

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda

Monday, 20 February 2023 6.30 p.m.
Council Chamber - Town Hall, Whitechapel

Members:

Chair: Councillor Musthak Ahmed

Vice Chair: Councillor Abdul Mannan

Councillor Maisha Begum, Councillor Bodrul Choudhury, Councillor Marc Francis, Councillor Asma Islam, Councillor Ahmodur Khan, Councillor Sabina Khan and Councillor Abdul Malik

Co-opted Members:

Jahid Ahmed and Halima Islam

Deputies: Councillor Faroque Ahmed, Councillor Mohammad Chowdhury, Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled, Councillor Kamrul Hussain, Councillor Abdul Wahid and Councillor Leelu Ahmed

[The quorum for this body is 3 voting Members]

Contact for further enquiries:

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Town Hall, 160 Whitechapel Road, London, E1 1BJ
<http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee>



Public Information

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A Guide to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Local Government Act 2000 established the overview and scrutiny function for every council, with the key roles of:

- Scrutinising decisions before or after they are made or implemented
- Proposing new policies and commenting on draft policies, and
- Ensuring customer satisfaction and value for money.

The aim is to make the decision-making process more transparent, accountable and inclusive, and improve services for people by being responsive to their needs. Overview & Scrutiny membership is required to reflect the proportional political makeup of the council and, as well as council services, there are statutory powers to examine the impact of work undertaken by partnerships and outside bodies, including the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and local health bodies.

In Tower Hamlets, the function is exercised by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC). The OSC considers issues from across the council and partnership remit. The Committee has 3 Sub-Committees:

- Children & Education Scrutiny Sub Committee
- Health & Adults Scrutiny Sub Committee
- Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub Committee

The committee's quorum is three voting members.

Public Engagement

OSC usually meets once per month (a few days before Cabinet, to allow scrutiny of decisions scheduled to be made there). These meetings are open to the public to attend, and a timetable for meeting dates and deadlines can be found on the Council's website. More detail of how residents can engage with Overview and Scrutiny are available here

[Overview and scrutiny \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](https://towerhamlets.gov.uk/overview-and-scrutiny)

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 20 February 2023

6.30 p.m.

SECTION ONE

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST AND OTHER INTERESTS (PAGES 7 - 8)

Members are reminded to consider the categories of interest 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, please see the attached note from the Monitoring Officer.

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

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

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES (PAGES 9 - 22)

To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12 December 2022 and 9 January 2023

4. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

To receive any petitions (to be notified at the meeting).

5. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION LOG (PAGES 23 - 36)



For the committee to review and note Work Program and Action Log

6. FORTHCOMING DECISIONS

To review forthcoming decisions expected to be taken by the Mayor and identify any areas of further Scrutiny for committee.

A copy of the forthcoming decisions can be found here:

[FORTHCOMING DECISIONS PLAN 9 February 2023](#)

7. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

To consider any decisions that have been called in.

8. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT

8.1 BOROUGH COMMANDER SPOTLIGHT

9. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

The following items are due to be considered at the Cabinet meeting 22 February 2023. The committee is invited to consider the reports below, which can be found on the links provided to the agenda for the Cabinet meeting.

9.1 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

This item has been withdrawn

9.2 STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE MONITORING BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

This item has been withdrawn

10. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS

To hear verbal updates from the Overview and Scrutiny Leads on their work across the Council.

11. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF UNRESTRICTED CABINET PAPERS

To review the Cabinet agenda and to consider and agree any pre-decision scrutiny questions to be presented to the Cabinet meeting 22 February 2023.

12. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

To consider any other unrestricted business that the Chair considers to be urgent.



13. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

In view of the contents of the remaining items on the agenda the Committee is recommended to adopt the following motion:

“That, under the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for the consideration of the Section Two business on the grounds that it contains information defined as Exempt in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972.”

EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL SECTION (Pink Papers)

The exempt committee papers in the agenda will contain information, which is commercially, legally or personally sensitive and should not be divulged to third parties. If you do not wish to retain these papers after the meeting, please hand them to the Committee Officer present.

SECTION TWO

14. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Nil Items

15. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

Nil Items

16. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL) CABINET PAPERS

Nil Items

17. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

To consider any other exempt/ confidential business that the Chair considers to be urgent.

Next Meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 27 March 2023 at 5.30 p.m. to be held in Council Chamber - Town Hall, Whitechapel



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 DPI dispensation or for an interest to be treated as sensitive interest.

