



Meeting of the

Tower Hamlets Council

Agenda

Wednesday, 21 July 2021 at 7.00 p.m.

VENUE

Council Chamber, 1st Floor,
Town Hall, Mulberry Place,
5 Clove Crescent,
London E14 2BG

Meeting Webcast

The meeting is being webcast for viewing through the Council's webcast system.
<http://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

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Directorate of Governance

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To the Mayor and Councillors of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to be held in **THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG** at **7.00 p.m.** on **WEDNESDAY, 21 JULY 2021**

Will Tuckley
Chief Executive





Public Information

The meeting is being held at the Council's Town Hall– with some Members in attendance and other participants joining from remote locations.

Full Council is made up of the Mayor and the 45 Councillors. It's responsibilities include: deciding the Council's overall policies and setting the budget for the year. It also appoints the Council's Committees at the Annual Meeting. In addition, the Council provides opportunities to discuss local issues and is a means by which the Mayor and Cabinet can be held to account in public

The agenda for this ordinary Council meetings comprises:

- Apologies for absence from Members
- Declarations of Interests.
- Minutes of the previous meeting.
- Announcements from the Speaker or the Chief Executive of the Council.
- Petitions for presentation (over 30 signatures) or for debate (over 2000 signatures). A maximum of 4 Petitions that meet the criteria may be discussed taken in the order of receipt.
- Mayor's report followed by Opposition Leader's response. Written report to be published shortly before the meeting.
- State of the Borough debate
- Reports requiring Full Council approval
- Member Questions (30 minutes). Questions not put to receive a written response.
- Motions from Members received on notice, (including any amendments received) subject to time constraints.
- Any Urgent motions from Members.

The process for considering these items is set out on the covering reports in the agenda.

How can I watch the meeting?

Except when an exempt item is under discussion, the meeting will be broadcast live for public viewing via our Webcasting portal <https://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>. Details of the broadcasting arrangements will be published on the agenda front sheet.

Public Attendance and Conduct at Meetings

We welcome all members of the public to the gallery to watch the Council meeting. However, we request that you show courtesy to all present and do not interrupt the meeting. The intention is not to specifically film members of the public, however, it is possible that you may be filmed in the background. By attending the meeting you are agreeing to this condition.

Please also switch off mobile phones or turn them on silent.



If you are scheduled to present a petition at the meeting, please sit in the reserved seating in the front row and you will be called to address the meeting at the appropriate time



If the fire alarm rings please follow the instructions of the Facilities Staff who will direct you to the exits.

Procedure at the meeting.

Just before the start of the meeting, the macebearer will ask everyone to be upstanding for the Speaker. The Speaker of the Council is the Chair of the meeting and is in charge of the debate. Their role is to control the meeting, including the order of speakers, and to ensure that the business is carried out properly. The Speaker will confirm the expected meeting etiquette for Council meeting, including the following:

- The Speaker will determine the order of speakers - usually from a list of speakers.
- That any online participants must mute their microphones when not speaking.
- They may also switch off their cameras when not speaking to save bandwidth.
- All Members may contribute to the discussions, but only the Members physically present in the chamber may vote.

Order of business

The Speaker may agree to change the order of business at the meeting. In addition, the Speaker may adjourn the meeting for a period of time or agree an extension to the time limit for the meeting (by up to half hour beyond the three-hour limit). To change the order of business, a Member will need to formally move a motion seeking approval for the requested change. Any such motions will be put to the vote.

Voting

The items requiring a decision will normally be determined by a show of hands or an electronic vote (by Members present in the meeting room). If there are an equal number of votes for and against an item of business, the Speaker will have a second or casting vote.

Decisions and Minutes

The decisions will be published on the website 2 days after the meeting. The draft minutes will be published around 10 working days after the meeting.

Publication of Agenda papers.

Electronic copies of the Council agenda will be published on the Council's Website on the relevant Committee pages at least five clear working days before the meeting.

To view meeting papers and to be alerted when agendas have been published visit: www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee. Council documents are also available on 'Mod.Gov' iPad, Android and Windows tablet apps downloadable for free from their respective app stores.

Publication of tabled papers

Any additional documents (such as the Mayor's report, amendments to motions and urgent motions) will normally be published on the Council meeting website either shortly before or during the meeting.



London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Council



Wednesday, 21 July 2021

7.00 p.m.

**PAGE
NUMBER**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

9 - 10

Members are reminded to consider the categories of interest, identified in the Code of Conduct for Members to determine; whether they have an interest in any agenda item and any action they should take. For further details, see the attached note from the Monitoring Officer.

Members are also reminded to declare the nature of the interest at the earliest opportunity and the agenda item it relates to. Please note that ultimately it is the Members' responsibility to identify any interests and also update their register of interests form as required by the Code.

If in doubt as to the nature of an interest, you are advised to seek advice prior to the meeting by contacting the Monitoring Officer or Democratic Services.

3. MINUTES

11 - 18

To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Council held 19th May 2021

4. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE SPEAKER OF THE COUNCIL OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

5. TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

19 - 22

The Council Procedure Rules provide for a maximum of four petitions to be discussed at an Ordinary Meeting of the Council.

The attached report presents the received petitions to be discussed. Should any additional petitions be received they will be listed to be noted but not discussed.



6. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Council's Constitution provides for the Elected Mayor to give a report at each Ordinary Council Meeting.

A maximum of six minutes is allowed for the Elected Mayor's report, following which the Speaker of the Council will invite the leader of the opposition group to respond for up to two minutes should he so wish.

7. STATE OF THE BOROUGH DEBATE

An opportunity for the Mayor and the Councillors to give their views on the 'State of the Borough'.

8. REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES

- | | | |
|------------|---|------------------|
| 8.1 | Annual Report of the Standards Advisory Committee | 23 - 46 |
| | To consider the annual report of the Standards Advisory Committee. | |
| 8.2 | Annual Report of the Audit Committee | 47 - 66 |
| | To consider the annual report of the Audit Committee. | |
| 8.3 | Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Board | 67 - 94 |
| | To consider the annual report of the Corporate Parenting Board. | |
| 8.4 | Annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee | 95 - 114 |
| | To consider the annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. | |
| 8.5 | Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2021/22 | 115 - 126 |
| | To consider the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for the 2021-22 municipal year. | |
|
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| 9. | OTHER BUSINESS | |
| 9.1 | Appointment of a Chair of the Strategic Development Committee | 127 - 130 |
| | To consider appointments for the vacant Chair of the Strategic Development Committee. | |



9.2 Extensions of the 6-month attendance rule

To consider a request for an extension to the 6-month attendance rule for Councillors.

10. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

135 - 138

The questions which have been received from Councillors to be put at this Council meeting are set out in the attached report. A maximum period of 30 minutes is allocated to this agenda item.

11. TO CONSIDER MOTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

139 - 150

The motions submitted by Councillors for debate at this meeting are set out in the attached report.



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Agenda Item 2

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AT MEETINGS– NOTE FROM THE MONITORING OFFICER

This note is for guidance only. For further details please consult the Code of Conduct for Members at Part C, Section 31 of the Council's Constitution

(i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI)

You have a DPI in any item of business on the agenda where it relates to the categories listed in **Appendix A** to this guidance. Please note that a DPI includes: (i) Your own relevant interests; (ii) Those of your spouse or civil partner; (iii) A person with whom the Member is living as husband/wife/civil partners. Other individuals, e.g. Children, siblings and flatmates do not need to be considered. Failure to disclose or register a DPI (within 28 days) is a criminal offence.

Members with a DPI, (unless granted a dispensation) must not seek to improperly influence the decision, must declare the nature of the interest and leave the meeting room (including the public gallery) during the consideration and decision on the item – unless exercising their right to address the Committee.

DPI Dispensations and Sensitive Interests. In certain circumstances, Members may make a request to the Monitoring Officer for a dispensation or for an interest to be treated as sensitive.

(ii) Non - DPI Interests that the Council has decided should be registered – (Non - DPIs)

You will have 'Non DPI Interest' in any item on the agenda, where it relates to (i) the offer of gifts or hospitality, (with an estimated value of at least £25) (ii) Council Appointments or nominations to bodies (iii) Membership of any body exercising a function of a public nature, a charitable purpose or aimed at influencing public opinion.

Members must declare the nature of the interest, but may stay in the meeting room and participate in the consideration of the matter and vote on it **unless:**

- A reasonable person would think that your interest is so significant that it would be likely to impair your judgement of the public interest. **If so, you must withdraw and take no part in the consideration or discussion of the matter.**

(iii) Declarations of Interests not included in the Register of Members' Interest.

Occasions may arise where a matter under consideration would, or would be likely to, **affect the wellbeing of you, your family, or close associate(s) more than it would anyone else living in the local area** but which is not required to be included in the Register of Members' Interests. In such matters, Members must consider the information set out in paragraph (ii) above regarding Non DPI - interests and apply the test, set out in this paragraph.

Guidance on Predetermination and Bias

Member's attention is drawn to the guidance on predetermination and bias, particularly the need to consider the merits of the case with an open mind, as set out in the Planning and Licensing Codes of Conduct, (Part C, Section 34 and 35 of the Constitution). For further advice on the possibility of bias or predetermination, you are advised to seek advice prior to the meeting.

Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992 - Declarations which restrict Members in Council Tax arrears, for at least a two months from voting

In such circumstances the member may not vote on any reports and motions with respect to the matter.

Further Advice contact: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer, Tel: 0207 364 4800.

APPENDIX A: Definition of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

(Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, Reg 2 and Schedule)

Subject	Prescribed description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vacation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by the Member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of the Member. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority— (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the Member's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and (b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where— (a) that body (to the Member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 19 MAY 2021

MAIN HALL, BRADY ARTS AND COMMUNITY CENTRE, 192-196 HANBURY STREET, LONDON, E1 5HU

Members Present:

Mayor John Biggs*	Councillor Rabina Khan*
Councillor Faroque Ahmed	Councillor Tarik Khan*
Councillor Rajib Ahmed	Councillor James King
Councillor Sabina Akhtar*	Councillor Eve McQuillan
Councillor Sufia Alam	Councillor Ayas Miah
Councillor Amina Ali	Councillor Harun Miah
Councillor Shah Ameen	Councillor Puru Miah
Councillor Asma Begum*	Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE*
Councillor Rachel Blake*	Councillor Mohammed Pappu
Councillor Kevin Brady	Councillor Kyrsten Perry
Councillor Mufeedah Bustin	Councillor Leema Qureshi*
Councillor Kahar Chowdhury	Councillor Zenith Rahman
Councillor Shad Chowdhury*	Councillor Candida Ronald
Councillor Dipa Das	Councillor Gabriela Salva Macallan
Councillor David Edgar*	Councillor Dan Tomlinson
Councillor Peter Golds*	Councillor Helal Uddin
Councillor Ehtasham Haque*	Councillor Abdal Ullah*
Councillor Danny Hassell	Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman*
Councillor Mohammed Ahabab Hossain*	Councillor Val Whitehead
Councillor Asma Islam*	Councillor Bex White
Councillor Sirajul Islam*	Councillor Andrew Wood*
Councillor Denise Jones	

*Councillors present in person and able to vote.
(Remaining Councillors attended from remote locations).

THE SPEAKER OF THE COUNCIL MOHAMMED AHBAB HOSSAIN, IN THE CHAIR

1. ELECTION OF SPEAKER

The Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer called for nominations to serve as Speaker of the Council for the coming year.

It was **moved** by Mayor John Biggs, and **seconded** by Councillor Sabina Akhtar, and unanimously:

RESOLVED

1. That Councillor Mohammed Ahab Hossain, be elected to serve as Speaker of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council until the Annual Council Meeting in May 2022.

Mayor John Biggs spoke in support of his nomination. He stated that Councillor Mohammed Ahab Hossain had served the community proudly and had worked tirelessly in support of many good causes over the years and for his ward. He felt therefore it was fitting that he should serve as the Speaker of the Council.

The Mayor also recognised that since the Speaker's election in September 2020, this had been a difficult time for the community, with the focus of the Council and the Speaker on helping residents. He hoped however, that with the lifting of the restrictions, the Speaker could fully fulfil his civic duties and continue with his community work. He felt that the Speaker would continue to serve the community proudly and his office would be at the centre of the recovery.

Councillor Sabina Akhtar stated that it was an honour for her to second the nomination. She recognised that, despite the difficult circumstances, the Speaker had served the community with dignity and honour. She also welcomed that he had been an advocate of important causes. She looked forward to the Speaker continuing with this work over the next year.

Councillors Peter Golds, Asma Islam, David Edgar and Rabina Khan also echoed the above sentiments. Whilst recognising his good work over the year, they also look forward to the Speaker's participation in community life again.

In particular, Councillor Asma Islam thanked the Speaker for providing a platform for important community events and bringing the community together, such as the interfaith events.

Councillor David Edgar stated that he pleased to see the Speaker present in person at a Council meeting. He hoped that he could continue his personal attendance at Council meetings and at community events.

Councillor Rabina Khan also wished to highlight the Speaker's work to reach out to opposition Councillors and to the community. She particularly welcomed his role in supporting the 50th Anniversary of Bangladesh's Independence celebration events.

Councillor Peter Golds also thanked Councillor Victoria Obaze for all the work she had undertaken as the previous Speaker of the Council.

The Speaker of the Council then addressed the meeting on his re – election as Speaker. He firstly recognised that this had been a difficult time for all of the community. Many had lost loved ones and have had to adapt to the restrictions.

In light of this, he highlighted his decision to focus his activities completely on the community, primarily by attending and initiating virtual community events.

He thanked everyone for their support over this year, especially his consorts: his wife Rohima Begum, and good friends Mohammed Sunahar Ali and Abdul Latif. He looked forward to their continued support over the year as his consorts. He also thanked the Mayor and Councillors as well as the Democratic Services Team, who had supported him with his work.

The Speaker also confirmed his decision to keep the same charities that he announced last year. These were: Capital Kids Cricket, Patchwork Foundation and Sottyten School of Performing Arts. He hoped to start holding fundraising events soon.

He also looked forward to arranging a Speaker's reception event once the restrictions had lifted.

Turning to recent events, he spoke with deep regret about the international conflict between Israel and Palestine. The Speaker felt that the conflict showed the importance of communities working together for everyone's peace and prosperity. The Speaker called on everyone including governments to work together to stop the killing of innocent people.

2. ELECTION OF DEPUTY SPEAKER

The Speaker sought nominations to serve as Deputy Speaker of the Council for the forthcoming municipal year. It was **moved** by Mayor John Biggs, **seconded** by Councillor Sabina Akhtar, and:

RESOLVED

1. That Councillor Zenith Rahman be elected to serve as Deputy Speaker of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Council until the Annual Council meeting in May 2022.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Marc Francis
- Councillor Victoria Obaze
- Councillor John Pierce

4. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

Councillor Andrew Wood declared a Non - Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda item 11, Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Plan - Post Referendum Adoption. This was on the grounds of his membership of the Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Planning Forum and that he was the Secretary of the Forum.

5. MINUTES**RESOLVED:**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the ordinary Council Meeting held on 17 March 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and the Speaker be authorised to sign them accordingly.

6. TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) FROM THE SPEAKER OF THE COUNCIL OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Speaker of the Council congratulated Sadiq Khan and Unmesh Desai on their re – election as Mayor of London and the local Greater London Assembly Member (respectively). He also congratulated everyone else successfully elected to the GLA Assembly. Turning to other election news, he confirmed the results of the Tower Hamlets Governance Referendum, which was to retain the Mayoral Model.

The Speaker also confirmed that the referendum on the Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Plan had returned a positive result (which was the subject of item 11).

The Chief Executive also provided an update to the Council meeting on the following:

- Covid 19 and Vaccines. Over 100,000 Tower Hamlets residents had now received the vaccine. The Council were working hard with the NHS to ensure that the most vulnerable residents received a vaccine.
- Staffing. He expressed sincere condolences at the sad death of Ronke Martins-Taylor, Divisional Director, Youth and Commissioning. Ronke will be remembered for her dedicated service to the Borough.
- He also welcomed to the Council, Stephen Nayakatawa as the Director of Education who joined in May. He thanked Pauline Maddison who would be leaving the Council shortly, for covering this post. He also reported that Raj Chand will be commencing duties as the Director, of Customer Services on 1st June and thanked Teresa Heaney for her work in this role.
- Council Award success. In February, the Council won the Millie's Mark for Nurseries Award for it's outstanding work in relation children's first aid (TH Holiday Child Care Scheme)
- In April, the Council submitted nominations for the MJ 2021 Awards for responding to the climate change emergency.

- Elections. The Elections and the referendums had now taken place. He thanked the staff involved in the elections for all their hard work.

7. MAYOR'S CABINET AND EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS

The Council considered the report of the Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer setting out the Mayor's Cabinet appointments and other arrangements in respect of Executive Decision Making, as set out in the published supplementary agenda.

The recommendation was agreed.

RESOLVED

1. That the Mayor's Executive Decision Making scheme be noted

8. PROPORTIONALITY AND ALLOCATION OF PLACES ON COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL 2021/22

The Council considered the report of the Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer proposing the establishment of the Council's committees for 2021/22 and setting out the review of proportionality and the allocation of places on those Committees. Members noted that the figures for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should read: 9 Members, 8 Labour and 1 Conservative.

The recommendations were agreed.

RESOLVED

That the Council agree:

1. The review of proportionality as at Section 3 of the report and the allocation of seats on Committees and Panels for the Municipal Year 2020/21 as set out at paragraph 3.6 of the report subject to the following amendment for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: that it comprises: 9 Members, 8 Labour and 1 Conservative.
2. To establish the Committees set out for the municipal year 2021/22, and for places to be allocated on those Committees, as set out at Paragraph 3.6.

9. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL 2021-22

The Council considered the report of the Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer regarding the appointment of members to the Council's Committees, and Chairs where appropriate, (including those established under item 8 above). The list of nominations were published in a supplementary agenda.

Following the receipt of two nominations for the positions of: Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Chair of the Audit Committee, and Chair of the Strategic Development, the nominations were put to a vote.

The results were as follows:

- Councillor Mohammed Pappu was elected to the position of Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Councillor Val Whitehead was elected to the position of Chair of the Audit Committee.
- Councillor John Pierce was elected as Chair of the Strategic Development Committee (with Councillor Kahar Chowdhury covering the position during Councillor's John Pierce parental leave),

The recommendations in the report were agreed.

RESOLVED:

The Council agree to:

1. Appoint members and substitute members to the committees and subcommittees of the Council, other bodies and Mayoral Advisors for the municipal year 2021/22 as set out in the list of nominations circulated in the supplementary agenda.
2. Appoint the Chairs of Committees for 2021/22 as set out in the list of nominations published in the supplementary agenda subject to the appointment of:
 - Councillor Mohammed Pappu to the position of Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
 - Councillor Val Whitehead to the position of Chair of the Audit Committee.
 - Councillor John Pierce to the position of Chair of the Strategic Development Committee (with Councillor Kahar Chowdhury covering the position during Councillor John Pierce's parental leave).
3. Agree that in relation to any unfilled places within the seats allocated to a particular political group, the Council note that the Director of Legal, as Interim Monitoring Officer has delegated authority subsequently to

agree the appointments to those places in accordance with nominations from the relevant political group.

10. COMMITTEE CALENDAR 2021-22

The Council considered the report of the Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer setting out a revised calendar of meetings for the Council, Committees and other meetings for the municipal year 2021/22. The Council noted the change in the Audit Committee meeting date from 7th October 2021 to 28th September 2021.

RESOLVED:

The Council agree to:

1. Approve the proposed calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2021/22 as set out in Appendix A of the report subject to the change in the Audit Committee date from 7th October 2021 to 28th September 2021.
2. To delegate to the Interim Monitoring Officer authority to agree meeting dates for any new Committees or Panels that are set up subsequent to this report being presented to Council, subject to appropriate consultation with Members.
3. To note that the Constitution provides for the Monitoring Officer to agree to cancel, amend a meeting or arrange new meetings where required, subject to the requirements of the Council Procedure Rules.
4. To note that the Council procedure rules agreed in relation to the operation of 'virtual' or 'remote' committee meetings (Section 26A of the Constitution) expired on 6 May 2021 and that the Council is now operating under its original Council Meeting Procedure Rules set out in the Constitution.

11. ISLE OF DOGS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - POST REFERENDUM ADOPTION

The Council considered the report of the Corporate Director, Place regarding the adoption of the Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Plan, following the referendum held on 6th May 2021.

RESOLVED:

The Council agree to:

1. To note the result of the Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood Plan referendum and adopt the neighbourhood plan, in line with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Section 38A.

2. To agree that plan is not implemented until 1 July 2021.

12. COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION 2021-22

The Council considered the report of the Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer seeking confirmation of the adoption of the Council's Constitution.

RESOLVED:

1. Note the work of the General Purposes Committee and confirm continued adoption of the Constitution as set out in the appendices to the report.
2. Note that the additional Council Procedure Rules agreed to support virtual committee meetings have now expired and no longer form part of the Constitution.
3. Note that the Council will be submitting a response to the Government's consultation on the future of virtual meetings and agree that the Chair of the General Purposes Committee should be consulted before the response is submitted.
4. Agree that the General Purposes Committee should consider the potential advantages to the Council's committees and meetings of the uses of virtual and hybrid meeting technologies.

13. USE OF SPECIAL URGENCY PROCEDURES

The Council considered the report of the Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer regarding the use of special urgency powers during the previous municipal year.


RESOLVED:

1. Note the report on the use of special urgency provisions in relation to Executive Key Decisions be noted.

The meeting ended at 8.00 p.m.

Speaker of the Council

Agenda Item 5

Non-Executive Report of the: Council 21 st July 2021	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of, Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Petitions to Council	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
Wards affected	All wards

SUMMARY

1. This report sets out details of the valid petitions submitted for presentation at the Council meeting on Wednesday 21st July 2021. The text of the petition received for presentation to this meeting is set out in the attached report.
2. The Council's Constitution provides for up to four petitions to be heard at each ordinary Council meeting. These are taken in order of receipt, except that petitions for debate (those in excess of 2,000 signatures) will take precedence. Should more than four petitions be received, all remaining petitions will be listed to be formally noted by Council.
3. For Petitions listed as to be heard:
 - a. Petitioners may address the meeting for no more than 3 minutes.
 - b. Members may then question the petitioners for a further 4 minutes.
 - c. Finally, the speaker will invite the Mayor or (at the Mayor's discretion) the relevant Lead Member or Committee Chair to respond to the petition for up to 2 minutes. The petition will then be referred to the relevant Corporate Director for attention who will provide a written response within 28 days of the date of the meeting.
4. Members, other than a Cabinet Member or Committee Chair responding at the end of the item, should confine their contributions to questions and not make statements or attempt to debate.
5. For Petitions listed as to be noted, petitioners may not address the meeting. The Speaker will state where they will go for a full response.

6. Responses to all petitions will be sent to the lead petitioner and displayed on the Council's website.

PETITIONS FOR DEBATE

There are no petitions for debate.

PETITIONS TO BE HEARD

5.1 Petition: Objection to the one way system in Shadwell and carry out a New Consultation submitted by Ruhul Amin and others.

We Petition Tower Hamlets Council to stop the street works to Martha Street, Dellow Street, Tarling Street, Lowood Street, Bewley Street and Sutton Street which will result in to a one way system in Shadwell. We strongly urge the Council to Immediately carry out a new inclusive consultation. Mayor John Biggs acknowledged this in 2018, where he received a petition with over 800 signatures. As a result, and following this, at the Tarling Centre in a meeting, he stated that the works to create a one way system would not be carried out.

5.2 Petition requesting a Moratorium on the Felling of Trees submitted by Geoffrey Juden and others.

Tower Hamlets as a local authority has a remit to understand the needs of all its residents, these to include the trees in the borough. It seems that trees are felled without a tree report, together with no notification. Tower Hamlets must take from best practice of other London Boroughs in the way it deals with its biodiversity.

