneliness including our partners in Tower Hamlets Together, faith groups, the voluntary and community sector and the wider community.
3. To endorse the importance of highlighting the impact of loneliness and the inspiring response of our local communities in the Council's post Covid-19 communications planning.
4. To mandate that tackling loneliness continues to be a key thread in the council's community engagement strategy building on the community mobilisation that has been generated through the Covid-19 emergency.
5. To support the urgent consideration of how the digital exclusion and digital poverty of people in our community can be systematically addressed to ensure that everyone has access to digital tools to access the services they need as well as to keep in touch with friends and family.
6. To note the specific equalities considerations as set out in the report.

Action by:

CORPORATE DIRECTOR, HEALTH, ADULTS AND COMMUNITY (D. RADLEY)

(Director of Public Health (S. Banerjee)

(Programme Lead – Commissioning (K. Williams)

Reasons for the decision

The work of the Loneliness task force and the impact of Covid-19 social distancing measures including the local community responses has highlighted the need to take stronger and more systemic action to address loneliness and isolation in Tower Hamlets and to sustain the increased neighbourliness and community networking that the virus emergency generated.

Alternative options

To not agree the recommendations would reduce the chances that the work to tackle loneliness and isolation would lead to positive and sustainable outcomes.

7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

Nil items.

8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

DECISION

1. That in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4 of the Local Authority (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for the consideration of the following exempt business: Item 12.1 THH Major Works Contracts Variations. This is due to the information within containing exempt information defined in Paragraph 3 (financial or business affairs), Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

9. EXEMPT / CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Nil items.

10. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10.1 Chair's Advice of Key Issues or Questions in Relation to Exempt / Confidential Business

Nil items.

10.2 Any Exempt / Confidential Decisions "Called in" by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Nil items.

11. EXEMPT / CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

Nil items.

12. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

12.1 THH Major Works Contracts Variations

The reasons for urgency and exemption were agreed.

DECISION

1. The contract variations, funding totals and delegated authorities set out in the report were agreed.

Action by:

CORPORATE DIRECTOR, PLACE (A. SUTCLIFFE)

(Divisional Director, Housing and Housing Regeneration (K. Swift))

The meeting ended at 9.02 p.m.

Mayor John Biggs