(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.

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Further Advice contact: Janet Fasan, Interim Corporate Director, Governance and 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 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD AT 18:30 ON MONDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2022

**COMMITTEE ROOM ONE - TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE
CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Councillor Musthak Ahmed (Chair)
Councillor Maisha Begum (Member)
Councillor Marc Francis (Member)
Councillor Asma Islam (Member)
Councillor Ahmodur Khan (Member)
Councillor Sabina Khan (Member)

Jahid Ahmed (Co-Optee) (Co-optee)
Halima Islam (Co-Optee) Scrutiny Co-Optee

Other Members Present:

Councillor Saied Ahmed (Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living)

Officers Present:

Stephen Bramah (Corporate Head of Strategy and Improvement)
Daniel Kerr (Senior Strategy and Policy Officer)
Thomas French (Democratic Services Officer (Committees))

Officers Present, virtually:

Will Tuckley (Chief Executive)
Nisar Visram (Director of Finance Audit and Procurement)

**1. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST AND
OTHER INTERESTS**

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were received at the meeting.

2. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

Minutes will be presented at future meeting of the committee.

3. CABINETS REPORTS FOR SCRUTINY

3.1 Strategic Performance Monitoring Strategic Performance & Delivery Reporting Q1 & Q2 2022/23

The committee considered the report on Strategic Performance Monitoring Strategic Performance & Delivery Reporting Q1 & Q2 2022/23 presented by Cllr Saied Ahmed and Will Tuckley, Chief Executive, and Stephen Bramah, Corporate Head of Strategy and Improvement.

The committee made the following comments and questions:

- The Mayor's Energy Fund for the cost-of-living crisis, how is this funded and will it be seeking funding from government grants? Is it correct to call this a Mayor's Fund, when it seems to be funded by the Government? Cllr Saied Ahmed confirmed that the fund has come from across different pots of money. The name of the fund is less concerning than what support is given out to the residents. Will Tuckley stated that the fund has been topped up from council funding, along with the funds from central government. However, the council is trying to support residents while we wait for the government to announce all the resources that they will provide to help during the energy crisis.
- The reporting on the performance of refuse and recycling collections is seen to be very low, can this be explained? These figures do not reflect the true picture of the issue the borough is going through with our waste collection. Cllr Saied Ahmed stated that the Mayor has called a waste emergency and is currently being taken very seriously, with the aim to improve this service to compete with other boroughs on their waste performance. Stephen Bramah confirmed that the Q2 data will be following later in the month, as it was not ready for reporting. Will Tuckley confirmed that the council is not happy with the waste performance and the council is reacting to a borough that has got denser and busier, which has been impacted further by the affects of Covid-19. But the council will be looking at ways to improve this, it is a key priority for the council. The work of bringing services in house will have an improvement on performance.
- The percentage of victims of violence against women and girls who feel safer, is lower in Q2, can this be explained? With the administration lacking representation of the marginalised groups who use these services, what will the council be doing to build confidence in victims coming forward? Stephen Bramah explained that the data collection could be better, reflecting more on those using the service. Cllr Saied Ahmed stated that more work is needed to be done, and the council is committed to improving this vital service. The council works with women across services and will work with specialists to ensure that this issue in the borough is supported correctly.
- What is the council doing to ensure the top earners in the council are from diverse backgrounds? Do you feel the current target is ambitious enough? Will Tuckley stated that a lot of measures are needed to ensure that colleagues are able to step up and gain these positions, as

a lot of our staff are from diverse backgrounds and should be able to gain the experience needed to step in more senior roles.

- Members asked to see a copy of the action plan on waste and for a breakdown of the costing around the Mayor's Energy Fund.

RESOLVED:

The report was noted.

3.2 Strategic Performance Monitoring P6 Budget Monitoring Report

The committee considered the report on Budget Monitoring Report presented by Cllr Saied Ahmed and Nisar Visram, Director of Finance Audit and Procurement.