5.3 Petition regarding Bring Back the Basketball courts at Wapping Gardens submitted by Fernando SaraviaRajal and others.

We the undersigned petition the council to reinstall the basketball hoops at Wapping Gardens. The 4 basketball rims were an essential part of the community, and they were abruptly removed in May 2021. It was a place where local neighbors connected, communities formed, and parents introduced their kids to basketball. Especially in the context of the tough past year, in which the Covid pandemic forced people to stay home and indoor facilities are still restricted, removing outdoors recreational space is a disservice. We have heard that the reason for the removal was noise complaints and for that we propose restricting playing times and using noise barriers. They are used throughout the country for sports. Finally, we would like to emphasize that these courts were the best basketball courts in the entire Tower Hamlets and the only ones in Wapping (The court in Helling st. is a children's court). And while the basketball courts were removed, the tennis and football areas are still in place.

5.4 Petition regarding Human Rights Violation submitted by Abdul Salam and others

I am deeply concerned that Tower Hamlets Council voted unanimously to agree the IHRA definition and all 11 accompanying examples, on 19th September 2018. I believe that the examples are against the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “everyone has the right to freedom of expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers” – Human Rights Act 1998, section 6.


Therefore, I am requesting that Tower Hamlets Council inserts two “clarifications”, which was recommended by the Home Affairs Committee to the UK government on 12th December 2016:

- It is not anti-Semitic to criticise the Government of Israel, without additional evidence to suggest anti-Semitic intent.
- It is not anti-Semitic to hold the Israeli Government to the same standards as other liberal democracies, or to take a particular interest in the Israeli Government’s policies or actions, without additional evidence to suggest anti-Semitic intent.

PETITIONS TO BE NOTED

None.

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Decision Report Cover Sheet: Council 21 July 2021	 TOWER HAMLETS
Cover Report of: Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services Main Report: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Annual Report of the Standards Advisory Committee	

Wards affected	All Wards
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Summary

At its meeting on 1 July 2021, the Standards Advisory Committee considered its Annual Report to Council. Following discussion, they agreed to forward the report to Council for consideration. The report will be introduced at the meeting by John Pulford MBE, the Chair of the Standards Advisory Committee.


The report and its Appendices are therefore attached to this cover sheet as Appendix 1.

Recommendations:

The Council is recommended to:

1. Review the attached Annual Report to Council.
2. Agree to note the Annual Report to Council.

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Non-Executive Report of the: Standards Advisory Committee 1 July 2021	
Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Draft Standards Advisory Committee Annual Report to Council	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion – Head of Democratic Services
Wards affected	All Wards

Summary

This report sets out a final draft of the Committee’s annual report to Council. The report covers the activities of the Committee over the last year as well as being an opportunity to highlight any relevant issues to Council.

The Committee are asked to consider the draft Annual Report and feedback on any last updates before the report is presented to Council on 21 July 2021.

Recommendation:

The Standards Advisory Committee is recommended:

1. To consider and comment on the suggested draft Annual Report attached as Appendix 1.

1. **REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 It is considered best practice in many authorities for the full Council to receive an annual report in relation to the work of the Standards Advisory Committee and on issues around standards generally. The provision of an annual report of the Committee’s business ensures the profile of ethical standards across the organisation and affords the opportunity to highlight areas of good practice and identify any requirements for improvement.

2. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 2.1 The Advisory Committee could decide not to submit an annual report but this course of action is not recommended.

3. **DETAILS OF REPORT**

- 3.1 The Advisory Committee is asked to consider and comment on the proposed draft Annual Report attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The draft report contains an outline of the work and activities of the Standards Advisory Committee over the past year as well as highlighting any particular issues that Council should consider.
- 3.3 The report would usually consider activity across a single municipal year from May in one calendar year to May in the next. However, the Covid-19 pandemic caused the Council's 2020 annual meeting to be delayed until September 2020.
- 3.4 To maintain a good consistency and comparator through the Committee's annual reports it was agreed that they would continue to monitor a year's worth of activity. Therefore, this report considers the period from May 2020 to May 2021.
- 3.5 The report has been updated following feedback received at the last meeting and subsequently and the Committee are now asked to make any final comments before agreeing it be submitted by the Chair to Council on 21 July 2021.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no immediate equalities implications arising out of this report.

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
 - Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,
 - Crime Reduction,
 - Safeguarding.
- 5.2 Robust ethical governance arrangements help to ensure the proper, efficient and effective discharge of the Council's functions and contribute to compliance with the requirement to achieve best value.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 There are no significant direct financial implications resulting from this report.

7. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 7.1 The principal statutory provisions relating to standards of conduct for Members are contained in the Localism Act 2011. Section 27(1) of the 2011 Act provides that the Council must promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and Co-opted Members of the authority.
- 7.2 Sections 27 and 28 of the Localism Act require the Council to adopt a Code of Conduct consistent with the Nolan principles of good governance and to appoint at least one Independent Person whose views must be sought and taken into account before the Council makes any decision about an alleged breach of the Code that has been investigated.
-

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – draft Annual Report to Council

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)

List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

- N/A

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London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Standards Advisory Committee – Annual Report to Council
Year May 2020 to May 2021

Introduction

1. This is the regular Annual Report of the Advisory Committee. It sets out the key issues dealt with by the Committee during the past municipal year and identifies the priorities for 2021/22. Note that although the Covid-19 pandemic has altered the Council's formal municipal year timetable, for clarity the Committee is reporting on the regular May to May period.

Membership

2. During the municipal year 2020/21 the Committee comprised 5 elected members and 5 independent co-opted members. The Council's Constitution provides that an independent co-opted member be appointed Chair of the Committee.

Elected Members (up to September 2020):

- Cllr. Sufia Alam
- Cllr. Mufeedah Bustin
- Cllr. Rabina Khan
- Cllr. James King
- Cllr. Abdal Ullah

Elected Members (post September 2020):

- Cllr. Rajib Ahmed
- Cllr. Mufeedah Bustin
- Cllr. Rabina Khan
- Cllr. Leema Qureshi
- Cllr. Abdal Ullah

Independent Co-opted Members

- John Pulford MBE (Chair)
- Nafisa Adam (Vice Chair)
- Fiona Browne
- Mike Houston
- Denzil Johnson (appointed March 2021)

Independent Persons

3. The Council has appointed two statutory Independent Persons (IPs) under the Localism Act 2011. Ms Elizabeth Hall served an initial term of 5 years until June 2018 and has been re-appointed as an IP until 18 September 2021. Ms Rachael Tiffen was appointed in June 2018 and her term of office will expire on 16 January 2022.

4. The principal role of the IP is to give an independent view on governance issues in general and specifically in relation to alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members. Both IP's work closely the Monitoring Officer and her Deputies, considering all complaints and whether an alleged breach of the Code meets the criteria for investigation.

5. It is also a statutory requirement to consult the IP before deciding on the outcome of an investigation into a complaint and whether to impose any sanction. The Member complained about may also at any stage of the process seek a view from the IP and in order to avoid any conflict of interest the Council has appointed two IPs.

6. The Council is fortunate to have appointed two IPs with a sound understanding of the ethical framework who both act as advocates for the Council in promoting ethical standards and of high standards of conduct. Although not members of the Standards Advisory Committee, they attend meetings and play an important role in the proceedings. Both IPs also contribute to and participate in the Council's mandatory Ethics & Probity training programme. In this report I would like to acknowledge the continuing invaluable work and support of Elizabeth Hall and Rachael Tiffen.

7. As the terms of appointment for both Independent Persons expire during the 2021-22 year, it will be necessary to consider any appropriate recruitment exercises or re-appointments during that year.

Officers

8. The Committee's lead officers were:

- Asmat Hussain – Corporate Director Governance & Monitoring Officer (up to December 2020)
- Mark Norman – Legal Adviser & Deputy Monitoring Officer
- Janet Fasan – Director, Legal Services and Interim Monitoring Officer
- Matthew Mannion – Head of Democratic Services

Terms of Reference

9. The current terms of reference for the Standards Advisory Committee are contained in Part B Section 19 of the Constitution, with the Committee's procedures set out in Part D. These are attached as Appendix A to this report.

Meetings

10. The Standards Advisory Committee held four meetings during the 2020/21 municipal period on the following dates:

- 30 July 2020
- 15 October 2020
- 4 February 2021
- 22 April 2021

11. Due to the pandemic, the Committee met virtually and at a new time of 2pm. These innovations were generally successful and many Members commented that they found it easier to attend meetings because they were held virtually and during the day. However, in line with the expiration of the virtual meetings regulations, the Committee will be reverting to physical, evening meetings for the next municipal year.

Standards Advisory Committee Work Programme 2020/21

12. The Committee agreed a work programme at the first meeting of the municipal period on 30 July 2020. It was updated throughout the year. The key areas of business considered during the year are listed below:

Code of Conduct for Members – Complaint Monitoring:

13. The Committee received bi-annual monitoring reports on complaints of alleged breach of the Code of Conduct for Members. There were 21 complaints from May 2020 to May 2021.

14. 20 of the complaints were made by members of the public and 1 by local councillors. Following consultation with the Independent Person one complaint has been referred for investigation.

15. The Committee continue to monitor whether there are lessons to take from complaints monitoring. They continue to monitor remedial actions and that outcomes are reported to the complainant, to give assurance that maintaining ethical standards is given full organisational support.

Dispensations:

16. The Committee received bi-annual reports on dispensations granted by the Monitoring Officer under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of disclosable pecuniary interests (DPI's). There is a continuing General Dispensation to all Members to be present, speak and vote where they would otherwise have a DPI in the following matters:

(a) Housing: where the Councillor (or spouse or partner) holds a tenancy or lease with the Council if the matter does not relate to the particular tenancy or lease of the Councillor (their spouse or partner).

- (b) Council Tax: setting the council tax and related matters including setting precepts and agreeing council tax reduction schemes; and
- (c) Determining an allowance, travelling expense, payment or indemnity for Councillors. This includes discussions of issues relating to officer pay which could have consequential impacts on Member Allowances.

17. A specific dispensation may also be granted where the Monitoring Officer is satisfied that:

- (a) without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in any particular business would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business;
- (b) without the dispensation the representation of different political groups on the body transacting any particular business would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote relating to the business;
- (c) granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority's area; or
- (d) it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

Any grant of a dispensation must specify the duration of the dispensation up to a maximum of 4 years.

The regular reporting to the Standards Advisory Committee allows Members to maintain oversight of any specific dispensations that are granted.

18. One specific dispensations was reported up to the Committee during the year. This related to Councillor Sirajul Islam in respect of his role as Cabinet Member for Housing. As a Council tenant he had a potential interest in any work around tenancy agreements. However, as the relevant Cabinet Member he would have been expected to have a role in relation to this. The dispensation allowed him to undertake that role, whilst putting certain restrictions in place.

Gifts & Hospitality:

19. The Committee received quarterly reports on the requirement contained in the Code of Conduct to register gifts and hospitality received or declined with an estimated value of £25 or above.

20. In total 18 declarations were made within the reporting periods of the July 2020, October 2020, February 2021 and April 2021 meetings. This was a very low total however, it was considered that the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions were the main reason for this as most events were cancelled for the year and so offers of hospitality were not being received.

21. During the year the Committee also monitored the speed of the declarations made, taking interest in whether declarations were made within the 28-day deadline. The Committee were pleased to note that only 2 of the 18 declarations were made

after the deadline. Given it was an issue raised in the previous internal audit of the gifts and hospitality process the Committee will continue to monitor compliance.

22. During the year the Committee paid particular attention to any large donations received. The Committee would encourage all large gifts to be donated to the Speaker's Charity.

23. The Committee noted that acceptance of gifts and hospitality by councillors is not merely an administrative issue. Acceptance can impact on member reputation and on the council as a whole. Members need to show they are acting in the public interest and do not gain personally from receiving gifts.

24. Following a proposal from a Member at the Committee noted in the last annual report to Council, the Register of Interests update form now includes a 'Nil Return' field in relation to Gifts and Hospitality. This additional field allows Members to actively confirm each time they update their Register that they have declared all relevant gifts and hospitality. This helps mitigate any concerns that a Member had missed any declarations. The Committee will continue to monitor this issue and will receive quarterly update reports.

Member Learning and Development Programme:

25. The October meeting of the Committee received the regular yearly report providing an update on the Member Learning and Development Programme listing events that had taken place during the year to that date.

26. The Committee saw that the planned programme of sessions and training events had been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic with a pause in all sessions between February and July 2020. Nevertheless, a wide range of briefing sessions had taken place on subjects as diverse as the Youth Consultation Task and Finish Group, the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme and the Regeneration Delivery Plan.

27. A number of learning and development sessions had also been run including on resilience and group cohesion, local government finance, social media policy and the mandatory ethics and probity training had also taken place.

28. It was noted that the move to virtual training and information sessions from July 2020 caused by the pandemic had seen a significant increase in Member attendance and the Committee heard that Members found the new virtual sessions much more convenient and simpler to fit into their busy diaries.

29. Consequently, the Committee noted that virtual member briefing sessions were likely to remain the default arrangement once the pandemic had passed but that some training and development sessions would revert to physical attendance where that was appropriate.

30. A survey was sent round to Members early in 2021 asking for views on the Member Learning and Development programme. Only 8 responses were received. A range of views were expressed but there was a clear preference for the continuation

of virtual training where that was possible. The use of external trainers at training sessions was also welcomed especially where they could bring particular expertise to the session. In terms of subject areas there were not many overlapping suggestions but Council finances and the scrutiny skills did both appear in a number of submissions. The findings from the survey are being used to help shape the 2021-22 member learning and development programme.

Strengthening Local Democracy:

31. The Committee considered an update report on the Council's Strengthening Local Democracy project at its February 2021 meeting. Whilst this is under the guidance of the General Purposes Committee, it was useful to have a report presented to the Standards Committee due to the overlap with the Code of Conduct and the work of Members.

32. The report set out the Ward Councillor Support Framework which had been developed and listed the various actions and tasks to be completed or in progress.

33. The Committee welcomed the updates and had good discussions looking at the issues raised. Particular issues that came up included:

- Public behaviour towards Members and whether there was anything that could be done to tackle problems.
- How ICT was changing all areas of work, and the importance of supporting Members.
- Ensuring that projects like Strengthening Local Democracy considered their role in supporting good practice and standards under the Code of Conduct.

Local Government Ethical Standards Review:

34. As previously reported, the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) conducted a review of local government ethical standards between January and May 2018. The review considered all levels of local government in England and its terms of reference were to:

- examine the structures, processes and practices in local government in England for:
- maintaining codes of conduct for local councillors
- investigating alleged breaches fairly and with due process
 - enforcing codes and imposing sanctions for misconduct
 - declaring interests and managing conflicts of interest
 - whistleblowing
- assess whether the existing structures, processes and practices are conducive to high standards of conduct in local government
- make any recommendations for how they can be improved
- note any evidence of intimidation of Councillors, and make recommendations for any measures that could be put in place to prevent and address such intimidation

35. The CSPL set out 15 Best Practice Recommendations in a letter to all Councils in July 2020. The Committee considered a report looking at these

recommendations at its meeting in October 2020. It noted that some recommendations were not relevant (for example some referenced Parish Councils) and in other cases the Council's existing processes and procedures covered the recommended actions. A number of actions remained and the report set out how these were to be covered. This report was also attached as an appendix to the last Annual Report to Council.

New Model Code of Conduct

36. As reported in the last Annual Report, in June 2020, the Local Government Association (LGA) launched a consultation on a draft Model Code of Conduct. The Committee provided feedback as part of that consultation exercise.

37. Following the consultation exercise a new Model Code of Conduct was produced. This was considered by the Committee at its meeting on 4 February 2021.

38. The Committee welcomed the new Code and in particular noted that it incorporated a number of additions to the existing code which Tower Hamlets had already implemented including the requirement for Members to register additional interest beyond the standard Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

39. The Committee agreed that the Council should look to adopt the new Model Code, subject to any amendments and additions that were thought to be useful.

40. The Committee established an informal sub-group to consider potential revisions to the code and to then report back to the Committee.

41. This working group met a number of times and has put together a draft new Code of Conduct. The intention is that this draft will be agreed at the Committee meeting on 1 July 2021 and that it will then be subject to consultation with the political groups before presentation to Council for agreement. It may also be taken to the General Purposes Committee if required.

Member / Officer Relations Protocol

42. The Committee received an initial report at its February meeting providing an opportunity to consider whether Members wished to review the existing Member / Officer Relations Protocol as set out in the Constitution.

43. During discussion it was felt that the new Code of Conduct would have a big impact on the Protocol and that therefore it should be reviewed once the Code of Conduct was updated and agreed. This action has been added to the Committees 2021/22 workplan.

Members' Rights of Access to Information

44. At its October meeting, the Committee considered a briefing on the constitutional right of access to information for Members of the Council. The standard and additional rights for Members were noted and examples were given on the 'need to know' and the rights of Members on Committees.

45. The briefing paper generated a good discussion and a wide range of views were expressed. Particular points noted included:

- The role of the Member Enquiries process and how to balance the 'need to know' with the needs of Members to undertake their various roles.
- Occasions where it was appropriate to delay sharing of information such as when it was due to be published at a later date.
- The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and how it could request additional information from services in relation to reviews it was undertaking.

46. Following the discussion, the Committee asked for more details on the current review of the Member Enquiries process and this is on the workplan for 2020-21.

Register of Interests – Member Addresses

47. A recurring theme across the year concerned Member safety. At the October meeting the Committee considered a report highlighting the increase in the number of Members requesting that their home addresses be removed from the published Register of Interests under the Localism Act 2011. As recently at 2019 the Local Government Minister had written to Councils encouraging use of this option to minimise risk to Members (this followed a review of intimidation in public life by the Parliamentary Committee on Standards in Public Life).

48. It was noted that in 2018 only 2 Members had their home addresses withheld but that this had now increased to 21. The Committee heard that it was for the Member to present their concerns to the Monitoring Officer who could agree such requests.

49. A good discussion was held on the balance between a Member's right to take action when threatened against the public interest in knowing the Interests of their elected Members. It was agreed that Members had a right to feel safe in their own homes and removing addresses was a reasonable action where threats had been received. However, the public interest was also noted. It was confirmed that only home addresses were removed from the website. It was also agreed that in future where an address was removed the general area of the borough in which it was located would be retained to provide some transparency.

Terms of Reference Review

50. Following a suggestion at the October meeting of the Committee, a report was presented to the February meeting to begin a project to review the Committee's Terms of Reference (TOR). This was to ensure that the TORs were comprehensive and were written in clear language. The question was also raised as to whether the TORs set out were achievable and realistic.

51. The review began with a survey of existing and recent Members of the Committee to take their views. This was reported up to the Committee in February 2021. The general results were very positive. None of the functions in the TORs were identified as being extremely deficient. However, some potential improvements were noted. This work will be picked up in the Committees workplan for 2021-22.

Guidance Provided to Members who are appointed to Outside Bodies

52. The April Committee meeting received an initial paper launching a review of the guidance provided to Members who are appointed to Outside Bodies by the Council. It was agreed that the guidance needed a review both from a legal perspective but also to ensure it provided sufficient information and guidance for Members to understand their roles and the responsibilities that were would be required to fulfil.

53. The full review has been added to the workplan for 2021-222.

Governance at Council Owned Bodies

54. The April meeting also received a verbal update on a Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) recommendation in respect to the transparency of companies owned by the Council. The CSPL recommendation was that these bodies should be reported in the Annual Governance Statement and that they should publish relevant information such as board papers and reports. It was noted that Tower Hamlets Homes fully met these requirements but that other bodies did not.

55. Follow-up reports on this issue are due during 2021-22.

Member Attendance Update

56. At the July meeting, the Committee received the annual report setting out Member attendance at Council and Committee meetings. The report set out how attendance was recorded and provided details of attendance at meetings by the Mayor, Councillors and Co-optees. In particular the Committee noted the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic had had on Committee meetings from March to September 2020.

57. The Committee also noted that the General Purposes Committee (under its emergency powers on behalf of Council) had agreed a general extension for all Councillors until the end of October 2020 to the requirement to attend at least one meeting every six months, due to the Covid-19 pandemic disruption.

Standards and Code of Conduct in relation to planning and development matters

58. Following questions submitted by a Co-opted Member, the Committee received a report in July 2020 (and attached to the previous annual report as an appendix) on recent issues seen at other authorities around probity in relation to planning decisions.

59. The Committee were provided with reassurance that the Council had strong processes in place. Members of the Committee who were also members of the Council's Development and Strategic Development Committees reported on the strong culture of ethics and probity on those Committees.

60. The issues raised by the report will be included in training for the planning committees when appropriate.

The Covid-19 Pandemic and support for Members

61. Given the impact the Covid-19 pandemic was having on Members and the Council's decision making arrangements, the Committee asked for a report to its July meeting setting out how the pandemic had impacted the Council's arrangements and how Members were being supported through this time.

62. The report covered a number of areas including:

- How the Council had developed new virtual Committee meeting arrangements
- The impact on the work of the Speaker of the Council.
- That the Member Learning and Development Programme had been paused but that it was now starting up again as online events and briefings.
- The temporary introduction of an 'Urgent' Member Enquiries process during the early stages of the pandemic.
- That Member Surgeries had ceased for the time being.
- General support provided to Members, including the new ICT equipment being rolled out.

63. The Committee noted the impact on the Council's Committees and meetings and held an interesting discussion on early experiences of online meetings. It was noted that the legislation which allowed for remote meetings would expire in May 2021 and that there may be lobbying to encourage government to make the new rules permanent.

Standards Advisory Committee Work Planning for 2021-22

64. The Committee intends to undertake a substantial work programme during 2021-22, including looking at the following items.

- Bi-annual monitoring of complaints of alleged breach of the Code of Conduct for Members.
- Quarterly monitoring of gifts and hospitality registered.
- Bi-annual reports on DPI dispensations.
- Concluding its preparation of the proposed new Member Code of Conduct
- Following the conclusion of the Member Code of Conduct to conduct a review of the Member / Officer Relations Protocol.

- Members training programme including looking at the Member Induction programme planned for after the May 2022 elections with a particular focus on mandatory training.
- Implementation of CSPL best practice recommendations.
- Looking at what follows the Strengthening Local Democracy project.
- Continue its review of the Committee's Terms of Reference.
- Practical guidance for Members handling confidential information.
- News on ethics matters elsewhere including areas such as good practice, case law, ombudsman and quasi-judicial proceedings and similar.
- Members attendance at meetings.
- Annual report to Council.
- Annual review of the Member Code of Conduct

65. The 2021/22 work programme aims to continue to embed behaviours that support the seven principles in public life described in the Nolan report by encouraging Members to apply ethical standards in their day-to-day duties and to look at how these should influence their approach to discharging their responsibilities in their individual and collective capacities.

Conclusion

66. As Chair of the Committee I wish to thank my fellow committee members, both Independent Persons and the Monitoring Officer for their contributions to the Committee's business and their commitment to promoting and maintaining high standards of ethical conduct across the Council. I also wish to thank the officers of the Council for their work in supporting the Committee during the year.

67. I would particularly like to highlight how important it is that the Council has such dedicated co-opted Members who are active contributors to the Committee's discussions and have demonstrated commitment to the role of Standards in the authority. The involvement of co-opted Members should be considered as 'good governance'. We are ahead of many local authorities in this area.

John Pulford MBE
Independent Chair

Standards Advisory Committee – Terms of Reference and Procedures

(As agreed at the Standards Advisory Committee on 15 October 2020)

17. Standards Advisory Committee – Terms of Reference

Summary Description: The Committee performs a number of functions to maintain high standards of conduct in public life including promoting the Members Code of Conduct and considering potential breaches of the Code of Conduct.

The Committee may establish Sub-Committees to consider certain matters as set out in the ‘Functions’ below.