The committee made the following comments and questions:

- How sustainable is the policy when the reserves are gone? What are the key drivers to explain the overspend? Nisar Visram explained how the funding has been applied this year, but Adult Social Care has been an overspend. But future budgeting around this will take this into account, along with additional funding, year on year.
- The reporting on employment skills is very thin, more detail is needed to explain the expense. Nisar Visram agreed to investigate this area for the committee and see if this can be reported on at future meetings.
- On the extra funding for staffing on the Mayor's office, can this expenditure be justified? Could the spending not be put into areas like customer service? Nisar Visram explained how this will be funded, including initially from reserves, then from the medium-term budget. Cllr Saied Ahmed stated that the Mayor's office staffing is an important part of improving the borough, making it more open to ensure that residents are able to meet with, and engage with the Mayor.
- The repairs & maintenance budget is forecasting a favourable variance; however, this does seem to have an impact on tenants and leaseholders who will be paying for repairs? What is the impact of Gill Street not progressing? Can these projects not be funded from reserves? Nisar Visram explained the pressures that have been found and what impact this has had on the revenue budget. Cllr Saied Ahmed stated that building homes was a priority of this council, but the committee would need to wait and see what these projects turn out to be.
- What is the progress on the councils plans to build more homes? Cllr Saied Ahmed stated the current plans on home building, like meeting with new developers.

RESOLVED

The report was noted.

3.3 Budget Fees and Charges report

Item was withdrawn.

4. FORTHCOMING DECISIONS

RESOLVED:

Members Noted the forward plan.

5. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF UNRESTRICTED CABINET PAPERS

Members Noted the Cabinet Papers and did not wish to raise any questions.

6. WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED:

Members Noted the Report

7. ACTION NOTE

RESOLVED:

Members Noted the Report

8. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

The chair invited the Scrutiny Leads to give the committee updates:

- Cllr Sabina Khan, Scrutiny Lead for Resources and Finance, reported on the recent scrutiny review and gave the following highlights. The need to focus on the cost-of-living crisis and the impact on food poverty. The review should be looking at those who are struggling with council tax and suggesting relaxed terms for repayment. A range of support needs to be offered to those who visit food banks and on prepaid energy meters.

9. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

As the agenda circulated had no exempt/confidential reports and there was therefore no requirement to exclude the press and public to allow for its consideration

10. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL) CABINET PAPERS

Nil items.

11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mannan and Choudhury.

The meeting ended at 19:58

Chair, Councillor Musthak Ahmed
Overview & Scrutiny Committee

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LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.00 P.M. ON MONDAY, 9 JANUARY 2023

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON,
E14 2BG**

Members Present in Person:

Councillor Musthak Ahmed	(Chair)
Councillor Maisha Begum	
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury	Scrutiny Lead for Children's and Education
Councillor Marc Francis	
Councillor Asma Islam	
Councillor Ahmodur Khan	Scrutiny Lead for Health and Adults
Councillor Sabina Khan	Scrutiny Lead for Resources and Finance
Councillor Abdul Malik	Scrutiny Lead for Community Safety

Other Councillors Present in Person:

Councillor Sirajul Islam

Other Councillors In Attendance Virtually:

Councillor Kabir Ahmed (Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding)

Co-optees Present in Person:

Jahid Ahmed
Halima Islam

Officers Present in Person:

Afazul Hoque	(Head of Corporate Strategy & Policy)
Jane Abraham	(Head of Capital Delivery)
Rupert Brandon	Interim Head of Housing Supply
Joel West	(Democratic Services Team Leader (Committee))

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST AND OTHER INTERESTS

Councillor Sirajul Islam, attending on behalf of call-in members, declared a non-pecuniary interest as he was a Council tenant.

3. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

3.1 Call in of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 2022 - 25 Capital Programme: Latest position

CALL-IN MEMBERS' PRESENTATION

Councillor Sirajul Islam members presented the reasons for call-in on behalf of the Call-in members and proposed alternative course of action as set out in the report. Councillor Islam added that:

- Call in councillors acknowledge the Ashington House scheme's slow progression, but are not persuaded that it should be dropped from the capital program.
- Council homes are desperately needed to address the shortage and combat overcrowding. Removal of the Ashington House scheme will remove vital new homes from the development pipeline.
- Call in councillors understand the value of investing in improving Watney Market car park, but believe the funding should not come from the HRA Capital program. This account should be restricted for improving homes and repairs.

Following questions from Committee members, the Councillor Islam provided opinion on:

- His opinion of the need for substantial investment in Ashington House.
- Details of actions and plans from when he was the lead member for housing. There had been strong political commitment to redevelopment. He advised that at no point was he minded not to have the development move forward. Consultation with residents was well attended, positive and the TRA was supportive. Refurbishment of Ashington House was considered but redevelopment was concluded to be the better option.

LEAD MEMBER'S PRESENTATION

The Lead Member, Councillor Kabir Ahmed, set out the context of the Cabinet Decision and reviewed the key elements of the decision, reflecting that:

- The call in submission contained an inaccuracy, as it referred to build of 79 new homes at Ashington, but scheme can deliver only 64 new homes.
- Redevelopment of Ashington House was at design stage, a long way off in terms of planning.
- Potential for refurbishment as well as building a new program for Ashington is being explored.
- Removal releases funds to deliver alternative programs which are further developed and will deliver 88 new council homes – a better deal for the money spent.
- Fire safety issues at Watney Market car park had been known to the council for several years and work needed to be done urgently.

- Leaseholders would not have to pay for the works as a section 20 notice has not been issued and a contractor had already been appointed.
- Once design feasibilities had been discussed with the Mayor, consultation with stakeholders, board members, and local residents will take place regarding Albert Jacob House.

Following questions from Committee members, Councillor Ahmed provided more details on:

- How the proposals would address the borough's housing shortage.
- His opinion of the how long will it take for Ashington House to be in a position where redevelopment could be pursued. He explained this was difficult due to the current economic situation, including rising inflation rates and prices.
- How soon essential safety works at Watney Market would be completed. He explained scoping and summarised work underway, but could not give an estimate for how soon it would be done.
- How the administration was working with planners and developers to deliver more family-sized homes.

Officers advised that the design panel had reduced the proposed number of units for Ashington House from 79 to 64. This led to the conclusion that it was best to look at refurbishment instead of a new build. The consultation for Ashington House was well-attended; exact number of attendees could be provided.

CONSIDERATION OF THE CALL IN

After hearing from the Call-in Members and the Mayor, the Committee considered the following issues and concerns:

- Ashington House properties are in need of desperate repairs, especially around mould and damp. Could residents continue to live in such poor conditions? Would interim proposals be put in place?
- Albert Jacob house should not be converted into temporary accommodation using HRA money. Risk of whether HRA funds would be eligible to pay for temporary accommodation as it is not a service for tenants/leaseholders.
- Proposal would stop the building of new affordable homes which are badly needed.
- Proposal would result in more homes than with Ashington House scheme, so represents a better deal for the borough.
- Watney Market car park is an ASB hotspot and a fire risk. Proposal to redevelop would address this.

DECISION

The Committee **RESOLVED** that no further action would be taken on the call in.

The meeting ended at 7.00 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Musthak Ahmed
Overview & Scrutiny Committee

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD AT 7PM ON MONDAY, 9 JANUARY 2023

**COMMITTEE ROOM ONE - TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE
CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present in Person:

Councillor Musthak Ahmed	
Councillor Maisha Begum	
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury	Scrutiny Lead for Children's and Education
Councillor Marc Francis	
Councillor Asma Islam	
Councillor Ahmodur Khan	Scrutiny Lead for Health and Adults
Councillor Sabina Khan	Scrutiny Lead for Resources and Finance (To Be Confirmed)
Councillor Abdul Malik	Scrutiny Lead for Community Safety

Other Members Present in Person:

Councillor Saied Ahmed (Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living)

Co-optees Present in Person:

Jahid Ahmed
Halima Islam

Officers Present in Person:

Nisar Visram	(Director of Finance Audit and Procurement)
Afazul Hoque	(Head of Corporate Strategy & Policy)
Joel West	(Democratic Services Team Leader (Committees))

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST AND OTHER INTERESTS

Nil items.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 28 November 2022 approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the Proceedings.

4. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

Nil items.

5. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 The Council's 2023-24 Budget Report and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-26

The committee considered The Council's 2023-24 Budget Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-26, presented by Cllr Saied Ahmed and Nisar Visram, Director of Finance Audit and Procurement.

The committee made the following comments and questions:

- Is the council confident that the forecasting is robust, to allow for the council budget to be agreed? Cllr Saied Ahmed reported on the process around creating the budget to ensure it has been created in a robust form.
- The year-on-year savings that are required to ensure the council is balancing its budget, along with the usage of the council's reserves, how sustainable is this position? Cllr Saied Ahmed stated that the budget will be put in place to help the residents of this borough as it is going through tough times, with economical help, but also through education, environmental and crime reduction measures as well. However, a budget like the one presented does require usage of the reserves. But this is not something the council can continue to do, so the council will be detailing how the future savings will be found as the financial year continues. The comments of the Chief Financial Officer have been considered and the usage of reserves is not something the council has taken lightly.
- What plans are the council looking at to increase growth to ensure services are able to grow post 2026? Has the council considered council tax increases? Cllr Saied Ahmed reported on the many revenue sources the council has and the importance of ensuring vital services are continued to be run by the council after 2026. While the council has looked at the modelling around council tax, and the administration decided not to increase council tax.
- What has the council considered to safeguard the council's reserves? Cllr Saied Ahmed highlighted what reserves the council will be accessing, some pools of reserves are safe guarded and the council's constitution does have restrictions on the levels of the reserves as well. Nisar Visram reported on the projections around the usage of the council's reserves.
- How will the cost of the secondary school meals be found?