The Committee and any of its sub-committees may meet in private in accordance with relevant legislation as advised by the Monitoring Officer. Any meeting or part of a meeting that considers whether or not a complaint should be referred for investigation or, following an investigation should proceed to hearing, shall be held in private and all papers relating to that consideration shall remain confidential.

Membership: 5 elected members of the Council (not including the Mayor or more than 1 Cabinet member),

Co-opted Members

Plus up to 5 independent co-opted members.

Co-opted members will be entitled to vote at meetings under the provisions of section 13(4)(e) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The Standards Advisory Committee (SAC) shall be chaired by an independent co-opted member.

Independent Co-opted members shall be appointed by full Council on the recommendation of the Monitoring Officer. The term of appointment shall be 4 years unless otherwise determined by Council. Co-opted members may serve as many terms of appointment as the Council considers appropriate.

Note – Independent Persons

The Council has appointed two statutory Independent Persons to assist in dealing with complaints of alleged breach of the Code of Conduct for Members under section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011. They are not co-opted member of the SAC but may attend and observe any meeting of the Committee or a sub-committee established by it.

Functions	Delegation of Functions
1. Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by the Mayor, councillors and co-opted members of the Council.	None

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Code of Conduct for Members. 3. To monitor and advise the Council about the operation of the Code of Conduct for Members considering best practice and changes in the law. 4. Advising, training or arranging to train the Mayor, councillors and co-opted members on matters relating to ethics and probity and the Code of Conduct. 5. To appoint sub-committees for the purpose of discharging any of the Committee's functions including the consideration and determination of complaints of breach of the code of Conduct for Members. 6. As requested by the Monitoring Officer, to establish a Dispensations Sub-Committee to advise on any applications for dispensations in relation to participation at a meeting by a member with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest. 7. To deal with any reports from the Monitoring Officer on any matter relating to standards of conduct. 8. Other functions relating to the standards of conduct of members under any relevant statutory provision or otherwise. 	
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Quorum: A meeting of the Standards Advisory Committee or one of its sub-committees shall only be quorate where at least three members of the Committee or Sub-Committee are present for its duration and such quorum must include at least one councillor and at least one independent co-opted member.

Additional Information:

- Constitution Part A, Section 11 (The Standards Advisory Committee and the Code of Conduct for Members)
- Constitution Part C, Section 31 (The Code of Conduct for Members)
- Constitution Part D, Section 53 (Standards Advisory Committee Procedures)

Standards Advisory Committee Procedures

1. Composition

1.1 The Standards Advisory Committee shall be comprised of 5 Members of the Council (not including the Mayor or more than 1 Cabinet Member) and each political group may appoint up to 3 substitutes, appointed by the Council in accordance with the requirements of political proportionality; and up to 7 persons who are not Members or officers of the Council or any other relevant authority (i.e. Co-opted members).

1.2 The Co-opted member(s) will be entitled to vote at meetings under the provisions of section 13(4)(e) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The Standards Advisory Committee shall be chaired by a Co-opted member.

1.3 The Committee shall establish Hearings and other Sub-Committees in accordance with its terms of reference and these procedures.

2. Appointment of Co-Opted Members

2.1 A person may not be appointed as a Co-opted member of the Standards Advisory Committee or one of its sub-committees unless the appointment is approved by Full Council. The term of appointment shall be for 4 years unless otherwise determined by Council or the Co-optee does not continue to fulfil any required conditions as may be determined by the Authority from time to time. Co-opted members may serve as many terms of appointment as the Council considers appropriate.

3. Roles and Functions

3.1 The Standards Advisory Committee has the following roles:

(a) To recommend to the Monitoring Officer whether or not any complaint of a breach by the Mayor, a Councillor or a co-opted member of the Members Code of Conduct should be referred for investigation by the Monitoring Officer or an investigator appointed by the Monitoring Officer; and where a complaint has been subject to such investigation, to recommend whether or not the complaint should proceed to hearing. Where the Monitoring Officer considers that a complaint should not be subject to investigation or should not proceed to hearing, s/he shall convene an Investigation and Disciplinary Sub-Committee of the Standards Advisory Committee comprising at least 3 different Members of the Standards Advisory Committee (comprising 2 of the co-opted members and 1 Councillor) which shall make the final decision on the matter;

(b) To receive regular quarterly reports from the Monitoring Officer on the numbers of complaints of the Code received, the decisions taken by the Monitoring Officer (in consultation with the Independent Person) on such complaints and investigation outcomes where the investigation determines there was no evidence of a failure to comply with the code or where the investigation outcome recommends a local resolution;

(c) To convene a Hearings Sub-Committee of 3 Members of the Standards Advisory Committee comprising 2 of the co-opted members and 1 Councillor to consider any matter where the investigation finds evidence of a failure to comply with the Code and a local resolution is not possible or appropriate;

(d) To make such recommendations to Council in respect of the matter as the Hearings Sub-Committee considers appropriate as a result of any matter referred including;

(i) Reporting its findings to Council for information;

(ii) Recommending to the member's Group Leader (or in the case of ungrouped members, recommend to Council or to Committees) removal from any or all Committees or Sub-Committees of the Council;

(iii) Recommending to the Mayor removal from the Executive, or from particular Portfolio responsibilities;

(iv) Recommending the Monitoring Officer arrange training for the member;

(v) Recommending removal from outside appointments to which s/he has been appointed or nominated;

(vi) Recommending withdrawing facilities provided to the member by the Council, such as a computer, website and/or email and Internet access;

(vii) Recommending excluding the member from the Council's offices or other premises, except for meeting rooms as necessary for attending Council, Executive Committee and Sub-Committee meetings;

(viii) Recommending the Member to contact the Council via specified point(s) of contact;

(e) To convene a Hearings (Appeal) Sub-Committee of at least three different Members of the Standards Advisory Committee (comprising 2 of the co-opted members and 1 Councillor) to consider any appeal against a finding of, or sanction recommended by, the Hearings Sub-Committee;

(f) To receive reports on compliance with any recommendation(s) made for sanctions to be applied in respect of any member;

(g) Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by the Mayor, Members of the Council, co-opted members including church and parent governor representatives and where the Committee considers that there may be issues of concern recommending that the Monitoring Officer considers and reports on the issues raised;

(h) Assisting the Mayor, Members of the Council, co-opted members including church and other faiths and parent governor representatives to observe the Council's Code of Conduct for Members;

(i) Advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Code of Conduct for Members;

(j) Monitoring the operation of the Code of Conduct for Members;

(k) Advising, training or arranging to train the Mayor, Members of the Council and co-opted members including church and other faiths and parent governor representatives on matters relating to the Code of Conduct for Members;

(l) To act as an advisory body in respect of any matters referred to the Standards Committee by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) or Community Forums in respect of probity issues arising out of the codes and protocols applicable to relevant members of the LSP and Community Forums as set out in the Community Forum handbook and as may be amended from time to time;

(m) To advise on allegations of Member breaches of the Protocols set out in the constitution as may be referred to the Committee by the Monitoring Officer and to make recommendations with regard to such allegations as maybe so referred;

(n) Advising on local protocols for both Officer and Member governance;

(o) To monitor and review Member and Officer Procedures for registering interests and declaring gifts and hospitality;

(p) To receive periodic reports on the Council's Ethical Governance arrangements, on whistle blowing arrangements and complaints; and

(q) As requested by the Monitoring Officer, to establish a Dispensations Sub-Committee to advise on any applications for dispensations in relation to participation at a meeting by a member with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.

4. Validity of proceedings

4.1 A meeting of the Standards Advisory Committee or one of its sub-committees shall only be quorate where at least three members of the Committee or Sub-Committee are present for its duration and such quorum must include at least one councillor and at least one co-opted member.

4.2 Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972 applies in relation to meetings of the Standards Advisory Committee or its Sub-Committees as it applies to meetings of the Council.

5. Hearings Sub-Committee and Hearings (Appeal) Sub-Committee

5.1 Any Hearings Sub-Committee or Hearings (Appeal) Sub-Committee shall comprise a minimum of three Members of the Standards Advisory Committee at least two of whom shall be co-opted members.

5.2 The Hearings Sub-Committee shall consider complaints referred to it that the Mayor, an elected or co-opted Member of the Council may have failed to comply with the Council's Code of Conduct for Members or local protocol where the complaint has been subject to an investigation arranged by the Monitoring Officer and shall make recommendations accordingly. The Hearings Sub-Committee shall decide at the outset of the meeting whether it is in the public interest that the Hearing is held in

a public or private session in accordance with relevant statutory guidance as advised by the Monitoring Officer.

5.3 The membership of the Hearings (Appeal) Sub-Committee shall not include any member who served on the Hearings Sub-Committee that considered the same complaint.

5.4 The Independent Person, or if that person is unable to act a reserve Independent Person, shall have the right to attend all meetings of the Hearings Sub-Committee or Hearings (Appeal) Sub-Committee as an observer but may not vote or participate in the decision making.

6. Attendance Requirements

6.1 In the event that any Member of the Committee does not attend three or more consecutive meetings of the Committee, the Committee may draw the attention of the Council to such non-attendance and may recommend that the member concerned be replaced on the Committee.

6.2 The Committee shall not do so without first giving the absent Member an opportunity to make representations (which may be made in writing) as to their non-attendance and any matters they wish the Committee to take into account.


7. Procedures

7.1 The Committee shall maintain these procedures to enable it to discharge the arrangements under its Terms of Reference.

8. Confidentiality

8.1 The Committee and any of its Sub-Committees may meet in private in accordance with the relevant legislation as advised by the Monitoring Officer. Any meeting or part of a meeting that considers whether or not a complaint should be referred for investigation or, following an investigation should proceed to hearing, shall be held in private and all papers relating to that consideration shall remain confidential.

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Decision Report Cover Sheet: Council 21 July 2021	 TOWER HAMLETS
Cover Report of: Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services Main Report: Cllr Val Whitehead: Chair of the Audit Committee	Classification: Unrestricted
Annual Report of the Audit Committee	

Wards affected	All Wards
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Summary

At its meeting on 7 April 2021, the Audit Committee considered its Annual Report to Council. Following discussion, they agreed to forward the report to Council for consideration. The report will be introduced at the meeting by Cllr Val Whitehead, the Chair of the Audit Committee.

The report and its Appendices are therefore attached to this cover sheet as Appendix 1.

Recommendations:

The Council is recommended to:

1. Review the attached Annual Report to Council.
2. Agree to note the Annual Report to Council.

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<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Audit Committee</p> <p>7th April 2021</p>	
<p>Report of: Chair of Audit Committee – Cllr Val Whitehead</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Audit Committee Annual Report 2020/21</p>	

Originating Officer(s)	Farhana Zia
Wards affected	All wards

Executive Summary

The Chair's Audit Committee Annual Report is produced to reflect on the achievements of the Committee and is reported to Council. The report relates to the activity of the Committee in 2020/21.

Reference within the report assumes the draft accounts for 2018/19 and 2019/20, which are to be considered by the Committee at this meeting, will be presented and approved by the Committee. Should the accounts not be approved the report will be amended accordingly.

Recommendations:

The Audit Committee is recommended to:

1. Note and approve the Chair's Annual Report before this is presented to Council.

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AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

Foreword by the Chair of the Audit Committee

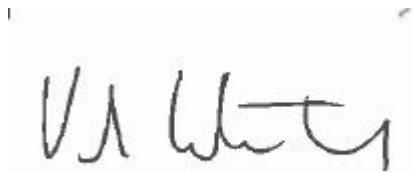
This has been a year like no other for Councillors and their support teams. I would like to thank our team for their work in making it possible for us to carry on meeting our objectives.

We have made some progress in meeting CIPFA guidance by carrying out our own self-assessment process and have an improvement plan in place for next year.

We have continued to receive reports from Internal Audit and have reviewed Fraud and Risk Management. I would like to thank the teams who continued to do this work throughout the pandemic restrictions.

We have worked with External Audit and the Finance team in order to not only bring the outstanding Accounts to a close but to set up systems which will allow swift and accurate finance reporting for the future.

Lastly, I would like to thank my fellow Councillors for continuing to scrutinise all the Council does. I have not been able to see you in person this year, but I sincerely hope next year will allow us to meet again in the Town Hall.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Val Whitehead', is centered on the page.

Councillor Val Whitehead, Chair of the Audit Committee

Introduction

Audit Committees are a key component of the Council's governance framework. Their function is to provide an independent and high-level resource to support good governance and strong public financial management.

The Audit committee is required, by its terms of reference, to submit an annual report to Council outlining the Audit Committee's activities over the previous year. This report summaries the work of the Audit Committee during 2020/2021 and how it has undertaken its responsibilities for reviewing the key areas within its remit. Specifically, these include:

- Internal Audit;
- Risk Management;
- Corporate Governance;
- Internal Control
- External Audit
- Counter Fraud; and
- Financial reporting and treasury management.

Terms of reference

The terms of reference for the Audit Committee are reviewed each year to ensure they represent current regulations and best practice as outlined within guidance for audit committees from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and are attached at **Appendix A**.

The terms of reference are reviewed by the Audit Committee on an annual basis at its first meeting of the municipal year, usually at the July meeting. However due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Annual General meeting (AGM) of the Council did not take place until the end of September 2020. As such the terms of reference were presented to the Audit Committee on the 12th November 2020 meeting, with three meetings scheduled for the municipal year. Namely, 12th November 2020, 28th January, and 7th April 2021.

There was a meeting held on the 21st July 2020, which formed part of the 2019/2020 municipal year, however will be referred to in this Annual report so to ensure all meetings that took place are reflected on, since the last report to Council.

Committee Information

Audit Committee Membership 2019/20 – for July 2020 meeting

Eight elected Members serve on the committee plus the Independent Person:

- Councillor Val Whitehead (Chair)
- Councillor Abdal Ullah (Vice-Chair)

- Councillor Mufeedah Bustin (Member) *
- Councillor Marc Francis (Member)
- Councillor Ehtasham Haque (Member)
- Councillor Ayas Miah (Member)
- Councillor Kyrsten Perry (Member)
- Councillor Andrew Wood (Member)
- Charlotte Webster (Independent Person)

There are four substitute members

- Councillor Mohammed Ahbab Hossain (Substitute)
- Councillor Gabriela Salva-Macallan (Substitute)*
- Councillor Bex White (Substitute)*
- Councillor Peter Golds (Substitute)

The substitute members identified with a *, have substituted for Councillor Mufeedah Bustin, who was on maternity leave, with each councillor covering one meeting respectively.

Audit Committee Membership 2020/21

Eight elected Members serve on the committee plus the Independent Person:

- Councillor Val Whitehead (Chair)
- Councillor David Edgar (Vice-Chair)
- Councillor Marc Francis (Member)
- Councillor Ayas Miah (Member)
- Councillor Puru Miah (Member)
- Councillor Kyrsten Perry (Member)
- Councillor Dan Tomlinson (Member)
- Councillor Andrew Wood (Member)
- Charlotte Webster (Independent Person)

There are four substitute members

- Councillor Kevin Brady (Substitute)
- Councillor Abdal Ullah (Substitute)
- Councillor Bex White (Substitute)
- Councillor Peter Golds (Substitute)

Audit Committee Meetings

The Committee has met on four occasions during the year with meeting dates structured around the regular receipt of annual assurance reports, external and internal audit cycles and statutory requirements around the production of the Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement.

The frequency of meetings ensures the Committee can fulfil its responsibilities in an efficient and effective way. The number of meetings are aligned to the recommendations made by CIFPA.

The July meeting of the Committee is particularly important, as the Annual Statement of Accounts and the agreement of the Annual Governance Statement takes place. However due to the extensive work required to correct the 2018/19 and 2019/20 set of accounts, the Committee has received regular updates on the progress made. Members have had the opportunity to probe the accounts and comment on the Annual Governance Statement which accompanies the accounts.

Committee Business

A list of reports considered by the Audit Committee can be found in **Appendix B**. The main outcomes of the committee's work in relation to its core functions can be summarised as follows:

Internal Control

The Committee:

- Received and considered the Head of Internal Audit's annual opinion on the Council's governance, risk management and internal control environment for 2019/20.
- Received and considered regular reports from the Head of Internal Audit on audits of internal controls, risk management and governance. The reports also provided monitoring information on the implementation of agreed audit recommendations. Members specifically considered the following limited or nil assurance reports raised by the Head of Internal Audit during in year:
 - IT Business Continuity and Resilience
 - Financial Delegations
 - Financial Safeguarding for Service Users with Learning Disability
 - Monitoring of Domiciliary Care Contracts
 - Corporate Governance
 - IR35 – Management and Control of Off Payroll Engagement
 - Back up Schedules and Protection
 - Control and Monitoring of Parking Permits
 - Financial Assessments for Residential and Non-Residential Support
 - Capital Programme Governance

- Management of Acquisition of Properties for Temporary Accommodation
 - Corporate Governance
 - PCI and DSS Compliance
 - Management of Appointeeships and Deputyships
 - Cyber and Network Security
 - Treasury Management
 - IT Remote Working
 - Debtors and Income Recovery
 - Local Community Fund
 - General Ledger
 - New Town Hall
 - Pension's Administration
 - Staff Declarations of Interest
 - Housing and Allocations
- Requested the attendance of senior officers responsible for these areas to attend Audit Committee meetings to explain the remedial action taken and if recommendations made by the Internal Audit team had been implemented.
 - Continued to provide support to the Internal Audit Team to ensure management was responsive to recommendations made and agreed.

Risk Management

The Committee:

- Received and considered quarterly updates on Risk Management activity across the Council.
- Received and considered quarterly updates on the Corporate Risk Register.
- Received and considered the Risk Management Strategy.
- Deep-dived Directorate Risk registers – Place & Resources

Anti-Fraud

The Committee:

- Received and considered quarterly updates on the Fraud investigations undertaken by the Corporate Fraud team. The team investigated over 250 cases of alleged fraud.
- Reviewed the Anti-Bribery Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy.

Financial Reporting

The Committee:

- Received and considered the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and performance.
- Received regular reports on the progress to revise and finalise the Council's 2018/2019 and 2019/20 Statement of Accounts.

Internal Audit:

The Committee:

- Agreed the Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21.
- Received and approved the Internal Audit and Anti-Fraud Charter
- Received and considered information on the performance and effectiveness of the Internal Audit Team.

External Audit:

The Committee:

- Received and considered the External Audit Plan.
- Received and considered reports on the External Auditor's progress against the agreed plan.

Governance:

The Committee:

- Oversaw the production of the 2018/19 and 2019/20 Annual Governance Statements
- Held the Mayor, Corporate Leadership Team and Senior Managers to account in relation to governance and performance issues within the organisation.

Approval of 2018/19 & 2019/20 Annual Financial Accounts

The Annual Financial Accounts are signed off by the Committee in July each year. However, the Financial Accounts for 2018/19 and 2019/20 were delayed due to issues regarding the accounting procedures and records. The methodology used has been scrutinised by the external auditors and issues have been worked through to ensure that going forward the Council has robust accounting procedures in place. The Chair and Committee members have received regular updates on the progress being made and are pleased to report the Annual Financial Accounts for 2018/19 and 2019/20 were approved by the Committee at its April 2021 meeting.

Approval of 2018/19 and 2019/20 Annual Governance Statements

The 2018/19 draft Annual Governance statement was presented to Committee on several occasions and was updated taking into account the views of Members. The Chief Executive Mr Will Tuckley attended the Committee's April and July 2020 meetings, when he presented Annual Governance Statement and commented upon the overall health and governance culture in the organisation. The final version of the Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19 was agreed by the Committee at the July 2020 meeting. The Committee subsequently received and agreed the 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement at its meeting in January 2021.

Training and Development

Training and development of members has been provided to Members of the Audit Committee. Members have received specific training on their roles and responsibilities with training provided on key areas such as financial accounting and risk management. Training sessions are held approximately a week before the main meeting of the Committee. Below are the dates of the training sessions held and the topics covered:

Audit Training Date	Audit Committee Mtg Date	Training on
Monday, 9 th November 2020	Thursday, 12 th November 2020	Treasury Management
Thursday, 14 th January 2021	Thursday, 28 th January 2021	Statement of Accounts; Accounting Policies
Wednesday, 31 st March 2021	Wednesday, 7 th April 2021	Risk Management
	Carry forward to new municipal year.	Internal Audit (to include mention of External Audit) and Anti-Fraud

Audit Committee Effectiveness – Self Assessment

In 2021 the Audit Committee considered its own performance by means of a self-assessment; eight members of the Committee responded. In summary, the self-assessment identified the following positive areas of performance.

Members of the Committee:

- Fully understand their role and expected contribution.
- Believe the committee is the right size with a good mix of knowledge, skills and experience.

- Have received sufficient induction and training.
- Understood and recognised the role and benefits of the Independent Person.
- Have held sufficient, appropriate length meetings.
- Have received timely and accurate reports.
- Have recorded decisions and communicated them appropriately.
- Have recorded and tracked actions arising from the meetings.
- Believe the committee operates in an atmosphere of trust and openness.
- Have held effective meetings
- Maintain a professional, constructive relationship with Internal and External Audit.
- Have discharged the Committee's responsibilities as set out in the Terms of Reference.
- Have reviewed outcomes from Internal Audit's activity and challenged management on progress.
- Have reviewed and challenged risk management.
- Have discussed external audit results and monitored managements progress with actions.

The following areas were identified for improvement:

- Be more proactive in consider emerging issues.
- Be more proactive in reviewing and providing feedback on the performance of Internal and External Audit.
- To meet privately with Internal and External Audit, at least annually.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the Audit Committee has demonstrated that it has added value to the Council's overall governance, risk management and internal control framework.

Throughout 2021-22, the Audit Committee will continue to require senior officers to attend meetings to aid its understanding of the services and issues identified through the audit process, but also to ensure that internal and external recommendations are given the priority required and implemented in a timely basis.

In addition, the Audit Committee will meet privately with Internal Audit and External Audit (at least once during 21/22) will review the performance of Internal Audit and External Audit and give feedback to both, and will explore the inclusion of a horizon scanning item to the Committee's agenda to identify emerging issues that might require assurance and/or review by the Committee.

Audit Committee

Summary Description:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Audit Committee is a key component of the Council's corporate governance. It provides an independent and high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards. 2. The purpose of the Audit Committee is to provide independent assurance to the Members of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the internal control environment. It provides independent review of the Council's governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting and annual governance processes. It oversees internal audit and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place. 	
Membership: 8 Councillors. The Audit Committee shall not be chaired by a Member of the Executive.	
Independent Person: The Audit Committee may choose to appoint an Independent Person (IP) to advise and support the Committee. The IP will not be a member of the Audit Committee but would be entitled to attend all the meetings and associated training of the Committee. The IP can receive and comment on any reports submitted to the Committee, including restricted agenda items.	
Functions	Delegation of Functions
<u>Governance, Risk and Control</u>	None
1. To review the Council's corporate governance arrangements against the good governance framework, including the ethical framework and consider the local code of governance.	
2. To review the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, taking into account internal audit's opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control.	None
3. To consider the Council's arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.	None
4. To consider the Council's framework of assurance and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the Council.	None
5. To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management in the Council.	None
6. To monitor progress in addressing risk-related issues reported to the committee.	None

7. To consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.	None
8. To review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the Council from fraud and corruption.	None
9. To monitor the counter-fraud strategy, actions and resources.	None
10. To review the governance and assurance arrangements for significant partnerships or collaborations.	None
<u>Internal audit</u>	None
11. To approve the internal audit charter.	
12. To review proposals made in relation to the appointment of external providers of internal audit services.	None
13. To approve the risk-based internal audit plan, including internal audit's resource requirements, the approach to using other sources of assurance and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources.	None
14. To approve significant interim changes to the risk-based internal audit plan and resource requirements.	None
15. To make appropriate enquiries of both management and the Head of Internal Audit to determine if there are any inappropriate scope or resource limitations.	None
16. To consider any impairments to independence or objectivity arising from additional roles or responsibilities outside of internal auditing of the Head of Internal Audit. To approve and periodically review safeguards to limit such impairments.	None
17. To consider reports from the Head of Internal Audit on internal audit's performance during the year, including the performance of external providers of internal audit services. These will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Updates on the work of internal audit including key findings, issues of concern and management actions as a result of internal audit work. b. Regular reports on the results of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme (QAIP). c. Reports on instances where the internal audit function does not conform to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and the associated Local Government Application Note (LGAN) published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) considering whether the non-conformance is significant enough that it must be included in the AGS. 	None
18. To consider the Head of Internal Audit's annual report, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The statement of the level of conformance with the PSIAS and LGAN and the results of the QAIP that support the statement. 	None

b. The opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control together with the summary of the work supporting the opinion – these will assist the committee in reviewing the AGS.	
19.To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested.	None
20.To receive reports outlining the action taken where the Head of Internal Audit has concluded that management has accepted a level of risk that may be unacceptable to the authority or there are concerns about progress with the implementation of agreed actions.	None
21.To contribute to the QAIP and in particular to the external quality assessment of internal audit that takes place at least once every five years.	None
22.To consider a report on the effectiveness of internal audit to support the AGS, where required to do so by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	None
23.To provide free and unfettered access to the Audit Committee chair for the Head of Internal Audit, including the opportunity for a private meeting with the committee.	None
24.To commission work from internal audit.	None
<u>External audit</u>	None
25.To support the independence of external audit through consideration of the external auditor's annual assessment of its independence and review of any issues raised by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) or the authority's auditor panel as appropriate.	
26.To consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports and the report to those charged with governance.	None
27.To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor.	None
28.To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.	None
29.To commission work from external audit.	None
30.To advise and recommend on the effectiveness of relationships between external and internal audit and other inspection agencies or relevant bodies.	None
<u>Financial reporting</u>	None
31.To review the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Council.	
32.To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.	None


<u>Accountability arrangements</u> 33.To report to those charged with governance on the committee’s findings, conclusions and recommendations concerning the adequacy and effectiveness of their governance, risk management and internal control frameworks, financial reporting arrangements, and internal and external audit functions.	None
34.To report to full Council on a regular basis on the committee’s performance in relation to the terms of reference and the effectiveness of the committee in meeting its purpose.	None
35.To publish an annual report on the work of the committee.	None
Quorum: 3 Members of the Committee	

AUDIT COMMITTEE AGENDA ITEMS – FROM JULY 2020 TO MAY 2021

Reports	21 st July 2020	12 th November 2020	28 th January 2021	7 th April 2021
Annual Financial Accounts 2018/19 & 2019/20 – progress reports	✓	✓	✓	✓
Annual Governance Statement 2018/19 & 2019/20	✓ (2018/19)		✓ (2019/20)	
Annual Insurance Report 2019-2022	✓			
Annual Internal Audit and Counter-Fraud Strategy Plan	✓		✓ (Update of Anti-Fraud Strategy)	
Annual Review of Anti-Bribery Policy			✓	
Annual Risk Management Report 2018/19				
Annual Self-Assessment and report of the Audit Committee 2019/20 & 2020/21	✓ (2019/20)			✓ (2020/21)
Anti-Money Laundering Policy Report 2019-2020				✓
Audit Committee Terms of Reference		✓		
External Audit Report – Year end 31/03/20		✓		
Head of Internal Audit Annual report 2019/20	✓			
Independent Review of Accounts Closure 2018/20 and Improvement Plan		✓	✓	
Internal Audit & Anti-Fraud Report Q1, Q2, Q3 & Q4	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internal Audit Charter				✓
Review of Code of Corporate Governance	✓ (2019/20)			✓ (2020/21)
RIPA Policy 2020				✓
Risk Management Report Q1, Q2, Q3 & Q4	✓	✓	✓ (plus Place Directorate Risk	

			Register)	
Risk Management Strategy	✓			
Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2020-21		✓		
Treasury Management Report 2019/20		✓		
Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Investment Strategy & Capital Strategy report 2020-21			✓	
Whistleblowing Report	✓ (2019/20)		✓ (Update of Whistleblowing Strategy)	✓ (2020/21)

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<p>Council</p> <p>21 July 2021</p>	
<p>Report of: James Thomas, Director of Children and Culture</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2020-2021</p>	

Lead Member	Councillor Asma Begum, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Children, Youth Services and Education
Originating Officer(s)	Richard Baldwin, Divisional Director Children's Social Care
Wards affected	All wards
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	People are aspirational, independent and have equal access to opportunities

Executive Summary

The Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2020 to 2021 sets out the purpose of the board, how it functions in Tower Hamlets, what has been achieved over the last year and future priorities and challenges. The report includes sections focused on engagement with young people, including their views on key issues and challenges ahead, and the work we do with Foster Carers.

Recommendations:

Council is recommended to:

1. Note the contents of the Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2020-21

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Not applicable.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Not applicable.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Tower Hamlets Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) demonstrates our continuing commitment to the corporate parenting principles and shows how we deliver on them across many partnerships and services. The board meets on a quarterly basis and has representation from Councillors, young people, foster-carers, partner organisations and senior managers from across the Council.
- 3.2 Alongside the Children Living in Care Council (CLICC) the board provides a forum where children and young people in the care of the council have direct access to senior leaders and decision makers to share their views and raise and address issues. The board is able to take a strategic approach to the experiences of children looked after and care leavers and work with partners to continually develop and strengthen practice in relation to our corporate parenting responsibilities.
- 3.3 The annual report includes a section focused on engagement with young people, including how the Children Living in Care Council (CLICC) works with the CPB, plans for the future of the CLICC and key issues for 2021 and onwards from the perspective of the young people.
- 3.4 The CPB Annual Report 2019 – 2020 provides information on a wide range of achievements including:
- Educational attainment - 53% of CLA in the Virtual School are making expected progress in the core subjects of English/Maths (Spring 2021).
 - Provision of laptops via the DFE scheme for all young people in care (overseen by the Virtual School).
 - Pupil Education Plans (PEP) - 98% of pupils overseen by the Virtual School have had a PEP meeting in the last term.
 - Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) focus groups for Children Looked After (CLA) provided an opportunity to explore their experiences of accessing mental health support whilst they were in care and make recommendations for service improvements.
 - Personal and Professional Development Programme for CLA/CL's was delivered in response to concerns about education, employment and training opportunities following the pandemic.
 - The Fostering Service established a Fostering Therapeutic Service dedicated to working with Tower Hamlets foster carers and social workers to improve the wellbeing of CLA and Children under Special Guardianship orders.
 - The Health of CLA & Care Leavers Steering Group delivered a range of achievements in 2020 which has been focused on improved partnership working among professionals across whole system (Health, Social Care & Education).
- 3.5 The report includes reflections on the Covid 19 emergency as well as providing an overview of recent work and plans for the future. This includes:

- The Children Living in Care Council (CLICC) will continue work to expand membership including the establishment of two other CLICC forums 'Juniors CLICC – 8 to 12-year olds' and 'Teen CLICC – 13 to 17-year olds'.
- Care Leaver Employability Working Group – following a successful application by the CLICC to be a part of the programme this work will aim to share best practise and apply that learning to develop how we work with local employers to provide employment opportunities for young people with care experience.
- Care Leavers App – to be launched in 2021, providing help for young people leaving care by enabling them to access local information and support and advice for their wellbeing.
- Virtual School - supporting Post-16 students into education and employment, including work towards the ambition to be a 'Virtual College' and working with staff from the Behaviour and Attendance Service to support vulnerable young people to keep them on course and prevent mid-year drop out.
- Creation of two further Mockingbird Hubs (part of the Fostering Network) – the Mockingbird Programme is aimed at improving the stability of fostering placements and strengthening the relationships between carers, children and young people, fostering services and birth families
- Health of CLA & CL's Steering Group – goals in 2021 include increasing Children and Young People (CYP) involvement in decision making and initiatives, improving CYP transitions and Queen Mary University of London Integration Workshops to develop service maps and aid service integration spanning housing, health & wellbeing, education, training & employment.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Tower Hamlets Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) is committed to delivering on the corporate parenting principles for all children in care and care leavers. This report provides information about how the board does this through its activities, engagement and plans for the future.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,
 - Crime Reduction,
 - Safeguarding.
 - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

5.2 There are no other specific statutory implications.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 There are no direct financial implications to this report

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 Section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 sets out seven principles which local authorities should follow when carrying out functions in relation to children who are or have been looked after by them. Broadly speaking these principles require local authorities to aim to secure the best possible outcome for these children and young people.

7.2 Statutory guidance 'Applying corporate parenting principles to looked after children and care leavers' (February 2018) sets out how these principles should be applied.

7.3 Although the creation and maintenance of a Corporate Parenting Board is not a statutory requirement, it is suggested as good practice in the guidance. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 permits a local authority to do anything which is calculated to facilitate the discharge of any of its functions.

7.4 The matters referred to in this report comply with the above legislation and guidance.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2020-21

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

Tracy Stanley, Strategy & Policy Officer - Children and Culture

**EVERY
CHANCE**
for **EVERY
CHILD**

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Draft Tower Hamlets Corporate Parenting Board
Annual Report 2020/21

Chair's Foreword

This has been another busy and challenging year for all involved in supporting young people who are cared for by Tower Hamlets. The continued concerns in relation to the Covid 19 pandemic and the emerging concerns linked to its persistence mean that the emotional and physical welfare of all young people has been a key priority for the Council.

Of particular importance have been the group of young people who are cared for by our-selves. We have needed to ensure that foster-carers, teachers, social workers and all other professionals in the lives of our young people have focused on maintaining good relationships, and where safe to do so these need to be face to face. I have seen and heard of many very imaginative ways in which relationships have been maintained and encouraged to flourish despite the continuing challenges of Covid.

As the roll-out of the vaccination process continues, I am hopeful that the next 12 months can see us taking some important steps back towards a sense of normality and to bring back for our young people the opportunities and experiences that we had prior to the pandemic.

The Parenting Board has also developed and seen a number of changes over the past 12 months. In March I was appointed as the new lead member for Children, Youth Services and Families, and I have really enjoyed the new challenges that this role brings. As a

parent myself I fully understand the importance of ensuring that young people are prioritised and celebrated. I would also like to thank my predecessor, Cllr Danny Hassell for the work that he undertook over the past three years.

However, it is also important to look forward, and the work of the Corporate Parenting Board must continue to develop and respond to the challenges around us. We need to continue to strengthen the work that has begun this year to improve the apprenticeship offer we have for care-leavers, and we must also focus on different ways to engage with the young people in our care, particularly our younger children. I know that this is a priority for the CLICC (Children Living in Care Council) over the next 12 months.

I look forward to working with you.

Councillor Asma Begum
Deputy Mayor

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Children looked after and care leavers in Tower Hamlets

Children Looked After

306 children were looked after by the local authority (end of Mar 2021)

Under 5	55
5 to 9	43
10 to 15	105
16 to 17	103

There were 29 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) (end of Mar 2021)

CLA long term placement stability 73% (end of Mar 2021)

Care Leavers

At 31st March 2021 the Through Care Service was working with a cohort of 435 young people (between the ages of 14 – 25)

Education, training and employment

62% of pupils making expected progress (autumn term 2020/21)

95% of pupils had a personal education plan meeting during the term (autumn term 2020/21)

98% of allocated care leavers had a pathway plan (end of Mar 2021)

73% of allocated care leavers were in employment, education or training (end of Mar 2021)

Average no. of placement moves 1.5 (end of Mar 2021)

Health

86% of Children Looked After had an annual health check within 12 months (end Mar 2021)

60% of Children Looked After had an annual dental check within 12 months (end Mar 2021)

Accommodation

96% of allocated care leavers were in suitable accommodation (at end of Mar 2021)

Governance

Legal Context

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 (Section 1) sets out seven corporate parenting principles which local authorities must have regard to for looked after children or care leavers. Statutory guidance for local authorities 'Applying corporate parenting principles to looked-after children and care leavers' was published in February 2018. The guidance highlights that the critical question for local authorities as the 'corporate parent' should be 'would this be good enough for my child'?

The principles

In order to thrive, children and young people have certain key needs that good parents generally meet. The corporate parenting principles set out seven principles that local authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and young people, as follows:

1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
2. To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
3. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people

4. To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
6. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
7. To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

The Board

The Tower Hamlets Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) demonstrates our continuing commitment to the corporate parenting principles and shows how we deliver on them across many partnerships and services. The board meets on a quarterly basis and has representation from Councillors, young people, foster-carers, partner organisations and senior managers from across the Council.

The diagram on page 6 sets out the membership of the board and a full list is provided at Appendix A. Appendix B provides an overview of the topics covered in CPB meetings during 2020/21.

Alongside the Children in Care Council, the board provides a forum where children and young people in the care of the council have direct access to senior leaders and decision makers to share their views and raise and address issues.

The board aims to take a strategic approach to the experiences of children looked after and care leavers and work with partners to continually develop and strengthen practice in relation to our corporate parenting responsibilities.

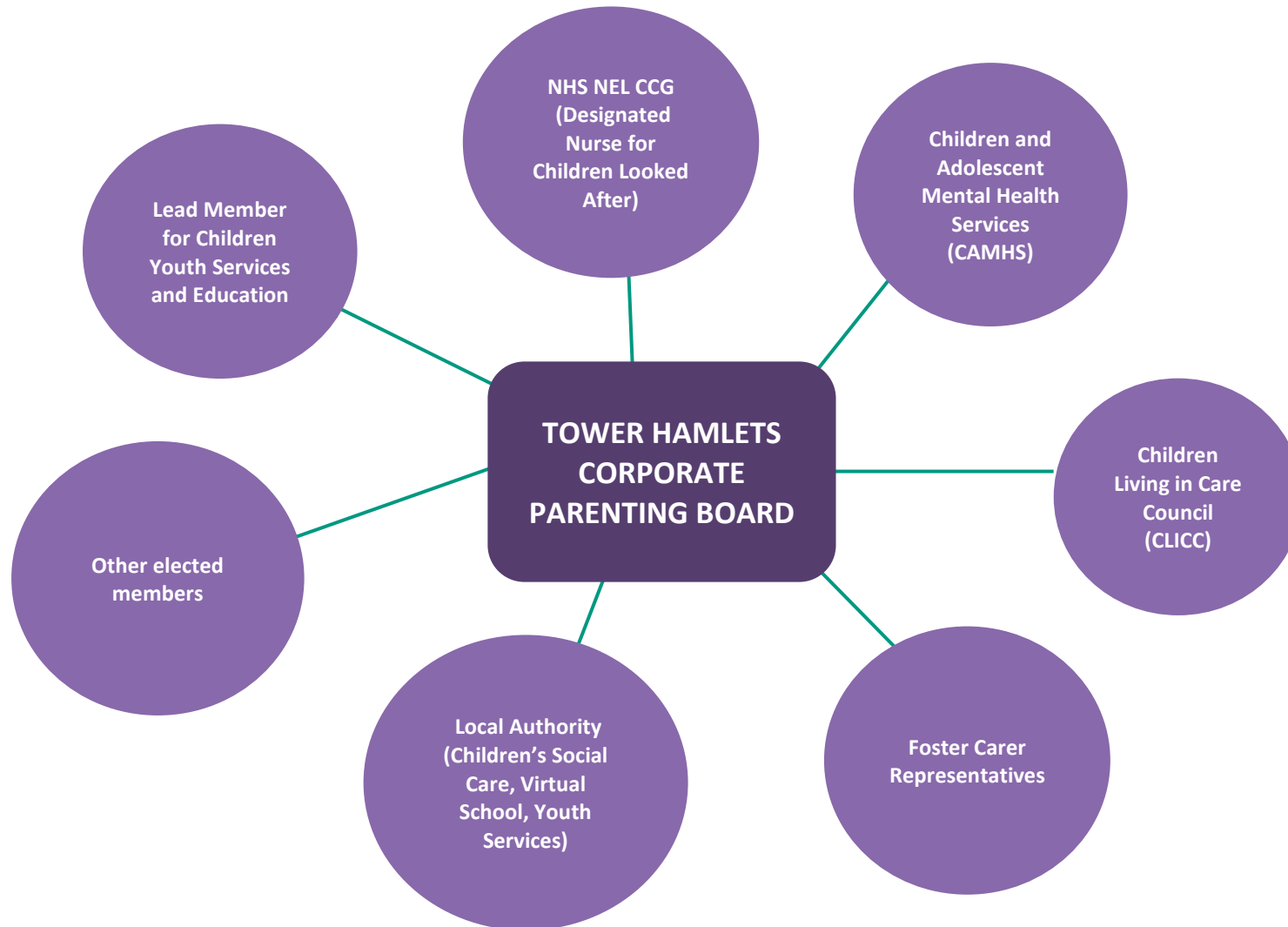
Responding to Covid 19

The challenges of Covid 19 continue to be significant. Despite the roll out of the government's vaccination programme, we are clear that the long-term impact of Covid 19 for young people remains an area that the Corporate Parenting Board must continue to address. In particular we highlight the following issues where work has been undertaken and will remain a priority for action:

- **Digital Poverty:** The roll-out of lap-tops for young people in care and Care-Leavers was the focus of considerable activity in the initial months of the pandemic. We were able to quickly ensure that all school-age children that we care for had their own lap-top in and had access to connectivity so that lessons and learning could be maintained. We have also ensured that we worked with Care Leavers and those supporting our care-leavers to ensure they also access connectivity to assist with college courses training and employment. This was been more challenging because of the range of different accommodation that some care-leavers have and the varying strength of broadband capacity within accommodation. However, we feel that we are now on top of this.

- **Well-Being and Emotional Health:** This was (and continues to be) a considerable issue for many of our young people. The launch and roll-out of the "Kooth" app, designed to assist with well-being issues, has been very positively received and the app is well used. We have also sought to work closely with CAMHS colleagues to ensure that the embedded facility we have for children in care is fully utilised and that carers are aware of its availability. This facility has also been of considerable assistance.
- **NEET:** Covid 19 has greatly affected how young people can access opportunities for training and employment. This is one of the reasons why the emphasis on Council apprenticeships is so important for our young people. The pandemic has seen a major impact on jobs within the borough and creating new and different training and employment opportunities has to remain a priority for the Council.

Membership of the Tower Hamlets Corporate Parenting Board



Participation and engagement with children and young people

The Tower Hamlets Children Living in Care Council (CLICC)

The Tower Hamlets Children Living in Care Council (CLICC) provides an opportunity for children looked after and care leavers to give their views and shape and influence the parenting that they receive at every level. The CLICC makes sure there is a way for young people to communicate directly with senior managers and elected members about things that matter to them. It also provides opportunities to meet new people, gain new skills, be supported to access wider services and take part in creative activities which boost self-esteem and confidence.

The Youth Service has created a post within the service to support the work of the CLICC & young carers so that more focused work can be undertaken and the young people in the CLICC are supported. This role helps to ensure that their voice is heard within the council at all levels as well as working with the CLICC to coproduce services that affect them and other young people to improve their lived experience.

As a result of the pandemic lockdown there were many months in 2020 when the CLICC were unable to meet as usual at KitKat Terrace. Fortnightly virtual meetings were organised as an alternative and as restrictions eased arrangements were made for the group to meet in person at the Haileybury Youth Centre via pre-booked sessions. This made it possible for young people

to socialise and have fun with activities such as basketball and table tennis, as well as an opportunity to eat together.

Summarised below are some of the key areas of work taken forward by the CLICC in 2020/21:

- **Emotional wellbeing** - young people highlighted the importance of being able to access timely, effective support for their emotional wellbeing at CPB meetings and through the CLICC. In response a series of focus groups were set up by Tower Hamlets Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and facilitated by a Clinical Psychologist and CAMHS Social Worker. The sessions provided an opportunity for young people to explore their experiences of accessing mental health support whilst they were in care and make recommendations for service improvements.
- **Personal and Professional Development Programme** - young people have raised their concerns about the opportunities which will be available to them especially when considering the impact of the pandemic on education, employment and training. The programme offered young people the chance to explore goals and consider how they could overcome barriers. The programme offered young people the chance to explore their ambitions and goals as well as considering how they could overcome barriers. By working as a group over several sessions the young people were able to encourage

and support each other as they identified their aspirations on a personal and professional basis.

- **Defining the future priorities for young people** - at the Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) in early 2021 a presentation was given by the Children Living in Care Council (CLICC) Team and young people representatives setting out what their priorities were and what they would like to see happening in the future. This 'Wish List' is shown below and will be used as a foundation to develop an action plan for the next 12 to 18 months which will enable CLICC and the board to monitor progress on delivery.

CLICC 'Wish List'

- Creating wrap around services – identifying gaps in service delivery and exploring how feedback from young people can be embedded in practice.
- Strengthening joined-up approach to transitions – working with young people to find ways to make transitions smoother in the future.
- Creating CLICC Ambassadors Scheme – to represent children looked after and care leavers by advocating for them and being their voice.
- Training and development for social workers – young people to help shape the future training offer, including awareness

of the wider services and opportunities that young people may need to access.

- Affordable travel – improving awareness of, and access to, travel entitlements and increasing the offer through the Pan-London CLICC Participation Group.
- Local Offer for Care Leavers – delivering a more 'young person friendly' resource.
- Relationships with professionals and agencies – establishing ways that young people can easily raise and address any concerns about relationships with staff.
- Referral processes – working with young people to identify challenges with referral processes ensuring support is provided and reducing the need to repeat information.
- Mental health and wellbeing – finding more ways to provide support around emotional wellbeing for young people.

Role of Foster Carers

The Corporate Parenting Board continues to benefit from the membership of two Foster Carer Representatives who are also members of the Tower Hamlets Foster Carers Association (THFCA). They bring their considerable experience and expertise to the board and help ensure that the voice of foster carers inform all discussions, actions taken and planning for the future. They are also able to raise any issues or concerns which affect foster carers so that the board can help to seek solutions when needed.

Tower Hamlets Foster Carers Association (THFCA)

The THFCA aims to bring all foster carers together to offer support and be a voice for them. They do this by working closely with the council and other partners in order to put carer's views and concerns forward. The THFCA holds an Annual General Meeting, facilitates support groups, attends the London FCA Forum and help as Ambassadors in the recruitment of new carers. Three committee members regularly facilitate the 'Skills to Foster' group and four members are mentors.

The THFCA also organises a range of events and activities which bring together foster carers and families. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic it was not possible to hold the planned

events in 2020 but as the restrictions change trips to seaside resorts and weekend breaks are being explored to help support foster carers and their children after a very challenging year.

The Tower Hamlets Fostering Service

There have been some staffing changes in the Fostering Service during 2020/21 and with the addition of some new colleagues the service is focused on ensuring a secure workforce which will provide stability as it continues to develop further.

Several new initiatives are being implemented to deliver improvements which will better support carers and refocus and re-energise the service. This will also help to improve the sense of connection with foster carers after the lockdown periods. Fortnightly email updates are being sent out to strengthen communication between the department and carers and help restore the sense of community and family. An online survey is being sent out to foster carers in 2021 and feedback received will help the service understand the challenges carers face, their views and concerns and to develop actions in response.