- The staffing costs of the Mayor's Office, is this a justifiable cost when the budget is looking for council savings? Cllr Saied Ahmed explained the office has expanded to carry out casework and policy support for the new council executive.
- How does the council budget compare to other local authorities? Cllr Saied Ahmed highlighted that the council's budget is ambitious compared to other authorities, but also services have been brought in house and the council has a higher amount of reserves.
- Committee members made recommendations, including resident skill growth, to review the Mayor's Office Staffing and extending the EMA.

Resolved:

The presentation be noted.

5.2 Fees and Charges 2023-24

The committee considered the presentation on the Fees and Charges 2023-24, presented by Cllr Saied Ahmed and Nisar Visram, Director of Finance Audit and Procurement.

The committee made the following comments and questions:

- Can the pricing for School meals, per pupil be confirmed? Will the cost of living crisis have an impact on meal sizes? Cllr Saied Ahmed confirmed that these were increases of around 7 – 8 per cent, which is due to the rise in interest. The council is committed to providing free school meals that are beneficial for the children.
- On market traders, there are a number of chargers and fees that need to be expanded on and explained further. If market traders are struggling to pay fees, will the council provide support to these businesses? Cllr Saied Ahmed agreed to investigate these points, but stated the council has not increased fees, it has only continued what the previous administration enacted.
- On visitor parking, will the council be monitoring this and will the cost be considered? Will the free parking time be long enough to be a benefit to residents? Cllr Saied Ahmed stated that it will be a yearly cost to the council but it will be a positive return to the borough, through increased trade at the markets, higher footfall and increased access to the markets. The Council will monitor this and consider changing this measure if it does not prove to be beneficial or increased based on feedback.

Resolved:

The presentation be noted.

6. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF UNRESTRICTED CABINET PAPERS

Nil items.

7. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

Nil items.

8. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:

That in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for the consideration of the Section Two business on the grounds that it contained information defined as exempt or confidential in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government, Act 1972.

9. ANY OTHER EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 20:15

Chair, Councillor Musthak Ahmed
Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item 5

Appendix 1: Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2022/23: Chair: Cllr Musthak Ahmed

Meeting	Scrutiny Activity	Title	Description	Speakers
Thursday 28 July	Strategic Performance	Strategic Plan 2022-26	To provide a robust critical friend challenge of the council's draft strategic plan 2022-26 and make recommendations on areas for improvement and further consideration	Mayor Lutfur Rahman
	OSC Work Programme	Draft OSC Work Programme	To review the OSC work programme for 2021/22	Cllr Musthak Ahmed
	Appointments	Co-optee appointments	To confirm appointments of scrutiny co-opted members	Cllr Musthak Ahmed
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny	To review Cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations	Cllr Musthak Ahmed
Monday 26 September	OSC Work Programme	Draft OSC Work Programme	Agree scrutiny work programme	Cllr Musthak Ahmed
	Strategic Performance Monitoring	P3 Budget Monitoring Report	To monitor the council's financial performance to ensure it supports council priorities and provides residents with value for money	Cllr Saied Ahmed Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living Kevin Bartle Corporate Director, Resources
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny	To review Cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations	Cllr Musthak Ahmed
Monday 24 October	Budget & Policy Framework	Gambling Policy 2022-25	To review the Gambling Policy 2022-25 is in line with the Council's statutory responsibilities as a Licensed Authority to Gambling Licences.	Cllr Kabir Hussain Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency Ann Sutcliffe