Key Achievements 2020/21

- **Educational attainment** - 53% of Children Looked After in the Virtual School are making expected progress in the core subjects of English/Maths (Spring 2021). This rises to 57% for those in care for one year.
- **Blended learning and digital provision** - the Virtual school has overseen provision of laptops have been provided via the DfE scheme for all young people in care (via the DfE scheme). The move to a blended learning approach in Tower Hamlets schools has been reflected in additions to the Virtual School website with an app to support learners and the creation of a Microsoft Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Tower Hamlets will be the first Virtual School with a VLE capability fully funded by the DfE to run sessions. This will greatly enhance our ability to support young people out of borough: 60% of the cohort.
- **Tuition support** - the Tower Hamlets Virtual School made representations to the DfE and National Tuition Programme (NTP) about the need for Virtual Schools to make direct bookings for tuition to support learners out of school. Access to the scheme was secured for all Virtual School Heads nationwide, enhancing the ability to support these most vulnerable learners in care in or out of borough.
- **Training for Virtual School Staff** – training delivered by North East London Care Commissioners which provided an insight into the care experience of young people. This has included being mindful of the use of language when writing reports and recording events, supporting mental well-being, pupils in residentials and those subject to placement change.
- **Training for Foster Carers** – despite the pandemic the Virtual School has continued to offer training to foster carers on education matters from primary to post 16 cohorts.
- **Pupil Education Plans (PEP)** - 98% of pupils overseen by the Virtual School have had a PEP meeting in the last term (Spring term). 95% of these plans were rated Green and Amber which means they are completed to a high standard and within time frames.
- **Stepladder PLUS Programme** - young people have been supported by the Sir John Cass Foundation with £15,000 to launch the Stepladder PLUS programme in Tower Hamlets. This is a 6-step financial education programme for 15 to 17 year olds who are in care. For each step they complete, the young person earns a reward into their Child Trust Fund or Junior ISA. The total rewards for full completion are £1500. Six pupils are taking part in the borough and they have so far added £2,400 to their children trust funds.

Key Achievements 2020/21

- **Step challenges** - with young people staying inside more as a result of the pandemic a step challenge was introduced by the CLICC to help address the negative impacts on physical and emotional wellbeing. Teams of young people and council staff challenged and supported each other to be more active and the first challenge was so successful that a second was held later in 2020.
- **First Aid Training for young people from the CLICC** – as a result of feedback from young people a workshop was delivered remotely using a large screen at a local youth centre and mannequins which had been arranged in advance. The session gave the young people an opportunity to learn the basics of first aid for emergency situations, with certificates issued on completion.
- **Improving functional skills in Maths and English** - a need was identified for training so that young people are better ready for employment or are able to progress into the next stage of their education. An external provider was found and eight young people have been referred for free basic Functional Skills Maths and English training. Work continues to find other agencies or establish further initiatives to address the issue.
- **The Through Care Service;** has worked hard to develop its Care Leavers app. The app has been designed and co-produced with young people and is now ready for launch.
- **Mockingbird Programme (part of the Fostering Network)** - the two current Mockingbird Hubs continued to meet virtually in 2020 on a fortnightly basis. This meant activities continued to be delivered to engage children and young people as well as providing support to carers.
- The groups organised events such as quizzes, online parties and the creation of birthday videos to ensure children felt special. Carers provided feedback noting that they really enjoyed seeing the children on their screens and although it was not the same as meeting in person it had helped give them a strong feeling of community and family.

Key Achievements 2020/21

- **The Fostering Service** - established a Fostering Therapeutic Service which is a clinical psychology led service dedicated to working with Tower Hamlets foster carers and social workers to improve the wellbeing of Children Looked After and Children under Special Guardianship orders.
- The service aims to improve outcomes for children through strategic level change in the training and support offered to assessing and supervising social workers and foster carers. The service bridges health and social care and has strong links with the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). The overarching goal is to improve the wellbeing of children, to support placement stability and improve the quality of placements through training and support to foster carers and social workers.
- **The Health of Children Looked After and Care Leavers Steering Group** has delivered a range of achievements in 2020 which has been focused on improved partnership working among professionals across whole system (Health, Social Care & Education). This has included:
 - Increase in reaching older young people for Initial and Review Health Assessments due to more flexibility using virtual and telephone consults
 - Increased awareness and partnership working with the Virtual School and Special Educational Needs (SEN) Team to review and develop clearer Children Looked After and Care Leavers SEN Pathway
 - Improved partnership between Health and Adoption & Fostering with the reorganisation of panels
- Improved information sharing and sharing of best practice during the pandemic, especially regarding dental services, school nursing, immunisations and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children services.
- The 'Catch-Up Project' offered face to face consultations for children (under 5's, children with medical problems and refugees) when lockdown restrictions were eased.
- **The Children and Adolescents Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in Social Care Team** undertook consultations with allocated social workers in relation to 139 children or sibling groups for children and young people subject to a Children Looked After Plan. This led to an offer of face to face assessment and intervention work or advice to the Social Worker and wider network as appropriate. 79 of these was as a result of a universal offer of emotional wellbeing screening for children as they enter local authority care.
-

Key Achievements 2020/21

- A further 60 referrals were made by Social Workers for CAMHS input in relation to children already looked after. The team also took 133 referrals for child and young people subject to either a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan.
- Consultations led to direct clinical involvement or advice to the referring Social Worker and the option of further consultation if required.
- As already highlighted focus groups have been held with the Children in Care Council (CLICC) to seek their views on issues regarding emotional wellbeing and their experiences of accessing services. These sessions were an excellent opportunity for us to hear about barriers for young people in the care system to accessing support. As set out below the findings from the focus groups will help to guide plans for the future around supporting young people with their emotional wellbeing.

Priorities and Emerging Challenges for 2021/20

Participation and engagement with young people

The Children Living in Care Council (CLICC) has been focused on expanding the membership so that they can reach out to as many children and young people as possible, across different age groups.

Plans for recruitment have been developed during 2020 and will be implemented throughout 2021. This includes establishing two other CLICC forums:

- Juniors CLICC – 8 to 12-year olds
- Teen CLICC – 13 to 17-year olds

Meetings have been taking place with the Foster Carers Association, Foster Care Team, Children Looked After and Through Care Teams to help spread the message, gather data and to discuss different ways of recruiting new members.

An information leaflet has been designed and produced (by the young people?) to help promote the CLICC and what it can offer. This is now being shared by colleagues in relevant teams and the FCA. Dates are currently being organised for during Summer 2021 to hold recruitment events where the CLICC and officers who support the group can speak with care experienced young people across the borough.

Care Leaver Employability Working Group

The CLICC have been successful in applying to be a part of the Care Leaver Employability Working Group run by the organisation 'Catch 22'. Ten local authorities were selected and Tower Hamlets is the only London borough involved. The aim of the programme is to share best practise and apply that learning to develop how we work with local employers to provide employment opportunities for young people with care experience.

As part of the project the CLICC has identified areas it wants to work on to increase employability options for care leavers in the borough. These will be 'strengthening our internal offers, pre-employment training (Level 2 Functional Skills in Maths and English) and improving the communication of our offer to young people'.

Care Leavers App

Tower Hamlets will be launching a Care Leavers App in 2021. The app will support and help young people leaving care by enabling them to access local information and support and advice for their wellbeing. The app will also provide information about the day to day lives of care leavers to the local authority on a real-time basis, allowing preventative action and early intervention to take place quickly.

The App will be available on the main phone platforms and can be customised with local information and advice to provide a valuable resource that care leavers can access on their phones and tablets on a 24/7 basis.

Post 16 support

A key focus for the Virtual School (VS) during 2021-22 is supporting Post-16 students into education and employment. Our ambition is to be a Virtual College. Nationally, the level of those 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET) is increasing with some of the highest rises in youth unemployment in a decade due to the pandemic. The VS recognises that this is going to put pressure on training opportunities and education options. Staff from the Tower Hamlets Behaviour and Attendance Service will be working with the school to support the monitoring and targeting of support for vulnerable young people to keep them on course and prevent mid-year drop out.

GCSE assessment in 2021

Virtual School teachers have supported schools and students in Year 11 with preparations for teacher assessments that will underpin GCSE grading decided at school level in the absence of exams during 2021. Comprehensive termly tracking by the VS means that expectations of achievement have been set with schools, which will be a factor informing the management moderation of grades. This ensures that every school knows there is a highly informed, concerned and expert adult behind every child in our care.

Using education data to support young people

To support interagency working and a greater awareness of educational issues, the Virtual School is going to work with

Children's Social Care on the transparency and use of education data that tracks a child's attainment from Early Years forward. The aim will be to comprehensively record education data in IT systems which allow it to be used more widely to enhance the support provided to children and young people.

Enrichment

A Post-Covid recovery bid has been prepared to restart the Virtual School's face to face enrichment programme, with sessions to support young people mixing with their peers. This will lead to a full awards ceremony for 2022 with a smaller exam group only celebration planned for 2021. In the meantime, online sessions with aspirational care experienced professionals have taken place. These included an online cook-a-long with Chef Mark Lloyd and a reading session with care experienced author Alex Wheatle.

Return to school based learning

Training to support the integration back into school has taken place for all Designated Teachers, with additional training on Emotional Based School Avoidance for the team. The online blended training approach means we can now record sessions, invite out of borough adults working with our children and staff from care homes. Attendance and feedback from sessions has actually improved.

Mockingbird Programme (part of the Fostering Network)

This programme is aimed at improving the stability of fostering placements and strengthening the relationships between carers, children and young people, fostering services and birth families.

Work is underway to create two further hubs in Tower Hamlets in addition to the existing two. The lockdowns caused some delay to progressing this but sessions are now planned for September 2021 to help identify people for 'Hub Carers' and identifying those carers within a suitable catchment area to enable the new hubs to be able to work closely together.

Cornerstone Virtual Reality (VR) Training for Foster Carers

Due to the impacts from the pandemic there has been a delay to the planned VR training. The intention was to provide training on topics such as attachment and help support carers who are struggling with challenging behaviours by being able to consider how life may feel in the child's shoes. The situation is being monitored and Cornerstone are looking at how they can develop their film library further which will provide extra opportunities for training on a variety of subjects. Other training courses have continued to run virtually.

Health of Children Looked After and Care Leavers Steering Group

The steering group is taking forward a set of main goals for 2021 including:

- Increasing Children and Young People (CYP) involvement:
 - Consider establishment of CYP Advisory Board
 - Co- production ensuring CYP have a key voice in service reviews & development
 - Awareness and access to health and service records

- Prioritise issues highlighted on the CLICC 'Wishlist'
 - Health Passports - align process of populating and sharing Health Passports with CYP between Social Care and Health.
- Improving CYP transitions, especially for those who are 16 - 25 years old:
 - Children Looked After & Care Leavers with diagnosed and undiagnosed Special Educational Needs
 - Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (including 18+ with no recourse to public funds)
 - CYP in Youth Justice System
 - Care Leavers (rising 21 years of age and over who are at risk of homelessness)
 - Improve assessment and early intervention of CYP Health & Wellbeing by further integration / partnership work between GP's and CAMHS and developing preventative mindfulness & life skills services
 - Sharing of information and improving processes to aid adoptions.
 - Queen Mary University of London Integration Workshops with the Steering Group and CLICC to develop service maps and aid service integration spanning housing, health & wellbeing, education, training & employment.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental health and wellbeing remains a key issue for children looked after and care leavers and following the focus groups delivered with Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) (see page 7 above) further work will be undertaken to identify the most effective ways of meeting these needs. Discussions are taking place with CAMHS and colleagues from the North East London Clinical Commissioning Group (NELCCG) to explore the possibility of delivering wellbeing sessions, opportunities to co-produce services with young people and the exploring the introduction of Wellbeing Champions from the CLICC.

Appendix A: Membership list for the Corporate Parenting Board (including officers who also report to the board)

Name	Job Title / Organisation	Name	Job Title / Organisation
Asma Begum	Chair of the CPB and Cabinet Member for Children and Schools	Amanda Harcus	Divisional Director, HR and OD, LBTH
David Edgar	Councillor	Lyn Glover	Designated Nurse for CLA, NHS TH CCG
Asma Islam	Councillor	Hasan Faruq	Commissioning & Contracts Manager Youth Service, LBTH
Ann Sutcliffe	Corporate Director, Place, LBTH	Caroline Campbell	IRO Group Manager, LBTH
Young People's Representatives	Children in Care Council	Farhan Hoque	Youth Services, LBTH
Foster Care Representatives		Sorrel Norwood	Youth Services, LBTH
Richard Baldwin	Divisional Director Children's Social Care, LBTH	Edosa Obunge	Through Care Service, LBTH
James Thomas	Director of Children and Culture	Peter Cox	CAMHS in Social Care Team Lead, LBTH
Robert Bielby	Service Manager, Children's Social Care, LBTH	Lissa-Marie Minnis	Children's Social Care, LBTH
David Cregan	Headteacher Virtual School, LBTH	Vicky Clark	Divisional Director, Growth and Economic Development, LBTH
Geraldine O'Donnell	Service Manager, LBTH	Karlijn Tummers	Interim Senior Commissioning Manager Children and Young People, LBTH
Pam Cummins	Business Support, LBTH	Tracy Stanley	Strategy & Policy Officer - Children and Culture, LBTH

Appendix B – CPB Meetings and Agendas 2020/21

MEETING	KEY AGENDA ITEMS
Standing Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update from Foster Care Representatives • Update from Children Living in Care Council (CLICC) • Performance Report
April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update of Support to Care Leavers during the current Covid 19 Emergency • Board member updates on Covid 19 related issues for children looked after and care leavers
June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update of Support to Care Leavers during the current Covid 19 Emergency • Update on fostering, placements and children looked after • Virtual School briefing
July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2019/20 • Children Looked After with SEND Report from the Virtual School
October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Assurance Service IRO Annual Report 2018/19 • Update on Children Looked After and Care Leavers Health Steering Group • Update on Regional Adoption Agency • LBTH Independent Panel Chair's Annual Report
January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on Corporate Parenting national and regional reports and best practice • Update on Apprenticeships
April 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Care Leavers App • Draft Corporate Parenting Board Action Plan 2021/22 • Local Planning and Implementation Group for Lifelong Links • Adopt London East - Performance and service development report

Appendix C – Children's Social Care Key Performance Indicator Report Extract March 2021

Performance Measure	2018/19	2019/20	Current (2020/21)	Period
Overview				
Number of CLA	329	307	306	Snapshot
Number of UASC	43	37	29	Snapshot
CLA - rate per 10,000	48.1	43.3	43.1	Snapshot

Performance Measure	2018/19	2019/20	Current (2020/21)	Period
Looked After Children				
No. of new CLA episodes in period	217	151	131	YTD
No. of CLA exits in period	174	172	131	YTD
% repeat CLA (entries that were re-entries within 2 years)	6.5%	6.0%	2.3%	YTD
Average no. of placement moves	1.5	1.6	1.5	YTD
Max. no of placement moves	10.0	6.0	5.0	YTD
% CLA long term placement stability	70.6%	71.6%	72.7%	Snapshot
% of CLA with a named Social Worker (key worker or personal advisor)	100%	100.0%	100.0%	Snapshot

Performance Measure	2018/19	2019/20	Current (2020/21)	Period
Section 6 - Care Leavers				
% allocated care leavers "in touch" (17,18,19,20,21 yr. olds with activity updated within last year)	97.9%	95.7%	98.8%	Snapshot
% allocated care leavers known to be EET	71.4%	67.3%	72.6%	Snapshot
% allocated care leavers known to be in suitable accommodation	89.6%	91.4%	95.8%	Snapshot
% allocated care leavers with a pathway plan	94.5%	98.8%	98.2%	Snapshot
% allocated care leavers with pathway plan updated in last 6 months	85.0%	96.7%	95.6%	Snapshot

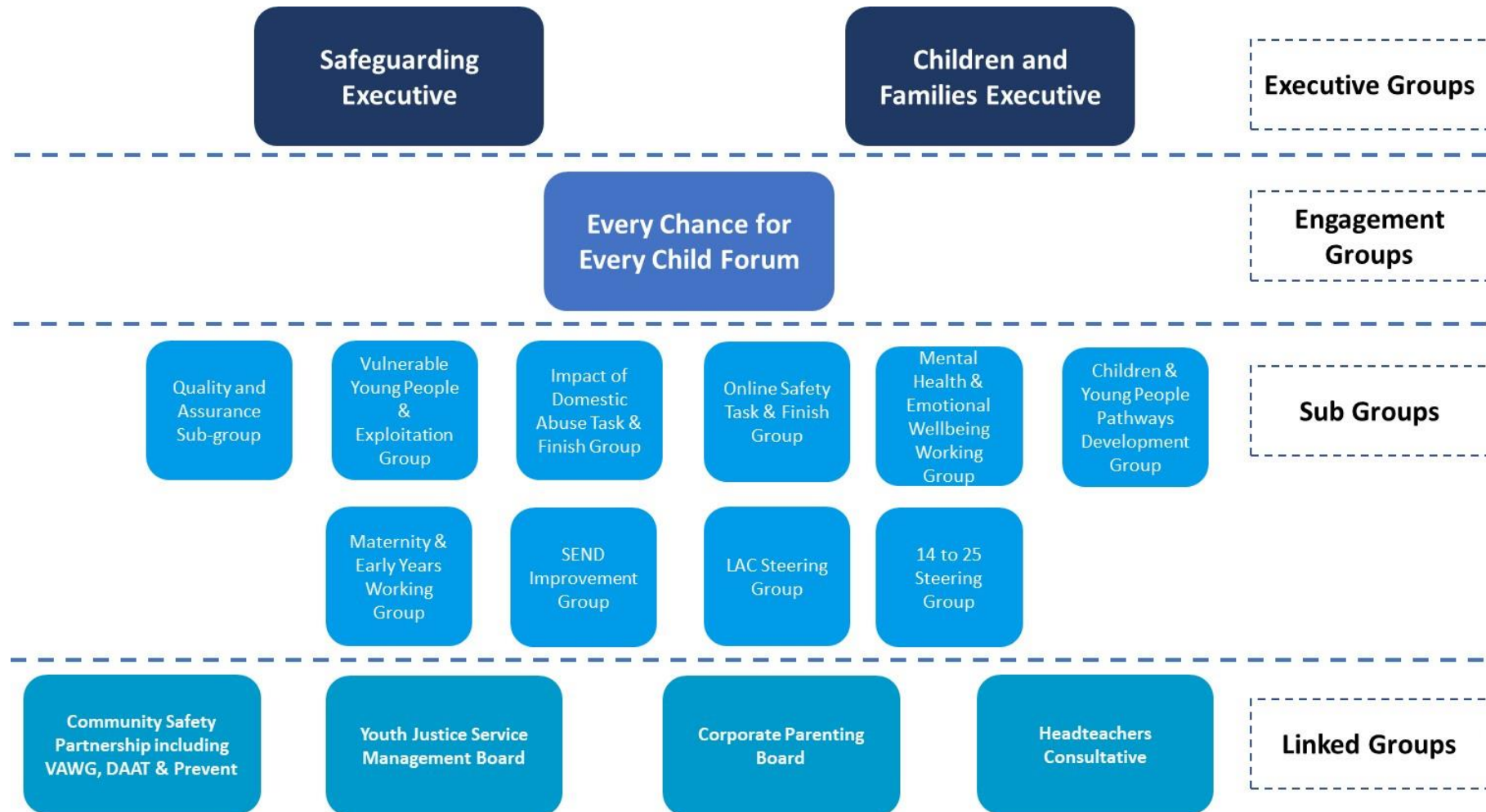
Performance Measure	2018/19	2019/20	Current (2020/21)	Period
Missing Children				
Number of missing children during period	287	276	210	YTD
Missing from home	176	176	141	YTD
CP	18	16	5	YTD
CIN	48	48	34	YTD
CLA (out of borough)	69	73	41	YTD
CLA (in borough)	24	16	15	YTD

Performance Measure	2018/19	2019/20	Current (2020/21)	Period
Fostering and Adoption				
Number of Foster Carer Enquiries	278	95	193	YTD
No. of Foster Carer Enquiries leading to Initial Visits	56	48	53	YTD
% Initial visits completed within 5 working days	64.3%	75.0%	44%	YTD
Total Approved Foster Carers (excl. family & friends, staying put, on hold/unavailable)	101	97	116	Snapshot
Foster Carer Vacancy rate	23.1%	23.7%	45.3%	Snapshot
Foster Carer Occupancy rate	76.9%	75.3%	54.7%	Snapshot
No. of children placed with Inhouse Foster Carers	132	115	109	Snapshot
No. of children in Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) Placements	85	92	85	Snapshot
Children in Residential Placements	30	30	27	Snapshot


Performance Measure	2018/19	2019/20	Current (2020/21)	Period
Fostering and Adoption (continued)				
Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family	401.9	376.3	432.3	YTD (3 years)
Average time between court authority to place a child and deciding on a match	208	164	245	YTD
% waiting less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their family (14 months)	70.7%	46.2%	36.1%	Snapshot
Adoptions from care (number adopted and percentage leaving care who are adopted)	9.2%	6.4%	6.1%	YTD
Number of Adoptions and Special Guardianship Orders granted for Looked After Children (S)	24	37	17	YTD
The percentage of black and minority ethnic children leaving care who are adopted	6.9%	4.4%	3.9%	YTD
The percentage of children who ceased to be looked after because of an SGO	4.6%	15.1%	8.4%	YTD
Percentage of CLA placed for adoption within 12 months of agency decision	87.5%	90.9%	87.5%	YTD

Performance Measure	2018/19	2019/20	Current (Autumn 2020/21)	Period
Virtual School				
% of pupils making expected progress		56%	62%	Termly
% of pupils where a PEP meeting took place in the term		93%	95%	Termly
% of PEPs which were signed off and RAG rated green		73%	91%	Termly

Appendix D – Tower Hamlets Partnership Structures



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<p>Decision Report Cover Sheet:</p> <p>Council</p> <p>21 July 2021</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Cover Report of: Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services</p> <p>Main Report: Sharon Godman: Director of Strategy, Policy and Performance</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny 2020-21</p>	

<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All Wards</p>
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Summary

At its meeting on 26 April 2021, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered its Annual Report to Council. Following discussion, they agreed to forward the report to Council for consideration. The report will be introduced at the meeting by Cllr James King, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2020-21.


The report and its Appendices are therefore attached to this cover sheet as Appendix 1.

Recommendations:

The Council is recommended to:

1. Review the attached Annual Report to Council.
2. Agree to note the Annual Report to Council.

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Non-Executive Report of the: Overview and Scrutiny Committee 26 April 2021	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Sharon Godman Divisional Director Strategy, Policy and Performance	Classification: Open
Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21	

Originating Officer(s)	Sharon Godman Divisional Director Strategy, Policy and Performance Filuck Miah Strategy and Policy Officer, Corporate
Wards affected	All Wards

Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of the work that Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC), it's sub-committees and scrutiny leads delivered in 2020-21 municipal year

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the attached Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21, comment and agree the report for submission to Full Council in the new municipal year; and
2. Authorise the Divisional Director Strategy, Policy and Performance to amend the report following comments by the committee and include scrutiny in numbers section before submission to Full Council.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The council's constitution requires that the OSC must report annually to the council on its work.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 To take no action. This is not recommended as the council's constitution requires OSC to report annually to the council on its work
- 2.2 OSC could decline to agree the report. This is also not recommended as the report outlines the work undertaken by scrutiny Members and officers to identify areas of improvement.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 Under the council's constitution, OSC must report annually to the council, evidencing the committees activities during the past year and include the work of its sub-committees.
- 3.2 The attached report (Appendix 1) provides a summary of the range of activities and work that scrutiny undertook this municipal year and includes it's oversight on the council's budget, MTFs and strategic performance (as standing agenda items on its work programme). The committee further undertook spotlight sessions examining topics of resident concerns such as ASB, domestic abuse, resident engagement, impact of Covid-19 of children's education and rough sleeping.
- 3.3 The committee continued its spotlight on the Borough Commander and were keen to focus on how reporting ASB can be improved. The Committee also brought back waste services to examine its performance since the service was brought back 'in house'. The committee also engaged with a variety of stakeholders which enabled the meetings to be more robust in discussion.
- 3.4 This year the committee placed particular focus on the pandemic and regularly invited the Divisional Director for Public Health providing monthly Covid-19 updates to the committee.
- 3.5 The committee also challenged some services to improve its performance including WorkPath services as coming out of the pandemic, employment will be a key feature. The committee also undertook a couple of challenge sessions looking at the impact on council's revised approach to the Idea stores and library services and examining the performance towards air quality commitments and resident's health outcomes.
- 3.6 The work of OSC is split into different scrutiny activities and this includes in depth scrutiny reviews, challenge sessions, call-ins and spotlight sessions focussing on council and partner services.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Reducing inequalities and promoting cohesion and building community leadership are all central to the work of the OSC. A number of reviews and challenge session incorporated equality consideration such as considering the impact on reducing services on service user groups children, the elderly and

disabled particularly around savings. This was also considered with the call-in such as the changes to the day ops services.

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

5.2 [Report authors should identify any other specific issues relevant to consideration of this report. Including, but not limited to, the issues noted above. This section of the report can also be used to re-emphasise particular issues that Members must have considered before taking the decision (for example issues that may come up if an objection was taken to court). Note – Paragraph 5.1 MUST NOT be deleted.]

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 There are no direct financial arising from the recommendations in this report

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 This report complies with the Council's constitutional requirements

7.2 There are no other legal issues arising directly from this report

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE.

Appendices

- Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)

List of "Background Papers" used in the preparation of this report

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- These must be sent to Democratic Services with the report
- State NONE if none.

Officer contact details for documents:

Filuck Miah - Strategy and Policy Officer, Corporate

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21

26/04/2021



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Chair's Foreword

I am pleased to present the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's (OSC) Annual Report for 2020-21. This report provides a summary of the work the committee delivered over the 2020-21 municipal year.

The Covid-19 pandemic compelled the council to change and adapt its services and redeploy resources to support the local emergency response to the pandemic. Despite the challenge of the crisis, at Tower Hamlets Council, our Overview and Scrutiny function continues to be an active and integral part of the council's governance arrangements and remains a critical friend to the development and implementation of key council policies.

As with many of the council services, the OSC and its sub-committees adapted its work programme to accommodate the response to the pandemic. We held scrutiny meetings virtually to meet the government's social distancing measures. Despite the challenge, the committee agreed to have an overarching Covid-19 theme given the significance of the pandemic and its impact.

This theme was reflected in our spotlight sessions on waste performance, WorkPath services, anti-social behaviour (ASB), domestic abuse and improving resident engagement in addition to our standing items the budget monitoring and strategic performance.

The committee received regular Covid-19 updates from the council's director of Public Health on infection rates, hospitalisation and deaths and mental health. Equally, we have seen how the strong partnership working between the local authority and community groups came together to support residents, delivering on the vaccination programme and support for businesses and communities.

Our sub-committee members also focussed on the impact of the pandemic on children's and young people's education, poverty, adults social isolation and mental health, adult learning disability, rough sleepers and homelessness. We also examined in detail the council budget for 2021-22 along with the MTFS 2021-24 as we felt that there would be long-lasting challenges resulting from the council's proposed budget.

These are very difficult times for the council and local government. As we gradually move away from lockdown measures and both businesses and communities begin to open up their doors, we continue to be cautiously optimistic in our roadmap to recovery. The next twelve months will bring further challenges and we will continue to collaborate to meet these challenges head on.

I would like to thank the committee Members, officers and partners who have contributed and supported scrutiny during the year. I hope this report helps you to understand the work and value of scrutiny and that it enthruses to get involved.

**Cllr James King,
Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee
London Borough of Tower Hamlets**



Overview and Scrutiny in Tower Hamlets 2020-21

Membership

Scrutiny Committees

For 2020-21, OSC remains the principle Member-led body, which holds the executive decision makers to account through providing the critical friend challenge on issues of strategic importance. To support this arrangement OSC continues with three sub-committees and two scrutiny leads covering portfolio area. These include:

Committee	Role
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
OSC's terms of reference can be found here: OSC Terms of Reference	
Councillor James King	Chair
Councillor Bex White	Vice Chair & Scrutiny Lead for Children and Education
Councillor Gabriela Salva-Macallan	Scrutiny Lead for Health and Adults
Councillor Ehtasham Haque	Scrutiny Lead for Housing and Regeneration
Councillor Leema Qureshi	Scrutiny Lead for Finance & Resources
Councillor Faroque Ahmed	Scrutiny Lead for Environment & Community Safety
Councillor Marc Francis	Scrutiny Member
Councillor Denise Jones	Scrutiny Member
Councillor Andrew Wood	Scrutiny Member
Halima Islam	Co-opted Member
James Wilson	Co-opted Member
Health & Adults Sub-Committee	
Health & Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee's terms of reference can be found here: Health & Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee Terms of Reference	
Councillor Gabriela Salva Macallan	Chair
Councillor Mohammed Pappu	Vice Chair
Councillor Denise Jones	Scrutiny Member
Councillor Shad Chowdhury	Scrutiny Member
Councillor Shah Ameen	Scrutiny Member
Councillor Andrew Wood	Scrutiny Member
David Burbidge	Co-opted Member
Sue Kenten	Co-opted Member
Children & Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee	

Children & Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee's terms of reference can be found here: Children and Education Scrutiny Terms of Reference	
Councillor Bex White	Chair
Dr Phillip Rice	Vice Chair & Co-opted Member
Councillor Gabriela Salva-Macallan	Scrutiny Member
Councillor Mohammed Pappu	Scrutiny Member
Councillor Kyrsten Perry	Scrutiny Member
Councillor Helal Uddin	Scrutiny Member
Councillor Victoria Obaze	Scrutiny Member
Councillor Andrew Wood	Scrutiny Member
Neil Cunningham	Co-opted Member
Joanna Hannan	Co-opted Member
Ahmed Hussain	Co-opted Member
Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee	
Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee's terms of reference can be found here: Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee Terms of Reference	
Councillor Ehtasham Haque	Chair
Councillor Marc Francis	Vice Chair
Councillor Amina Ali	Scrutiny Member
Councillor Dipa Das	Scrutiny Member
Councillor Helal Uddin	Scrutiny Member
Councillor Andrew Wood	Scrutiny Member
Ann Ambrose	Co-opted Member
Moshin Hamim	Co-opted Member

1. Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 1.1. OSC is the main, member led body that holds executive decision makers to account. OSC meets monthly and consists of nine elected councillors, along with two co-opted members ([OSC Papers](#)).
- 1.2. This municipal year, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) accepted that the Covid-19 pandemic would significantly impact council services. The work programme considered how Members can best support the council and residents during the crisis, and lead on local-led scrutiny of the operational response.
- 1.3. The OSC began its scrutiny of the council's response to Covid-19 in April 2020 and culminated in the committee's review of the council's Covid-19 response in September 2020 ([Covid Report and Action Plan](#)). Programme scrutiny meetings re-commenced from June starting with a Covid-19 briefing for the committee with the Director of Public Health.

Scrutiny Work Programme

- 1.4. The 2020-21 [scrutiny work programme](#) was developed and agreed after the new municipal year commenced and the new scrutiny committees were established in September 2020.

Covid-19 pandemic updates

- 1.5. As a committee, we agreed to have oversight of the Covid-19 pandemic as this would have some bearing on scrutiny work programme. At each meeting, the committee received the latest Covid-19 intelligence from the council's Director and Public Health on matters including, infection rates, health inequalities and disparities, hospitalisation, deaths, vaccination, test trace and isolation provision, lockdowns and managing further breakout of the infection. The committee was able to contextualise the impact and this helped to frame some of the other work programme topics.

Waste Service – Spotlight

- 1.6. In October 2020, the committee was keen to understand how the [waste management service](#) performed since being brought 'in house' in March 2020. Members had particular interest and focus on:

- Street cleanliness;
- fly tipping;
- frequency of missed bin collections;
- the impact of the pandemic on service delivery; and
- complaints handling procedures.

The committee pressed the service to clarify the measures used to report performance, improve its service information to residents and challenged the service to better understand resident behaviour. This theme that was further explored at a challenge session in September 2020 on report. [Click here for report](#)

Budget

- 1.7. In January 2021, the council's [budget](#) for 2021- 22 together with the MTFs 2021-24 was scrutinised. Eight recommendations to check and challenge the council's approach were made.

Whilst the committee accepted the council's need to maintain its reserves to avoid facing issues that other local authorities have encountered in these challenging times, the importance of scrutinising the council's proposed savings and to question the rationale behind some of the reserves proposals was recognised.

ASB and Borough Commander Spotlight

- 1.8. In January 2021, the committee turned its attention to other, non-Covid-19 matters of importance to residents and the borough including reviewing the effectiveness of the partnership response anti-social behaviour ([ASB](#)).

The committee raised resident's concerns on lack of clarity for reporting ASB matters. The committee also heard that substance misuse remains one of the main drivers of ASB demand.

- 1.9. The committee also heard from the [Borough Commander](#) who outlined his priorities for the Borough Commander Unit (BCU) this year and included the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic policing response, tackling increased levels of drugs and ASB and the efforts of Operation Continuum, street and youth based violence, burglary, and public protection. Resident issues on 101 reporting, Section 60 powers and the community response to this were questioned.

Resident Engagement

- 1.10. In November 2020, the committee raised the issue of [resident engagement](#), and particularly reaching out to the 'seldom-heard' or the under-represented in the borough. Accordingly, it is important to find out how to reach them and often it will be (i) partner organisation; (ii) the resident route; (iii) or that they already part of a certain community that is the best way to get the content out. The committee plans to undertake a challenge session in April 2021, building on the resident engagement topic and examining how resident structures can be used to influence and shape - place based priorities

Call-ins

- 1.11. The council's constitution permits all Members to call-in executive decisions before they are implemented, and the process requires that an OSC meeting is convened to consider a decision which is called-in by other Members/ Councillors. This year there have been two call-ins regarding the decisions on:

- Amendments to the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme
- Outcome of consultation on revised approach to day support in adult social care

- 1.12. On both occasions, OSC resolved that the decisions be referred for reconsideration. The Mayor reconsidered parts of the original decision on the council's housing allocation policy and made changes to the recommendation regarding existing social housing tenants under the age of 50. There were no changes to the call-in of the decision on day support.

- 1.13. A further call-in on the consultation of the council's BAME Commission is scheduled for the end of the municipal year.

2. Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee

- 2.1. The Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee held three meetings during 2020-21. These took place in 23 Jul 2020, 1 Dec 2020, 8 Feb 2021 ([Papers](#)).
- 2.2. This year, the sub-committee focussed on the current pandemic (Covid-19) and the impact it's had on the adult's services provision within the borough. There was a concentration on the partnership's response to key issues that came through the Covid-19 pandemic including mental health and health inequalities and disparities in service provision. The sub-committee heard from a wide range of evidence from stakeholders providing frontline response to the pandemic including local NHS commissioners for health and social care, Barts Health, East London Foundation Trust, GP Care Group, Community and Voluntary Sector and Healthwatch.

Covid-19 Response

- 2.3. In July 2020, the Director of Public Health for Tower Hamlets (along with partners) presented to the sub-committee its approach to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic and entailed developing a [Local Covid-19 Outbreak Management Plan](#).
- 2.4. The plan to address prevention and ongoing management of outbreaks in the borough was scrutinised. It was felt that there needed to be a particular emphasis for high risk settings including care homes, schools and places of worship. The sub-committee further examined the response of partners' approach to local test and trace system, shielding the most vulnerable and how Black, Asian Minority Ethnic groups are being supporting during the pandemic.
- 2.5. The sub-committee were concerned on the impact on people's mental health and wellbeing and heard how this is significantly affecting some of resident groups. East London Foundation Trust who specialise in mental health presented their views and experiences during the first lockdown phase of the pandemic.

Covid-19 Impact on Care Homes

- 2.6. The sub-committee also reviewed the report on the state of care homes and its impact on both residents and staff during this pandemic. Whilst the council and its partners response has been encouraging the sub-committee learned that the report findings showed varying experiences across the borough's five care homes.

The sub-committee also heard from service users directly impacted from the pandemic who raised concerns regarding the loss of life within care homes. The sub-committee expects that partners will learn lessons from this difficult period and ensure the right level of resources and support is afforded to protect the most vulnerable.

Review of Test Trace and Isolation Programme

- 2.7. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested for the sub-committee (at its December meeting) to review the performance and effectiveness of the [local test, trace and isolation programme](#). It was recommended to maintain and resource local shielding pathways for vulnerable people during the winter months and with the potential second wave of Covid-19.

- 2.8. The sub-committee further noted that legislation introduced by the Coronavirus Act 2020 facilitated amendments to parts of the Care Act 2014, as support to local authorities on easing some Adult Social Care statutory duties. The purpose behind this was to help local authorities manage the impact of the pandemic on the increase in demand for adult social care services with a reduced workforce. The potential risks of application of easement and how the council looks to mitigate those risks was examined.
- 2.9. The sub-committee also received a joint presentation from the council and Tower Hamlet's Clinical Commissioning Group focussing on proposals for their winter plans to maintain service provision throughout winter season and support measures for controlling the pandemic. It was recommended that partners should consider if winter plans can be integrated through collaborative commissioning.

3. Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

- 3.1. The Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee held three meetings during this municipal year. These took place in August, December 2020 & February 2021. ([Papers](#))
- 3.2. Our sub-committee mainly focussed on the current Covid-19 pandemic and the impact this had on children and families. As a sub-committee, we agreed to have a dedicated space on the agenda to allow the sub-committee to hear from a variety of stakeholders on the front line of the response. This included schools, police, health colleagues and others on the front line supporting the pandemic response.

Impact of Covid-19

- 3.3. In August 2020, the sub-committee heard from the Cabinet Member for Children and Schools alongside the corporate director of Children and Culture on the overall [impact of Covid-19](#) pandemic on children and their families.
- 3.4. It also heard about the challenges and opportunities over the next 12 months including the financial pressures for the council and the implications for Children's Social Care, Early Help and the impact on education and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The Sub-committee noted that overall, the physical, mental, and social repercussions of Covid-19 go far beyond the virus itself. It was recognised that the impact of Covid-19 upon local young people and their families has been an experience of isolation; pressure of high anxiety; and for some of an increased safeguarding risk.
- 3.5. The sub-committee noted that Covid-19 had shone a light on inequalities, and we were informed that these could be exacerbated further and leading to poorer outcomes for residents, higher demands for support with special education needs and social care and an increase in financial pressures on the Council. The sub-committee also heard that the impact of the pandemic on the first financial quarter of this year had been considerable as the social care demand rises as children go back the school.

Pandemic Impact on Education and Children's learning

- 3.6. In December 2020, the sub-committee heard from a local primary and secondary school headteacher together with the executive director for Tower Hamlets Education

Partnership on the impact of Covid-19 on education in the borough the steps taken to minimise disruption to children and the support provided to schools.

- 3.7. In February 2021, the sub-committee received an update on the impact of Covid-19 on education in the borough particularly on [children's learning](#) and the steps taken to minimize disruption to children and the support provided to schools.

It heard that schools worked tirelessly to meet the dual demands of having children of critical workers and vulnerable children in school as well as developing and running online learning packages for children at home. It also heard that secondary schools had to establish testing programmes for pupils and that lack of digital access and broadband also impacted on individual students.

- 3.8. We further heard on how Tower Hamlets Education Partnership had supported and shared good practice which had been invaluable in ensuring schools and pupils were well equipped with digital solutions, to narrow the gap between disadvantaged groups. The sub-committee examined and questioned plans to manage any long-term impact of the lockdown.

Food Provision for Vulnerable Families

- 3.9. The sub-committee heard that the pandemic intensified the challenge to ensure children do not go hungry, especially when out of school and that [vital food support](#) became critical during the pandemic whilst work was ongoing with the voluntary sector and other providers to ensure networks, such as schools could play a key role in tackling food hunger.
- 3.10. The Cabinet Member for Children and Schools informed the sub-committee that during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic there were variety of provisions that offered free school meals support with various government schemes. The sub-committee noted that the government now issued a block grant to support vulnerable families during term time as well as during school holidays, allowing Councils to provide targeted support to vulnerable families.
- 3.11. The council's Tackling Poverty Coordinator provided statistical information to the sub-committee on the number of people claiming benefits and the impact Covid-19 was having on vulnerable families and individuals. This included a number of households now claiming Universal Credit in Tower Hamlets that had risen quite significantly. It also heard from Bow Food Bank who underlined that there was an increase in demand for their service from vulnerable families.

4. Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee

- 4.1. The Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee held three meetings during this municipal year on July, November 2020 and February 2021. A final meeting is expected to take place in April 2021. ([Papers](#))
- 4.2. Our sub-committee also examined the impact of Covid -19 and the council's and partner's response to the pandemic on housing and regeneration issues.

Responding Rough Sleeping – during Covid-19

- 4.3. In July 2020, the sub-committee focussed its energy on the council's response to Covid-19 Pandemic and we reviewed the council's response to [rough sleeping](#) during the pandemic and the impact of Covid-19 on private rented sector. Specifically, as the governments directive required all rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping had to be accommodated to facilitate social distancing/self-isolation, regardless of priority need, local connection, or recourse to public funds.
- 4.4. The sub-committee heard that over 200 individuals had been supported by the council with emergency accommodation within commercial hotels. Most being from Tower Hamlets with over 40 that have no recourse to public funds. Individuals were accommodated under Housing Act 1996 s.188(1) duty and Housing Act 1996 s.205(3) statutory powers, and Localism Act 2011.

(Health and Welfare)

- 4.5. The sub-committee examined and noted that council's commissioned 24/7 on-site and floating support for rough sleepers within the commercial hotels as rough sleepers have complex needs. The value of these arrangements has been shown by the relatively low number of evictions and abandonments from the hotels and the low rough sleeping numbers during the first three months of the lockdown. It also heard how Public Health provided support in implementing an operation plan to minimise the risk of an outbreak and spread of infection.
- 4.6. The sub-committee also heard how the council used the opportunity to provide support to rough sleepers onsite to access substance dependence treatment.
- 4.7. The sub-committee heard about the challenges around managing costs, funding and moving onto the next phase of accommodating rough sleepers, whilst reviewing how improvements to the customer journey could be achieved to prevent and relieve homelessness in light of Covid-19. The level of support given to the private rented sector as a result of the pandemic was scrutinised too. We identified key issues for the recovery phase that will need to be explored further including evictions, rent arrears and private rental market.

Social Landlords Performance

- 4.8. In November 2020, the sub-committee reviewed its standing agenda item on the [performance of social landlords](#) in the borough and received a summary of the achievements and challenges for the quarterly performance data on 14 registered providers (RPs) within the borough as well as an update on the work of the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum Benchmarking Group.

It also heard from one of the registered providers, whilst efforts were made to improve their performance, we challenged whether this could delivered as failure to deliver on similar promises of service improvement that had been made in the past. The feedback received from residents who reported difficulties in securing needed repairs and problems with customer service and communication was highlighted. Consequently, it was recommended officers to explore if a KPI could be introduced to measure effective communication between RPs and residents.

Homeless Reduction Act

- 4.9. The sub-committee heard from the council’s divisional director for Housing and Regeneration on the report which made a series of practical recommendations for the housing options service following a scrutiny challenge session in March 2020. The proposed recommendations were scrutinised and further questioned whether they were challenging enough to deliver tangible improvements for service users.

The sub-committee also recommended a resumed/ additional challenge session to re-explore the matters raised in the report and draft new recommendations. The sub-committee approved in February 2021 for submission to the executive.

- 4.10. Overall, the sub-committee examined seven areas of its portfolio and made the following recommendations:

- to write to the Mayor and the cabinet member for housing to highlight the sub-committee’s concerns with the performance data available to it on registered providers;
- to consider recent resident feedback provided to councillors that indicated poor customer experience for those accessing the council’s housing options service, while noting the work underway to tackle this; and
- to consider a future challenge session on regeneration activity.

5. Scrutiny Lead for Finance and Resources

- 5.1. The scrutiny lead for Finance and Resources holds regular meetings with the Cabinet Member for Resources and Voluntary Sector and corporate director for Resources to scrutinise the portfolio area and the issues and challenge that council faces. The Scrutiny lead also represents the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the Grant Determination Sub-Committee which the Mayor chairs and allows scrutiny to examine some of the grant funding request proposals.

Challenge Session on Examining the council’s revised approach to Idea stores and library services

- 5.2. In January 2021, we held a scrutiny challenge session on examining council’s revised approach for [Idea stores and library services](#). The scrutiny committee wanted to understand how the proposals would impact particular service user groups, insights from public engagement and review the council’s five-year vision for the future of Idea stores. The challenge session itself fed into the council’s consultation on the topic.
- 5.3. The challenge session facilitated the discussion and allow the scrutiny committee to make eight recommendation which are listed below:

Recommendation 1	The council to provide more comprehensive information on its five-year vision for the future of Idea Stores and library services. This needs to include a full review of staffing levels to maintain services and publish further detailed information on the future site use of Watney Market Idea Store and Bethnal Green Library. It needs to examine how library
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	services can be supplemented by other council services and further consult residents on how proposed reduction of hours will be tailored to meet local demand.
Recommendation 2	The council to revisit its proposed plan for the Isle of Dogs library service and consider the merits of deprioritising Canary Wharf (as this is subject to future closure) to free up resources to sustain Cubitt Town Library Service in the interim until such time a new alternative site is opened.
Recommendation 3	The council to review and bring up to date its Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for all Idea Stores and library services to help comprehend the impact on protected characteristic groups.
Recommendation 4	To further undertake comprehensive risk assessments to help understand the impact of change on wider determinants including; delayed recovery and continuation of the pandemic, impact on footfall and local economy, increase in demand user groups, impact on children and young people’s educational outcomes, level of social deprivation, poverty, social isolation, crime and antisocial behaviour and community tension/ cohesion.
Recommendation 5	The council to review the use of Idea Stores and library service’s spaces so that youth hubs can offer dedicated spaces for children and young people to use for their education and social connection needs.
Recommendation 6	The council to investigate and publish the results into the research it’s undertaken for alternative / external funding streams. This must include a review of its application of fund streams such as Public Health or New Homes Bonus (earmarked for reserves), that could be aligned to a longer consultation period for examining the future delivery model of Idea Stores and library services whilst undertaking further assessments on the geography of sites being considered along with the economic impact on people.
Recommendation 7	The council to investigate and publish results of how it can develop revenue streams from commercialisation of the Idea Stores and library service’s physical premises and its digitalisation agenda to offset some of the savings requirements and future proof the sustainability of Idea Stores and library services.
Recommendation 8	The council to market and publicise the commercialisation of the Idea Stores and library services (using its communication channels and advertising space) and to include engagement with different media groups including Bangladeshi Language Media, Social Media Influencers and others to help it achieve a wider reach for business opportunities and revenue growth.

- 5.4. The Challenge session highlighted the impact that the council’s proposal would have if implemented. Subsequently, the council had taken on board some of the scrutiny recommendations and adjusted its original proposal with no closures and whilst increasing the hours for Idea stores or library services to enable better access.

6. Scrutiny Lead for Environment and Community Safety

- 6.1. The scrutiny lead for Environment and Community Safety engaged with cabinet members, council officers and partners to develop the agenda items discussed at OSC

including; domestic abuse, borough commander spotlight and partnership approach to anti-social behaviour.


Challenge Session – Performance towards air quality commitments and residents’ health outcomes

6.2. At the end of March 2021, we held a scrutiny challenge session to assess the performance and progress of the council’s air quality commitments. This also took into account other council objectives including:

- the Anti-idling Policy, Open Space Strategy;
- Air Quality Action Plan, Liveable Streets Programme;
- Transport strategy;
- Net Zero Carbon Plan (only commitments relating to air quality); and
- Parking Policy.

Our aim was to examine further the effectiveness of these towards health outcomes of residents in Tower Hamlets and consider whether these commitments go far enough.