				<p>Corporate Director of Place</p> <p>David Tolley Head of Environmental Health & trading Standards</p>
	Budget & Policy Framework	Youth Justice Annual Plan	To review the proposed Youth Justice Annual Plan in line with the council's budget and policy framework	<p>Cllr Maium Talukdar Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning</p> <p>James Thomas Corporate Director of Children & Culture</p> <p>Susannah Beasley-Murray Director of Supporting Families</p>
	Spotlight	Waste Services	To review the performance of Waste Services and make recommendations for improvement.	<p>Cllr Kabir Hussain Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency</p> <p>Dan Jones Director of Public Realm</p>
	Spotlight	Recycling	To review the level of recycling in the borough and make recommendations on how this can be improved	<p>Cllr Kabir Hussain Cabinet Member for Environment</p>

				and the Climate Emergency Dan Jones Director of Public Realm
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny	To review Cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations	Cllr Musthak Ahmed
Monday 28 November	Spotlight	Customer Service	To review resident access to services and consider how the council ensures its services are accessible for those who find it difficult to access via Telephony, Face to face, Social Media and Website/Digital	Cllr Kabir Ahmed Cabinet Member Lead Kabir Ahmed Raj Chand Director of Customer Services
		Scrutiny Lead Updates	Scrutiny leads to provide updates on their key scrutiny activity	Scrutiny chairs and Leads
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny	To review Cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations	Cllr Musthak Ahmed
Monday 12 Dec	Strategic Performance Monitoring	Strategic Performance & Delivery Reporting Q1 & Q2 2022/23	To review the council's performance against the strategic goals and provide critical friend challenge to service delivery	Mayor Lutfur Rahman Will Tuckley Chief Executive
	Strategic Performance Monitoring	P6 Budget Monitoring Report	To monitor the council's financial performance to ensure it supports council priorities and provides residents with value for money	Cllr Saied Ahmed Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living
	Budget	Fees and Charges report	To provide critical friend challenge and review the fees and charges 2022/23 is in line with the Council's priorities	tbc Corporate Director, Resources
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny	To review Cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations	Cllr Musthak Ahmed
Monday 9 January	Budget & Policy Framework	Budget Scrutiny	To provide a critical friend challenge to the budget	Cllr Saied Ahmed

			setting process in line with the Council's priorities	Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living Nisar Visram, Director finance, (Deputy S151)
	Budget	MTFS and Budget report (first version)	To provide critical friend challenge to the budget setting process in line with the Council's priorities	
Monday 23 January	Budget & Policy Framework	Budget Scrutiny	To provide a critical friend challenge to the budget setting process in line with the Council's priorities	Cllr Saied Ahmed Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living Nisar Visram, Director finance, (Deputy S151)
	Spotlight	Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan		Cllr Maium Talukdar Deputy Mayor & Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny	To review Cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations	Cllr Musthak Ahmed
Monday 20 February	Strategic Performance Monitoring	Strategic Performance & Delivery Reporting Q3 2022/23	To review the council's performance against the strategic goals and provide critical friend challenge to service delivery	Mayor Lutfur Rahman Will Tuckley Chief Executive
	Strategic Performance Monitoring	P9 Budget Monitoring Report	To monitor the council's financial performance to ensure it supports council priorities and provides residents with value for money	Cllr Saied Ahmed Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living

				tbc Corporate Director, Resources
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny	To review Cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations	Cllr Musthak Ahmed
Monday 27 March	Spotlight	Mayors Spotlight	To hold the Mayor to account and understand achievements, priorities and challenges.	Mayor Lutfur Rahman
	Spotlight	Climate Emergency	To understand and review the plans in place to tackle the climate emergency	Cllr Kabir Hussain Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency Dan Jones Director of Public Realm
	Tracking Recommendations	Air Quality	To track the implementation of actions in response to the recommendations made in the scrutiny challenge session	Cllr Kabir Hussain Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency Dan Jones Director of Public Realm
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny	To review Cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations	Cllr Musthak Ahmed
Monday 24 April	OSC Report	OSC Annual Report 2022/23	To review and approve the OSC annual report	Cllr Musthak Ahmed
	Spotlight	Street & Parks Cleanliness	To review the Council's actions and future plans to improve the cleanliness of parks and streets in the borough	Cllr Kabir Hussain Cabinet Member for Environment

				and the Climate Emergency Dan Jones Director of Public Realm
	Tracking Recommendations	Parking scrutiny	To track the implementation of actions in response to the recommendations made in the scrutiny challenge session	Cllr Kabir Hussain Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency Dan Jones Head of Public Realm
	Tracking Recommendations	Swimming provision in the borough	To track the implementation of actions in response to the recommendations made in the scrutiny challenge session	Cllr Iqbal Hossain Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation James Thomas Corporate Director Children & Culture
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny	To review Cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations	Cllr Musthak Ahmed

Appendix 2: Health & Adults Sub-Committee Work Programme 2022/23: Chair: Cllr Ahmodur Khan

Meeting	Scrutiny Activity	Title	Description	Speakers
Tuesday 18 October	Work Programme	Health & Adults Sub-Committee Work programme	Agree Committee Work Programme	Cllr Ahmodur Khan

	Spotlight	ICS delivery at a Place level	Review how the local approach to integrated health and social care system has improved services for residents and consider Social Care's parity and level of influence with NHS structures	<p>Cllr Gulam Kibria Choudhury Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing & Social Care</p> <p>Denise Radley Corporate Director of Health, Adults and Community and Deputy Chief</p> <p>Somen Banerjee Director of Public Health</p> <p>Warwick Tomsett Joint Director of Integrated Commissioning</p>
	Scrutiny Review	Review Workforce shortages across the sector	To review pre-covid H&SC workforce strategy and understand what the issues are impacting recruitment and retention of H&SC staff.	tbc
Tuesday 6 December	Spotlight	Improving access to GP Services	Understanding why GP access (physical appointments) continues to be a barrier for patients and developing solutions for improvements to access	<p>Cllr Gulam Kibria Choudhury Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing & Social Care</p> <p>Denise Radley Corporate Director of Health, Adults and Communities and Deputy Chief</p>

				<p>Jo-Ann Sheldon Head of Primary Care TH</p> <p>William Cunningham Davis</p> <p>Fiona Peskett & Neil Ashman NHS</p>
	Scrutiny Review	Tackling Workforce shortages across the sector	To review pre-covid H&SC workforce strategy and understand what the issues are impacting recruitment and retention of H&SC staff.	<p>Jo-Ann Sheldon Head of Primary Care TH</p> <p>William Cunningham Davis</p> <p>Fiona Peskett & Neil Ashman NHS</p>
14 February	Spotlight	Tackling BAME inequalities on access to Mental Health Services	Understanding why the BAME community face challenges in accessing mental health services and developing recommendations to address this	<p>Cllr Gulam Kibria Choudhury Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing & Social Care</p> <p>Denise Radley Corporate Director of Health, Adults and Community and Deputy Chief</p> <p>Richard Fradgley & Edwin Ndlovu</p>

				East London Foundation Trust
12 April	Spotlight	Tackling Obesity	Assessing the effectiveness of current strategy and comms on tackling obesity in the borough and what more needs to be done	Cllr Gulam Kibria Choudhury Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing & Social Care Denise Radley Corporate Director of Health, Adults and Community and Deputy Chief Somen Banerjee Director of Public Health

Scrutiny Activity	Title	Description
Scrutiny Review	Tackling Workforce shortages across the sector	To review pre-covid H&SC workforce strategy and understand what the issues are impacting recruitment and retention of H&SC staff.

Appendix 3: Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-committee work programme 2022/23: Chair: Cllr Abdul Mannan

Meeting	Scrutiny Activity	Title	Description	Speakers
20 October	Work Programme	Housing & Regeneration Sub-Committee work programme	Agree Committee Work Programme	Cllr Abdul Mannan
	Spotlight	Council representation on	Exploring the feasibility of having council	Karen Swift Director of Housing and Regeneration

		the boards of social landlords	representation on the boards of social landlords operating in the borough	Andrea Baker Chair THHF
	Spotlight	Approach & supporting homeless applications	Examine the council's approach to supporting homeless applicants	Karen Swift Director of Housing and Regeneration
15 December	Strategic Performance	Social Landlords Performance Report	Review social landlords' performance for Quarters 1 and 2	Karen Swift Director of Housing and Regeneration Andrea Baker Chair THHF
	Spotlight	Parking on Housing Estates	Reviewing parking on housing estates and learning from best practice.	Karen Swift Director of Housing and Regeneration Andrea Baker Chair THHF
	Spotlight	Approach to regeneration	Examine the approach to regeneration and how this can be linked to assisting local business recovery and making the best use of available local labour, particularly from excluded communities	Ellie Kershaw Interim Director of Integrated Growth and Development
16 February	Pre-Cabinet	THH Resident Consultation Feedback on Bringing THH Back in house	Feedback on the findings of the consultation process with THH residents ahead of the Cabinet report on the proposal	Karen Swift Director of Housing and Regeneration
	Spotlight	Developing a new Local Plan	Reviewing planning and building control issue and how this can be used to influence priorities for developing a new Local Plan	Jen Peters Director of Planning and Building Control