6.3. The challenge session’s focus led the scrutiny committee to make a number of recommendations (which will be published within the scrutiny challenge session report) with a view to influencing improvements and help to inform the on-going work on council’s air quality activities and plans. The recommendations are:

<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Council</p> <p>21 July 2021</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Sharon Godman, Divisional Director Strategy, Policy and Performance</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Draft Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2021/22</p>	

Originating Officer(s)	Filuck Miah, Strategy & Policy Officer Daniel Kerr, Strategy and Policy Manager
Wards affected	All Wards

Executive Summary

This report sets out the draft 2021/22 work programmes for the:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- Health & Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee;
- Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee; and
- Children & Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

This report also describes the work programmes for the Scrutiny Leads:

- Resources & Finance;
- Environment & Community Safety.

The work programme has been informed by a councillor workshop session (including co-optee members) and in consultation with senior officers.

Recommendations:

The council is recommended to note the draft scrutiny work programme for 2021-22 at Appendices 1-6.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The work programme of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) and its three sub-committees and Scrutiny Leads (Appendices 1-6) set out focus areas that scrutiny members have identified as important to scrutinise over this Municipal Year.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Full Council not to be informed of OSC work programme. This is not recommended as is useful for councillors to understand the areas of focus of scrutiny work.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1. The scrutiny function at the Council is undertaken by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, three Scrutiny Sub-Committees (Health & Adults, Housing & Regeneration, and Children's & Education), together with two Scrutiny Leads – OSC members who have responsibility for leading the scrutiny of Resources & Finance and Environment & Community Safety.
- 3.2. The work programming process was conducted for each Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Lead in order to provide focus for the scrutiny function as a whole.

Developing the work programme

- 3.3. Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) Members attended a workshop on 19 June 2021 to discuss the work programme for the 2021/22 Municipal Year. This was a joint workshop across all scrutiny committee areas in order to develop a better co-ordinated approach to delivering Scrutiny in 2021/22.
- 3.4. To identify areas of focus for the Committee, the session considered:
- Scrutiny values
 - Prioritisation methods and tools
 - Council priorities, performance information and horizon scan
 - How to engage residents and partners more effectively
 - Outcomes the Committees wish to achieve.
- 3.5. Members also considered what makes an effective work plan and held discussions to explore how Scrutiny could add value to service delivery and what Members understood to be the key priorities for the council. The discussion focused on:
- how the council communicates and consults any residents,
 - how the council can change its paternalistic practices,
 - whether the council has the relevant performance measures in place,
 - breaking down silos (internally and externally),
 - developing a placed based approach,
 - improving the speed of delivery.

- 3.6. Members voted on their priorities for each Committee and produced a list of the top five areas for each Committee to cover. In developing the work programme, OSC were clear that they wanted to look at fewer issues in more depth and be clear about what outcomes they want to achieve and how they can add value in order to allow them to make more effective recommendations.
- 3.7. In delivering the work programme scrutiny will focus on raising the profile of scrutiny through promoting scrutiny toolkit and public scrutiny guide, develop new internet webpage to engage residents and raise awareness of the Council's scrutiny function, using digital technology to allow residents to feed into the work programme and engage with meetings, engaging all non-executive Councillors in the OSC work programme through Members bulletin/hub and develop a more public engaging annual report for 2021/22.

Agreeing the work programme

- 3.8. Following the workshop, discussions were held with the OSC to prioritise, scope and agree the format of scrutiny activities for the year. Scrutiny leads agreed and specified the priorities in their area, developed an understanding of OSC priority outcomes, and defined how scrutiny can add value. This was presented back to the OSC on 28 June 2021 for discussion.
- 3.9. Additionally, an online form was developed to capture resident's views on what they feel the focus areas for the work programme should be. There has already been a number of submissions. All responses will be considered by Scrutiny Members for incorporation into agenda items or added to the work programme currently, and throughout the year.
- 3.10. Following presentation at Full Council, Scrutiny leads and OSC will engage key stakeholders to encourage buy-in and a final work programme will be agreed by the OSC at their meeting on the 26th July 2021.

Types of scrutiny

- 3.11. The 2021/22 the scrutiny work programme will comprise of different types of scrutiny focus:
 - **Scrutiny Spotlight Sessions:** A Cabinet Member and/or a senior leader from a stakeholder organisation (e.g. the Borough Commander) provides an overview of their work, including key risks within their portfolio, and is then questioned by members of the Committee;
 - **Scrutiny Reviews:** led by a scrutiny lead member to examine a topic over multiple evidence gathering sessions, followed by a report with recommendations for service improvement. These are directly supported by an officer from Corporate Strategy, Policy and Performance Team, with input from the relevant directorates;
 - **Scrutiny Challenge Sessions:** led by a scrutiny lead member, these take place during one 'deep dive' evidence gathering session and are followed by a report with recommendations for service improvement. These are

directly supported by an officer from Corporate Strategy, Policy and Performance Team, with input from the relevant directorates;

- **Budget & Policy Framework Scrutiny:** The Committee has a mandatory consultation role on all items that are the responsibility of Full Council to agree rather than the Executive, including the budget.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty (as set out in the Equality Act 2010) aims to embed equality considerations into the day to day work of public bodies, so that they tackle discrimination and inequality and contribute to making society fairer.
- 4.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and scrutiny sub-committee work programmes include key equality considerations of the Strategic Plan, including reducing inequality, promoting community cohesion and enabling community engagement. Identifying and prioritising issues, which are important to local residents, will play an important role in developing the work programme to drive service improvement.
- 4.3 Key to addressing equalities issues, is making scrutiny more accessible to residents. Accordingly, the OSC will implementing its communication plan to improve accessibility for example, offer greater opportunities for residents to contribute i.e. send in questions on agenda topics ahead of the committee meeting.
- 4.4 To ensure the Scrutiny work programme captures the diverse range of resident's views and concerns, an online form has been created to allow them to submit their items for OSC to consider as part of the 2021/22 work programme. This has been promoted through the Council's social media channels to ensure all residents are aware of this opportunity and their submissions will be taken into account when reviewing relevant items.

5. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 5.1. This report sets out the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for the Municipal Year 2021/22. It also includes draft work programmes for the Health & Adults, Housing & Regeneration and Children's & Education Scrutiny Sub-committees.
- 5.2. It is envisaged that the work programme will be delivered through existing resources and therefore there are no additional financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report. However, in the event that additional resources may be required to deliver particular aspects of the work programme, these will need to be considered as part of the council's budget setting and medium-term financial strategy.

6. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 6.1. Section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 requires authorities to set up an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a strategic and co-ordinating role over the Council's scrutiny function and in therefore it is appropriate that it has a draft work programme.
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Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Draft Overview & Scrutiny Committee work programme 2021/22
- Appendix 2: Draft Health & Adults Scrutiny Sub-committee work programme 2021/22
- Appendix 3: Draft Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-committee work programme 2021/22
- Appendix 4: Draft Children's & Education Scrutiny Sub-committee work programme 2021/22
- Appendix 5: Draft Scrutiny Lead Resources & Finance work programme 2021/22
- Appendix 6: Draft Scrutiny Lead Environment & Community Safety work programme 2021/22

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)

List of "Background Papers" used in the preparation of this report

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- These must be sent to Democratic Services with the report
- State NONE if none.

Officer contact details for documents:

Or state N/A

Appendix 1: Draft Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021/22

Meeting	Type of Scrutiny	Item	Outcome
Monday, 28 th June 2021	Strategic Performance Monitoring	End of year Performance report 2020/21	To review the council's performance against the strategic goals and provide critical friend challenge to service delivery
	OSC Work Programme Report	Draft Work Programme	To review the OSC work programme for 2021/22
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions	To review Cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations
Monday, 26 th July 2021	Tracking Recommendations	Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panels Scrutiny Action Plan	To track the implementation of recommendations from the scrutiny challenge session
	Strategic Performance Monitoring	Budget Year End Report 2020-21	To monitor the council's finances to ensure these align with council priorities and provide residents with value for money
	OSC Report: Scrutiny Challenge Session	Empowering Communities	To agree the recommendations of the Empowering Communities Challenge Session
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions	To review Cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations
Monday, 20 th September 2021	Strategic Performance Monitoring	Strategic Performance & Delivery Reporting Q1 2021/22	To review the council's performance against the strategic goals and provide critical friend challenge to service delivery
	Strategic Performance Monitoring	P3 Budget Monitoring Report	To review the council's performance against the strategic goals and provide critical friend challenge to service delivery
	Spotlight	Digital Exclusion	To review how the council is responding to digital exclusion
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions	To review Cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations
Monday, 25 th October 2021	Budget & Policy	MTFS 2022-25/ Fees and Charges and Budget Consultation	To provide critical friend challenge to the budget setting process in line with the council's priorities
	Budget & Policy	Licensing Policy	To review the impact of the council's proposed changes to its Licensing Policy
	Spotlight	Liveable Streets	To review progress of the Liveable Streets Programme
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions	To review Cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations
Monday, 22 nd November 2021	Strategic Performance Monitoring	Strategic Performance & Delivery Reporting Q2 2021/22	To review the council's performance against the strategic goals and provide critical friend challenge to service delivery

	Strategic Performance Monitoring	P6 Budget Monitoring Report	To review the council's performance against the strategic goals and provide critical friend challenge to service delivery
	Spotlight	Waste Service Performance	To review the performance of the Waste Service
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions	To review Cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations
Monday, 13 th December 2021	Spotlight	Mayors Spotlight	To hold the Mayor to account
	Tracking Recommendations	Community Buildings	To track the implementation of recommendations from the scrutiny challenge session.
	Cabinet Spotlight	Housing	To review the progress of the housing and development
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions	To review Cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations
Monday, 10 th January 2022	Budget & Policy	Budget Scrutiny	To provide critical friend challenge to the budget setting process in line with the council's priorities
Monday, 24 th January 2022	Spotlight	Borough Commander Review of 2020-21 and Priorities for 2021-22	To understand challenges and key areas of work undertaken to tackle community safety
	Cabinet Spotlight	Community Safety, Faith and Equalities	To review progress of community safety priorities with a focus on tackling serious youth violence.
	Spotlight	Governance Improvement Plan	Review progress against governance improvement plan
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions	To review Cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations
Monday, 21 st February 2022	Strategic Performance Monitoring	Strategic Performance & Delivery Reporting Q3 2021/22	To review the council's performance against the strategic goals and provide critical friend challenge to service delivery
	Strategic Performance Monitoring	P9 Budget Monitoring Report	To review the council's performance against the strategic goals and provide critical friend challenge to service delivery
	Spotlight	BAME Commission Action Plan	To review the progress of the BAME Commission action plan
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions	To review Cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations
Monday, 7 th March 2022	Cabinet Spotlight	Youth Services	To monitor the progress and performance of the new youth services structure
	Tracking Recommendations	Recycling Behaviour Change	To track the implementation of recommendations from the scrutiny challenge session.
	Tracking Recommendations	Review of LBTH response to COVID	To track the implementation of recommendations from the scrutiny

			challenge session.
		O&S Annual Report 2021/22	
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny Questions	To review Cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations

Monday, 12 July 2021	OSC Briefing Session	Strategic Measures Target Setting	To understand the approach and process for target setting and examine the strategic measures Targets for 2021/22
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Thursday, 22 July 2021	OSC Briefing Session	Savills Report Information	To understand and examine the implications for the council
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TBC	OSC Challenge Session	Swimming provision in the Borough	To review and make recommendation for Swimming provision in the borough
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Appendix 2: Draft Health & Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee work programme 2021/22

Meeting	Type of Scrutiny	Item	Outcome
Wednesday, 1 Sep 2021	Spotlight	Food provision in the borough	
	Spotlight	Adults Mental Health Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review annual report and joint presentation from East London Foundation Trust (ELFT) highlighting challenges in the system Impact of permanent move of Columbia and Cazaboun Ward in East Ham
Tuesday, 26 October 2021	Spotlight	Access to primary care	Equality of access to primary care by BAME communities
	Spotlight	Better Care Fund (BCF) programme	How it is supporting integration and details of the new governance framework
	Spotlight	Public Health Annual Report and Public Health Budget	Transparency around how funds are being utilised
Tuesday, 16 November 2021	Deep dive	Review of Council Budget Proposals	Review of specific proposals (tbc) and assess potential impact on community via equality analysis
	Spotlight	Restoring health provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restoring elective care and addressing backlog Urgent response to dental provision in the borough
	Spotlight	Impact of Long Covid	How is NHS addressing the issue of Long Covid

Meeting	Type of Scrutiny	Item	Outcome
Tuesday, 8 th March 2022	Spotlight	Adults Learning Disability Scrutiny Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on scrutiny recommendations Update on LD provision focusing on health outcomes, employment and accommodation

Appendix 3: Draft Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-committee work programme 2021/22

Meeting	Type of Scrutiny	Item	Outcome
Tuesday, 22 nd June 2021	Policy Framework	Agree Work Plan for the year	To ensure that the work of the sub-committee is purposeful and strategic driven
	Spotlight	Fire Safety scoping exercise	Increased pace and accountability on fire safety, implementing lessons learned and engagement with residents.
	Spotlight	Planning Bill White Paper	Increased oversight into planning reforms and engagement on next steps including lobbying and policy development
Thursday, 9 th September 2021	Scrutiny Review	Fire Safety	Increased pace and accountability on fire safety, implementing lessons learned and engagement with residents
	Policy Framework	Social Landlords Performance Report	Increased accountability and resident involvement in RP performance
	Spotlight	Housing Allocations Audit Report & Intermediate Housing	Quality assurance concerning operations regarding housing allocations. Shaping of next steps and potential amendments to the allocations policy / intermediate housing
Tuesday, 19 th October 2021	Policy Framework	Social Landlords Performance Report	Increased accountability and resident involvement in RP performance
	Spotlight	Tenancy Agreement Review	Presentation on the outcome of the consultation with tenants on the proposed revised tenancy conditions.
	Spotlight	Regeneration Framework	Increased oversight into regeneration approach, context and partner involvement with a view to extract the impact of regeneration on residents and shape next steps including lobbying and policy development
Thursday, 2 nd December	Policy Framework	Social Landlords Performance Report	Increased accountability and resident involvement in RP performance

Meeting	Type of Scrutiny	Item	Outcome
2021			
	Spotlight	6-Month Review of the use of PRS Allocations	Review of the implementation and impact of the recent change in allocations policy regarding use of the private rented sector
	Spotlight	Economic Growth - Employment	Increased oversight into employment delivery, context and partner involvement with a view to shape next steps including lobbying and policy development
Tuesday, 15 th March 2022	Policy Framework	Social Landlords Performance Report	Increased accountability and resident involvement in RP performance
	Spotlight	Housing Strategy 2016 – 2021 Refresh	Increased oversight into housing reforms across all tenures and engagement on next steps including lobbying and policy development
	Spotlight	Open Spaces Action Plan	More efficient use of vacant/under-utilised land held by stakeholders

Appendix 4: Draft Children’s & Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee Work Programme 2021/22

Work programme to be confirmed after meeting with Cabinet Member and Corporate Director on 19th July 21.


**Appendix 5: Cllr Leema Qureshi – Draft Scrutiny Lead Resources & Finance
Work Programme 2021-21**

Area of work	Method	Timescale
Portfolio Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular meetings with Cabinet Lead Regular meetings with Corporate Director Resources Induction meetings with Divisional Directors & Heads of Services Service visits/ engagement (subject to Covid-19 regulations) 	Ongoing Ongoing Jul – Sep 21 Sep – Feb 22
Grants Scrutiny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance at Grants Determination Sub Committee Presenting OSC Questions and comments 	July – Mar 22
Council Workforce Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutiny challenge session 	TBC
Exploration of council's Commercialisation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with CD and or DD to discuss progress, challenges and future opportunities 	Sep – Oct 21
Budget Scrutiny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly Budget Monitoring Budget Scrutiny 	Sept – May 22 Jan 22
Spotlight Digital Exclusion	OSC	Mar 22

**Appendix 6: Cllr Faroque Ahmed – Draft Scrutiny Lead Environment & Community Safety
Work Programme 2021-22**

Area of work	Method	Timescale
Portfolio Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly meetings with Cabinet Leads Quarterly meeting with Corporate/ Divisional Directors of Place and HAC Induction meetings with Divisional Directors and Heads of Services Service visits engagements (subject to Covid-19 regulations) 	Ongoing Ongoing Jul – Sep 21 Sep – Feb 22
Exploration of violent crime agenda through a public health agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with CD and or DD to discuss progress, challenges and future opportunities 	Jul – Sep 21
Tracking Recs: Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panels Action Plan	OSC	Jul 21
Spotlight: Liveable Streets	OSC	
Environment Spotlight: Waste Service Performance	OSC	Nov 21
Parking	Challenge Session	TBC
Spotlight Community Safety: Borough Commander	OSC	Jan 22
Tracking Recs: Recycling Behaviour Change	OSC	Mar 22

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<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Wednesday, 21 July 2021</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Janet Fasan: Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Classification: Open (Unrestricted)</p>
<p>Appointment of a Chair and a Member for the Strategic Development Committee</p>	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
Wards affected	(All Wards);

Executive Summary

Following the sad and unexpected death of Councillor John Pierce, Council is asked to fill the vacancy on the Strategic Development Committee and to appoint a new Chair of the Committee.

To comply with proportionality requirements the new Member must be nominated by the Labour Group. The Chair can be appointed from any member of the Committee (including the member appointed through this report).

Recommendations:

The Council is recommended to:

1. Appoint a new member of the Strategic Development Committee as nominated by the Labour Group.
2. Appoint a Chair of the Strategic Development Committee for the remainder of the 2021-22 municipal year from the members of the Committee.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 A vacancy for a member and a Chair has arisen on the Strategic Development Committee which Council are required to fill.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 There are no alternative options.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 At the Annual Meeting of Council, it was agreed to establish a Strategic Development Committee of 8 members. Following the proportionality rules set out at that meeting, 7 places were nominated by the Labour Group whilst 1 was allocated to ungrouped Councillors.
- 3.2 Council also appointed Councillor John Pierce as the Chair of the Committee.
- 3.3 Following the extremely sad and unexpected death of Councillor John Pierce, there are now vacancies for Chair of the Committee and for a new member of the Committee.
- 3.4 When appointing members of the Committee, Council must follow the proportionality rules which would dictate that this vacancy must be filled by a Labour Group nomination.
- 3.5 When appointing the Chair of the Committee, Council may consider nominations from any of the existing membership or of the member appointed through this report.
- 3.6 At the meeting, the Speaker will ask for nominations first for the vacancy and then for the Chair of the Committee. Where there are multiple nominations for the Chair, these will be voted on in the order in which they are received. Once a nomination receives a majority vote it will be accepted and no further nominations will be considered.
- 3.7 If no nominations for the Chair are received and/or accepted then the Strategic Development Committee will be free to determine its own Chair.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None arising directly from this report.

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,
 - Crime Reduction,
 - Safeguarding.
 - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

5.2 There would be a risk to the effective functioning of the Strategic Development Committee should a Chair not be nominated.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 permits a local authority to arrange for discharge of its functions by a committee. Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 require appointments to committees to reflect the representation of different groups in the authority as a whole.

7.2 The matters set out in this report comply with the above legislation.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- Proportionality and Establishment of Committees – report to the Annual Council meeting on 19 May 2021.

Appendices

- None.

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)

List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report


List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- None.

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A

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Non-Executive Report of the: Council Wednesday, 21 July 2021	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer	Classification: Open (Unrestricted)
Waiver of the 6-month attendance rule and appointment of Mayoral Advisor	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
Wards affected	(All Wards);

Executive Summary

Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a Member of a Local Authority to attend at least one meeting of that Authority within a six-month consecutive period, in order to avoid being disqualified as a Councillor. This requirement can be waived and the time limit extended if such a request is approved by Council in advance of the six-month period expiring.

Councillor Sufia Alam is currently absent on maternity leave from 4 June 2021 until the end of January 2022. This period is longer than six months and Councillor Alam is therefore formally requesting that an extension to the six-month rule be approved by Council.

In addition, Councillor Sufia Alam was appointed a Mayoral Advisor at the Annual Council meeting. This report therefore asks for nominations to cover that position until Councillor Alam returns.

Recommendations:

The Council is recommended to:

1. Consider the request to extend Councillor Sufia Alam’s period of office beyond the six-month period of non-attendance provided for within Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds of being on maternity leave.
2. That Council approve the requested extension of time to expire on 31 January 2022.
3. That Council consider appointing a replacement Mayoral Advisor until the point that Councillor Sufia Alam returns.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The extension to the 6-month rule has been requested to ensure that Councillor Sufia Alam is able to return to his role following her period of maternity leave.
- 1.2 The report also provides Council with the opportunity to appoint a replacement Mayoral Advisor should it wish. If Council does not appoint a replacement Advisor the position will remain vacant until Cllr Alam returns.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 None are presented however Council can decide not to grant the request for an extension.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 states that “if a member of a Local Authority fails, throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of their last attendance, to attend any meeting of the Authority they will, unless the failure was due to some good reason approved by the Authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the Authority.” Attendance can be at any committee or sub-committee, or any joint committee, joint board or other body where the functions of the Authority are discharged or who were appointed to advise the Authority on any matter relating to the discharge of their functions.
- 3.2 Councillor Sufia Alam will be on maternity leave from 4 June 2021 until 31 January 2022. This is longer than 6 months and so without an agreed extension she would cease to be a Member of the authority.
- 3.3 The Council has an agreed Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Sickness Pay policy for Members in that they shall continue to receive their Basic Allowance and any Special Responsibility Allowance whilst on leave. This extension to the 6-month rule would therefore ensure the Councillor was able to take leave in line with this policy.
- 3.4 Councillor Alam was also appointed as a Mayoral Advisor at the Annual Meeting of Council. Council should therefore consider whether it wishes to appoint a Member to cover that position whilst Councillor Alam is on leave..
- 3.5 At the Council meeting, the Speaker will ask for any nominations for the meeting to consider. Should Council not make an appointment, the position will remain vacant until Cllr Alam returns.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council's agreed Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Sickness policies for Members are designed to ensure that all Members are able to take necessary leave whilst continuing to serve as Members of the Council and are therefore a vital part in supporting all residents who would wish to serve as Members to serve their communities.
- 4.2 Waiver extensions to the 6-month rule can only be granted on a case-by-case basis and so cannot be pre-written into the policy. Council is therefore asked to grant this extension request to ensure Councillor Sufia Alam is able to make use of the maternity policy for Members.

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,
 - Crime Reduction,
 - Safeguarding.
 - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

- 5.2 Were an extension not to be granted there is a risk that Councillor Sufia Alam would be disqualified from office as a Councillor.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 This report recommends agreement to the extension of the waiver for the 6 Month Councillor Attendance Rule from 4 June 2021 to 31 January 2022. There are no direct financial implications arising from recommendations 1&2. Should recommendation 3 be approved then the additional costs of the Mayoral Advisor can be found from within the Members budget.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 states that a member ceases to be a member of a local authority if he or she does not attend a meeting of that authority for a period of six months from the date of his or her last attendance. The section permits a local authority to approve the non-attendance of the member at any meeting of the authority, if the approval is given before the expiry of the six month period. This would enable the Council to follow the requirements of its Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Sickness Policies in this case.

7.2 The proposals set out in this report comply with the above legislation.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None.

Appendices

- None.

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)


List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- None.

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A

Non-Executive Report of the: Council 21 st July 2021	
Report of: Janet Fasan: Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Questions submitted by Members of the Council	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
Wards affected	All wards

SUMMARY

1. Set out overleaf are the questions that were submitted by Members of the Council for response by the Mayor, the Speaker or the Chair of a Committee or Sub-Committee at the Council meeting on Wednesday 21st July 2021.
2. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.4, questions relating to Executive functions and decisions taken by the Mayor are put to the Mayor unless he delegates such a decision to another Member, who will therefore be responsible for answering the question. In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor will answer questions directed to the Mayor.
3. Questions are limited to one per Member per meeting, plus one supplementary question unless the Member has indicated that only a written reply is required and in these circumstances a supplementary question is not permitted. Oral responses are time limited to one minute. Supplementary questions and responses are also time limited to one minute each.
4. Council Procedure Rule 10.7 provides for an answer to take the form of a written answer circulated to the questioner, a reference to a published work or a direct oral answer.
5. There is a time limit of thirty minutes at the Council meeting for consideration of Members' questions with no extension of time allowed and any questions not put within this time are dealt with by way of written responses.
6. Members must confine their contributions to questions and answers and not make statements or attempt to debate.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

17 questions have been received from Members of the Council as follows:-

10.1 Question from Councillor Leema Qureshi

Can the Mayor or Cabinet Member please provide information on how many affordable homes have been built in the borough since 2015?