	Spotlight	Change in Private Sector Tenant rights	Reviewing the implications on the government's Renter's Reform Bill If published	Karen Swift Director of Housing and Regeneration
27 April	Strategic Performance	Social Landlords Performance Report	Review social landlords' performance for Quarter 3	Karen Swift Director of Housing and Regeneration Andrea Baker Chair THHF
	Spotlight	Housing Strategy Refresh	Review the housing strategy refresh in light of the new administration's housing priorities	Karen Swift Director of Housing and Regeneration
	Spotlight	ASB on Housing Estates	Reviewing ASB on housing estates and learning from best practice in tackling the problem.	Karen Swift Director of Housing and Regeneration Andrea Baker Chair THHF

Scrutiny Activity	Title	Description
Scrutiny Challenge Session	Review the proposal to consult residents on the option to bring THH back in house	Review the consultation pack and questions to be asked of the council's tenants and leaseholders on the option to bring Tower Hamlets Homes back in-house

Appendix 4: Children's & Education Sub-Committee Work Programme 2022/23:
Chair: Cllr Bodrul Choudhury

Meeting	Scrutiny Activity	Title	Description	Speakers
13 October	Work Programme	Children's & Education Sub-Committee Work Programme	Agree Committee Work programme	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury
	Youth Justice Spotlight	Youth Justice	To review the performance of the youth justice service, focusing specifically on drugs, grooming of young people, and county lines	Cllr Maium Talukdar Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning James Thomas

		HM Inspection of Probation report: Inspection of youth offending services in Tower Hamlets	To understand the findings from the inspection report and review the plans for improvement	Corporate Director of Children & Culture Susannah Beasley-Murray Director of Supporting Families Kelly Duggan Head of Service Lucky Singh Police
8 December	Education Spotlight	Education	To understand the plans in place to increase the educational attainment of pupils in the borough and how we are developing links with businesses to provide mentorship opportunities, increase social capital, and support children to access top universities	Cllr Maium Talukdar Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning James Thomas Corporate Director of Children & Culture Steve Nyakatawa Director of Education
		SEND Statement of Action	To review the council's progress against the statement of action in response to the SEND Inspection in 2021	Tracey Smith Performance (THEP) John O-Shea SEND
09 Feb	Youth provision Spotlight	Youth provision	To review the performance of the current youth provision and consider how we can improve and increase provision, especially for girls.	Cllr Maium Talukdar Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning James Thomas Corporate Director of Children & Culture Susannah Beasley-Murray Director of Supporting Families Kelly Duggan Head of Service
04 May	Social Care &	Social care	Hold a spotlight on the performance of children's	Cllr Maium Talukdar

	Safeguarding spotlight		<p>social care including improvements since Ofsted inspection and consider the findings from the National Government Children Social Care Review and the council's response.</p> <p>Review the work of the Children Safeguarding Partnership and learning from statutory reviews.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning</p> <p>James Thomas Corporate Director of Children & Culture</p> <p>Susannah Beasley-Murray Director of Supporting Families</p> <p>Louise Griffiths Safeguarding Children Partnership Strategy Manager</p> <p>Korkor Caesar NHS</p> <p>Mike Hamer Police</p>
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Scrutiny Activity	Title	Description
Scrutiny Challenge Session	Increasing women and girls access to sports provision	To review sports provision for women and girls in the brough and understand plans in place to increase access

Appendix 5: Cllr Sabinha Khan – Scrutiny Lead Resources & Finance Work Programme 2022-23

Area of work	Method
Portfolio Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular meetings with Corporate Director Resources Induction meetings with Divisional Directors & Heads of Services Service Visits
Grants Scrutiny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance at Grants Determination Sub Committee Presenting OSC Questions and comments
Scrutiny Review: Food Poverty	Develop an understanding of the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on residents and review whether the council has robust plans to tackle food poverty both in the short and long term.

Appendix 6: Cllr Abdul Malik – Scrutiny Lead Environment & Community Safety Work Programme 2022-23

Area of work	Method
Portfolio Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular Meeting with Corporate/ Divisional Directors of Place and HAC• Induction meetings with Divisional Directors and Heads of Services• Service Visits
Scrutiny Review: Women's Safety	Review the approach to ensuring women's safety in the borough and make recommendations on how this can be improved