10.2 Question from Councillor Peter Golds

Noting the problems regarding consultation with both school streets and liveable streets will the Mayor explain how he and his officers liaise with the emergency services before implementation of his proposals?

10.3 Question from Councillor Dipa Das

How will the Government's cuts to Discretionary Housing Payments affect residents in Tower Hamlets and in particular how will the Council's Tackling Poverty work help to support these residents?

10.4 Question from Councillor Andrew Wood

Can the Council help find new facilities for the Police Cadets based at the Isle of Dogs Police station which has been sold as well as the 2nd East London Scouts twice now forced out of their base by squatters?

10.5 Question from Councillor Amina Ali

What action is the Council taking to drive up vaccination rates in Tower Hamlets?

10.6 Question from Councillor Shad Chowdhury

How will the Mayor's £3m Covid Recovery Fund be used to support the borough's recovery over the coming months and years?

10.7 Question from Councillor Val Whitehead

What progress is the council making in meeting its commitments on climate change?

10.8 Question from Councillor Marc Francis

Will the Lead Member for Housing provide an update on the roll-out of the Traffic Management Orders to enable parking enforcement on our council housing estates?

10.9 Question from Councillor Bex White

What is the council doing about mopeds, motorbikes and pushbikes being ridden on pavements in connection with the increase in food delivery. Will we be incorporating this into the licensing policy and processes to ensure that takeaway food premises have a plan that doesn't involve using the pavements inappropriately?

10.10 Question from Councillor Tarik Khan

What assessment has been made of the funding announced by the Government to help school pupils catch-up?

10.11 Question from Councillor Kyrsten Perry

Can the Mayor or Cabinet Member provide an update on the delivery of new street trees?

10.12 Question from Councillor Victoria Obaze

Can the Mayor or Cabinet Member update members on the Covid-19 Response Annual Report, and how the council has responded to the pandemic?

10.13 Question from Councillor Rajib Ahmed

Can the Mayor or Cabinet Member give an update on the decision to renew the council's selective licensing scheme, and what other measures are in place to protect private renters?

10.14 Question from Councillor Shah Ameen

What continuing support is available to help our local businesses as restrictions are eased and as trading begins to gradually recover?

10.15 Question from Councillor Kahar Chowdhury

Can the Mayor or Cabinet Member provide an update on the Council's planned summer activities programme?


10.16 Question from Councillor Gabriella Salva-Macallan

The Council have earmarked a community centre, the Canal Club in St Peter's Wards for demolition as part of the council house building project. Would the Mayor and lead member consider meeting with local residents to discuss 'meanwhile use' by the local community of the centre?

10.17 Question from Councillor Rabina Khan

Mayor John Biggs is proposing to spend £2,996,265 on the Mayor's Covid Recovery Fund. Will the Mayor ensure money is allocated to address educational digital divide so that every child in the borough has access to a laptop or IT device over the summer and when schools reopen to support children's gap in their learning caused by Covid?

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Non-Executive Report of the: COUNCIL 21 st July 2021	
Report of: Janet Fasan, Director of Legal and Interim Monitoring Officer	Classification: Unrestricted
Motions submitted by Members of the Council	

Originating Officer(s)	Matthew Mannion, Head of Democratic Services
Wards affected	All wards

SUMMARY

1. Four motions have been submitted by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 11 for debate at the Council meeting on Wednesday 21st July 2021
2. The motions submitted are listed overleaf. In accordance with the Council Procedure Rules, the motions alternate between the administration and the other Political Groups, with the Opposition Group motions starting with the largest Political Group not to have that meeting's Opposition Motion Debate slot.
3. Motions must be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the Borough. A motion may not be moved which is substantially the same as a motion which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the previous six months; or which proposes that a decision of the Council taken in the previous six months be rescinded; unless notice of the motion is given signed by at least twenty Members.
4. There is no specific duration set for this agenda item and consideration of the attached motions may continue until the time limit for the meeting is reached. The guillotine procedure at Council Procedure Rule 9.2 does not apply to motions on notice and any of the attached motions which have not been put to the vote when the time limit for the meeting is reached will be deemed to have fallen. A motion which is not put to the vote at the current meeting may be resubmitted for the next meeting but is not automatically carried forward.

MOTIONS

Set out overleaf is the motions that have been submitted.

11.1 Motion regarding Memorial to the Matchwomen and Matchgirls

Proposer: Councillor Sabina Akhtar

Seconder: Councillor Rachel Blake

This Council believes:

1. We have a proud modern history in Tower Hamlets of championing diversity and standing up to discrimination, but there is more we can do
2. That historically under-represented groups should be remembered in the public realm
3. That the women and girls who took part in the Match Factory Strike of 1888 were pioneers of the Labour Movement

This Council notes:

1. The Council has pro-actively undertaken a review of race and equality in the public realm.
2. The purpose of the review was to share thoughts about under-representation in public spaces – not only in terms of race, but also on issues across the equalities landscape including but not limited to civil rights, workers', women's and LGBTQ+ rights and more.
3. The review asked the community identify and nominate other names, particularly of under-represented groups, who have done something memorable and who we should celebrate.

This Council resolves:

1. To welcome ideas for remembering the Matchwomen and Matchgirls who fought for their employment rights
2. To work with the Matchgirls Memorial Trust to remember the struggle of the Matchwomen and Matchgirls

11.2 Motion regarding the State of Borough as of July 2021

Proposed by: Councillor Peter Golds

Seconded by: Councillor Andrew Wood

That the true state of the Borough is listed below. These are all issues which still affect the Borough, and to which have been added risks to services that can be mitigated. They are also a record of the failures of the last six years.

Education

- Raines Foundation secondary school – second OFSTED failure despite LBTH staff on the governing body and eventual closure despite building a new secondary school in Wapping proving there is demand for secondary schools
- Loss of world class new secondary code free school on Commercial Road due to opposition from LBTH despite the Department of Education buying the site.
- Failure to ensure delivery of new secondary school on the Isle of Dogs for an established school but building a new secondary school for a school that does not yet exist in Wapping
- Unlike many other Boroughs LBTH has failed to commission a new school in over eleven years now despite being the fastest growing Borough in the country for more than ten years now – it has solely relied on others to provide new schools with the Wood Wharf primary school being the first to be provided by LBTH (may open in 2022)

Parking

- Difficulty in getting disabled parking bays for residents
- Not protecting disabled residents parking access to private underground car parks in s106 legal agreements
- 210 blue badges thefts from cars because LBTH won't consider providing disabled people with virtual permits for at least one vehicle used by disabled people. Forcing disabled people to pay extra to repair damaged cars or insurance premiums in order to protect LBTH from some additional parking fraud.
- Car free properties include many people with cars, but LBTH has no strategy for them
- Granting permit transfer schemes for developments with little or no nearby street parking
- Introduce 3-hour mini zones initially without consultation and then changing some zone boundaries to mitigate the impact
- Failures on parking enforcement resulting in the largest unpaid individual parking fine in the country

Children's Services

- Failed OFSTED in 2017
- No serious case reviews ever carried out for the girls from Tower Hamlets who died in Syria

New Town Hall

- No detail has ever been provided to explain the increase in the budget since this Council first approved the decision. Was it inflation, larger building, asbestos?

Council house building programme

- Not actually building 2,000 new homes as advertised – many were built by others and are not ‘new’
- Unwilling to build tall buildings on Council owned land in areas with fantastic transport connections and access to facilities proving that there is no actual housing crisis i.e., Mile End Veolia depot/Stroudely Walk – new development is lower than old nearby development or lower than nearby sites in Newham
- Buying expensive old stock in poor repair from one housing association and then making it difficult to find out how much spent on that stock even though clear more spent than originally planned
- Spending scarce funds on a large number of small projects resulting in high overheads and poor economies of scale rather than as a previous administration did using compulsory purchase powers to assemble large sites where large volumes of new affordable homes can be built more efficiently
- A lack of clarity (like Croydon) over what was bought, where and for how much? All we see is a dip in reserves.

Construction management

- Two residents died in construction related accidents outside the boundaries of the construction site
- There has been no management of this issue leading to pain and disruption caused to residents, working from home has materially increased the number of affected residents – has health implications
- Still no data about air quality issues caused by building sites available to public
- Continuous digging up of key roads like Marsh Wall because there is still no long-term plan
- Danger to residents of living in incomplete buildings like Amory Tower

Planning

- Failing to challenge housing targets set by the Mayor of London which we are now failing to achieve making it harder to resist new development
- Setting targets that put 57% of all new housing into a relatively small part of Tower Hamlets, the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar and then creating Supplementary Planning Documents for the largest part of Tower Hamlets to make large developments more difficult there, mean it will be even harder to meet targets overall putting more pressure on small parts of Tower Hamlets
- Failing to learn the lessons of previous failures i.e., Blackwall is the worst planned place in the UK (playgrounds!) when it comes to new development areas like along the river Lea
- Failing for the 2nd time to decide the West ferry Printworks planning application on time, on both occasions allowing others to make the decisions instead
- Routinely losing planning appeals because LBTH has not designed a process to ensure that if Councillors reject a scheme recommended by Officers that Councillor decisions are supported with the strongest possible planning reasons for a rejection
- Failure to report alleged corruption around planning issues to the Police until told to do so
- Failure to so far use new technology in the planning process until years after its introduction, Vu.City 3D model for example
- No effective meanwhile use strategy for the many large sites demolished and then left empty i.e., JP Morgan site or Helix/McDonalds site or the imminent loss of the Pepper Street site.

- No response to the poor door controversy – Councillors complain at planning committee but there is no formal policy response to the issues raised by the segregation of tenures

Investment strategy

- There is no strategy despite talking about it for years
- Substantial and continuing losses from reserves through inflation approximately £2.4 million a year, in 2018 to 2020 the Council finance team estimate was that we lost £22.3 over 3 years – this loss is not reported in the accounts nor commentary
- LBTH holds substantial reserves but there is a lack of clarity over what they are for

Youth Service

- Services that actually support children in the Borough: Scouts, Sea Scouts, Police Cadets, Brownies, Guides etc get no support from LBTH only impediments (have to pay business rates for example)
- Continuous restructuring of the youth service
- Unwillingness to consider different funding models bringing in external funds and resources i.e., Youth Zone
- Moving a Council investigator into the team he was investigating to work alongside the people he was investigating.
- Closure of youth centres like St Andrews Wharf in previous years due to inability to recruit staff.

Infrastructure

- Failure to deliver the infrastructure required as set out by the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar Development Infrastructure Funding Study
- Delays to the 4th attempt to build a new pedestrian bridge across South Quay & to make it compatible for cyclists
- Lea river bridge by Poplar gas works – allowing new development to occupy land required to allow construction of a new bridge that had planning permission (but was not built)
- Loss of GLA funding for the Poplar River zone
- DLR only 3 carriages long – should have been built 4 or 5 carriages
- No growth of public services to match population growth despite that being what New Homes Bonus is for. 2nd library for Whitechapel but libraries on the Isle of Dogs at risk of closure despite 57% of all new housing in Tower Hamlets allocated there.
- Lack of clarity over future of some major local assets – St Georges baths, Tiller Road leisure centre, Isle of Dogs Police station, Cubitt Town Library (if ASDA redeveloped)

Crime & Anti-Social

- Worst ASB rates in the UK
- Has been the top or 2nd highest concern of residents for years in the Residents Survey
- Little investment in ASB, the CCTV investment programme is mainly driven by the need to digitise the CCTV network to allow the move to the new Town Hall
- Most CCTV cameras are placed where the main population centres were a generation ago not where they are now i.e., Millharbour, densest place in the UK has no Council CCTV cameras
- Introduction of new PSPO to deal with NOX, six years after first introduced in London
- Still a lack of clarity over how to report ASB and to whom

Enforcement

- On a range of issues related to planning and rubbish little evidence of LBTH using its enforcement powers
- Other Boroughs are noticeably keener to enforce and take people to court

Financial

- Pension's failure – having to declare our failure to the Pension Regulator
- Two years accounts still not signed off by auditors with material issues found by auditors requiring major changes in the reserves position
- Still using Microsoft Excel to track key data
- Every year failing to spend our capex budget
- Threat of business rate reductions to our future income if properties revalued – what are we doing to attract new or retain existing businesses and encourage the full occupation of our shops, offices, and restaurants?

Homes of Multiple Occupation (HMO)

- Watering down limitations introduced by other Labour controlled councils to regulate the growth of HMOs.
- No strategy to provide a wider range of home tenures than just private for sale apartments, shared ownership, and social rent.
- Loss of family sized accommodation in existing larger houses as private developers meet demand instead by converting family homes which results in financial losses for the Council as well as the loss of affordable homes which might have been gained by developers building new buildings to meet this demand instead

Quality of Life

- Allowing parts of Tower Hamlets to look like a shambles due to the neo-liberal attitude of LBTH
- London rates poorly for quality of life in a number of international surveys – LBTH contributes to that
- Suffers high turnover as a result and skewed demographics (vaccine uptake might suggest we have youngest population in the country)
- Facilities for teenagers are poor to non-existent in large parts of Tower Hamlets or noticeably poorer than elsewhere i.e., skateboard parks in Lewisham superior to those in Tower Hamlets
- Playgrounds in or near to new developments are too small, badly located, or inadequate – LBTH has not provided new playgrounds to compensate for this.

Staffing Issues

- Only 32% of staff earning more than £60k are BAME but BAME staff comprise 57% of all staff
- Staff sickness rates – this leads to additional pressures on other staff
- Proportion of senior staff promoted from within the organisation is extremely low – high quality organisation would promote a % of management from within – this leads to higher recruitment costs, loss of knowledge, and low staff morale as can see little hope of advancement.

Rubbish & recycling

- Second worst recycling record in London after Newham
- % Recycled has declined over time – is getting worse

- Blackwall Reach URS bins routinely not emptied on time or full – within sight of the sales office trying to sell apartments at Blackwall Reach. LBTH is the developer!
- Issues with collections being missed on a regular basis or not being picked up for other reasons that are not made clear to residents i.e., Castalia Square

Climate change

- Council fleet of vehicles still fossil fuel powered with only a couple of hybrids – bought new fleet of diesel refuse vehicles after City of London some time before proved that electric refuse vehicles worked
- No electric vehicle chargers in any Council facility
- Only one Council building has solar panels on roof
- No other form of sustainable electricity generation in any Council building
- Bought electricity from renewable sources ten years at least after this was possible
- No emergency response to the emergency declared in 2020

Fire safety

- Most affected Borough in the country by a factor of two, 293 buildings asked for Building Safety Funds versus Manchester 144
- Almost every week new buildings are being added to the list of building with issues requiring a walking watch – perhaps ½ to 1/3 of all tall buildings affected in some way?
- LBTH does not know how many buildings affected by wider fire safety issues as mainly focussed on ACM clad buildings at the request of MHCLG
- Fire risk reports old and out of date for THH buildings
- No tall ladders placed in LBTH by the London Fire Brigade – does LBTH have a view on this?
- No evidence that LBTH has committed any of its own financial resources to this issue (extra staff employed funded by MHCLG) despite earning approaching half a billion in funds from development (s106, CIL, NHB) now at risk
- Not commissioning (yet) a fire safety report following the NPW fire to help learn all of the lessons from the fire.
- How will LBTH help affected residents? Will it support a reduction in Council tax based on a decline in property values?

Liveable Streets

- A process that started with broad public support – to stop vehicles rat running through Wapping has created division and conflict by being rushed through in a pandemic and by ignoring consultation responses
- Has created revenue generating assets (bus gates) from using money meant to support new infrastructure in other parts of Tower Hamlets
- Danger to life and property from emergency vehicle delays by using planters rather than ANPR cameras as requested by the London Fire Brigade
- Opportunity for liveable streets to be self-funding through use of ANPR camera-controlled gates rather than using scarce infrastructure funds

Air Quality

- LBTH still acting as if air quality is getting worse when its own sensors show the opposite, that air pollution levels have been dropping for years in part it is assuming due to new EURO standard engines.
- LBTH buying an all-new fleet of diesel refuse vehicles in 2020 (using latest EURO engines) shows that it actually believes this is also the case.

- As a result, it is not focussing its efforts on those areas with poor air quality nor other sources of air pollution (construction sites)

Consultation process

- Evidence that LBTH will ignore consultation responses if they do not fit what LBTH has already decided to do i.e., Bethnal Green ward name change not supported by residents of the ward, Wapping residents wanted Wapping residents to be able to drive through Wapping
- Consultation hub does not alert you to new consultations, have to manually visit the website to see what is being consulted on
- Many consultations are not advertised by the Council via its social media or are only done once

Deprivation

- High levels of deprivation remain – suggesting a generational failure by LBTH
- Lack of a strategy to welcome new immigrant groups, how many people from HK will move here, what will we do if they do come in large numbers?
- Too many people still cannot speak English well which has a detrimental impact on their ability to access a range of services (health especially) and jobs

The Council resolves to:

- To do better
- To actually listen to all of its residents
- To respond to residents' concerns based on their priorities as set out in the resident's survey
- To make decisions based on evidence not pre-conceptions
- To change the culture & structures of the Council to be more responsive and less silo like
- To be ambitious for residents and Tower Hamlets
- Not to accept mediocre outcomes

11.3 Motion regarding Local Government pay to council: a fully funded, proper pay rise for council and school workers

Proposed by: Councillor Rachel Blake

Seconded by: Councillor Asma Islam

This Council notes:

1. Local government has endured central government funding cuts of more than 50% since 2010.
2. Between 2010 and 2020, councils lost 60p out of every £1 they have received from central government.
3. Over the last year, councils have led the way in efforts against the Covid-19 pandemic, providing a huge range of services and support for our communities. Local government has shown more than ever how indispensable it is. But the pandemic has led to a massive increase in expenditure and loss of income, and the Government has failed to provide the full amount of promised support.
4. Local government workers have kept our communities safe through the pandemic, often putting themselves at considerable risk as they work to protect public health, provide quality housing, ensure our children continue to be educated, and look after older and vulnerable people.
5. Since 2010, the local government workforce has endured years of pay restraint with the majority of pay points losing at least 23 per cent of their value since 2009/10.
6. At the same time, workers have experienced ever-increasing workloads and persistent job insecurity. Across the UK, 900,000 jobs have been lost in local government since June 2010 – a reduction of more than 30 per cent. Local government has arguably been hit by more severe job losses than any other part of the public sector. The funding gap caused by Covid-19 will make local government employment even more precarious.
7. There has been a disproportionate impact on women, with women making up more than three-quarters of the local government workforce.
8. Recent research shows that if the Government were to fully fund the unions' 2021 pay claim, around half of the money would be recouped thanks to increased tax revenue, reduced expenditure on benefits, and increased consumer spending in the local economy.

This Council believes:

1. Our workers are public service super-heroes. They keep our communities clean and safe, look after those in need and keep our towns and cities running.
2. Without the professionalism and dedication of our staff, the council services our residents rely on would not be deliverable.
3. Local government workers deserve a proper real-terms pay increase. The Government needs to take responsibility and fully fund this increase; it should not put the burden on local authorities whose funding been cut to the bone and who have not been offered adequate support through the Covid-19 pandemic.

This Council resolves to:

1. Support the pay claim submitted by UNISON, GMB and Unite on behalf of council and school workers, for a substantial increase with a minimum 10 per cent uplift in April 2021.

2. Call on the Local Government Association to make urgent representations to central government to fund the NJC pay claim
3. Write to the Chancellor and Secretary of State to call for a pay increase for local government workers to be funded with new money from central government.
4. Meet with local NJC union representatives to convey support for the pay claim and consider practical ways in which the council can support the campaign
5. Encourage all local government workers to join a union.

11.4 Motion regarding The Purchase of a 64-Metre or Taller Turntable Ladder for Tower Hamlets Residents

Proposed by: Councillor Rabina Khan

The Council Notes:

- June 14th marked the day four years ago when a fire broke out at Grenfell Tower killing 72 and leaving many more injured, traumatised, and homeless.
- As we saw with the New Providence Wharf incident of May 7th, fires in tower blocks can start at any time.
- As more high-rise schemes are built which individually house many occupiers, the need to locate a Turntable Ladder of at least 64m or taller where the supertall residential buildings are, i.e. Isle of Dogs and Tower Hamlets, is urgent.
- 292 high-rise privately-owned blocks in Tower Hamlets are in need of fire safety remedial work, having applied to the government's Building Safety Fund, the highest number of any Local Authority in England.
- Residents living in social housing across the borough also in high rise towers.
- Tower Hamlets councillors had a meeting with the Tower Hamlets London Fire Brigade Commander on the 30th of June 2021 regarding fire safety infrastructure in the Borough and lessons learnt from the New Providence Wharf incident of May 7th.
- This motion puts on record the bravery of our firefighters and recognises the especially important work that they do.
- London Fire Brigade are working within a time of budget restraints with the LFB having to find £10 million of savings in 2020/21 and £15 million in 2021/22 in a way that does not affect the frontline services they provide to Londoners.
- Tower Hamlets does not have a tall Turntable Ladder that could minimise risk and support our firefighters during a live fire event.

The Council Further Notes:

- The borough hosts several high-rise socially owned or ex-social properties.
- Irrespective of whether these properties have cladding issues or fire safety defects, their occupiers need protection in the event of a fire and suitable equipment that could be at the site almost immediately.
- A tall ladder will benefit all in the high-rise community of Tower Hamlets, whether leaseholder, shared owner, renter, right-to-buy lessee or social tenant.
- This is a safety issue, not a tenure issue.
- LFB has 15 32m tall ladders in London (11 active, 4 reserve) and these are set to be joined by three new tall ladders to be based in Dagenham, Old Kent Road and Wimbledon fire stations.
- Unfortunately, none of these ladders will be housed in Tower Hamlets, an area of intense redevelopment and whose comparatively unique high-rise terrain (in the UK context), especially in the Isle of Dogs and surrounding area, demands that sort of fire safety infrastructure to be hosted locally.
- In any case, a fire in a tall building now automatically triggers the dispatching of a ladder to the affected site, it can take some time for these to arrive, especially in traffic.

The Council Resolves:

- The Council to investigate with statutory partners, housing associations and the

private sector options for the purchase of a tall aerial fire and rescue platform of at least 64m or taller to be based in Tower Hamlets.

- The council uses its existing and considerable s106 and CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funds, most of which have been generated by intense redevelopment of the Isle of Dogs and surrounding area, but also seek to secure donations from developers and other private sector stakeholders.
- Once the funds are raised for the Tall Ladder the Council works with LFB to identify the appropriate aerial equipment for the borough. LFB will have the expertise to work related to operation of aerial equipment needed to tackle a fire in high rise towers.
- That the Council works with LFB to identify the designated location of the aerial equipment in the borough whether it is at Millwall or Poplar fire stations which are ideally placed, on top of the heavily built-up Isle of Dogs dominated by multi-occupancy apartments buildings, many of which compete to be amongst the tallest in Europe. Or a relevant location identified by LFB.
- The council seeks to investigate that life-saving infrastructure is located closer to the area with the biggest concentration of high-rise and high-density residential developments in the entire United Kingdom.
- Since Tower Hamlets regularly clinches the top spot for number of new homes built in the country, it is essential that this housebuilding achievement is matched by world-class fire safety infrastructure, including adequate water pressure and a Turntable Ladder of at least 64m or taller.