

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda

Monday, 24 April 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:

Thomas French, Democratic Services,
Thomas.French@towerhamlets.gov.uk

020 7364 3048

Town Hall, 160 Whitechapel Road, London, E1 1BJ

<http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee>



Public Information

Viewing or Participating in Committee Meetings

The meeting will be broadcast live on the Council's website. A link to the website is detailed below. The press and public are encouraged to watch this meeting on line.

Meeting Webcast

The meeting is being webcast for viewing through the Council's webcast system.

<http://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

Electronic agendas reports and minutes.

Copies of agendas, reports and minutes for council meetings can also be found on our website from day of publication.

To access this, click www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee and search for the relevant committee and meeting date.

Agendas are available on the Modern.Gov, Windows, iPad and Android apps



Scan this QR code to view the electronic agenda



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, 24 April 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

To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 27 March 2023.

4. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

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

5. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE QUERY AND ACTION LOG

6. FORTHCOMING DECISIONS (PAGES 9 - 34)

To review the most recent publication of the Cabinet Forward Plan.



7. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

No decisions of the Mayor in Cabinet 29 March 2023 in respect of unrestricted reports on the agenda were 'called in'.

8. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT

8.1 Mayor's Spotlight (To Follow)

8.2 Streets and Parks Cleanliness Spotlight (Pages 35 - 48)

9. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

9.1 Scrutiny review of food insecurity in the Borough (Pages 49 - 74)

9.2 Women's Safety - Scrutiny Review Report (Pages 75 - 92)

9.3 Scrutiny Annual Report 22-23 (Pages 93 - 100)

9.4 Appointment of Co-opted Members to Scrutiny Committee and Sub Committees (Pages 101 - 106)

9.5 Tracking Recommendations - Parking Challenge Session (Pages 107 - 126)

9.6 Tracking Recommendations - Swimming Challenge Session (To Follow)

10. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS

(Time allocated – 5 minutes each)

11. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF UNRESTRICTED CABINET PAPERS

To consider and agree pre-decision scrutiny questions/comments to be presented to Cabinet.

(Time allocated – 30 minutes).

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 REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

No decisions of the Mayor in Cabinet 29 March 2023 in respect of exempt/ confidential reports on the agenda were 'called in'.

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

To consider and agree pre-decision scrutiny questions/comments to be presented to Cabinet.

(Time allocated 15 minutes).

16. 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, 22 May 2023 at 6.30 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.



THE FORWARD PLAN

Published: 28 March 2023

Contact Matthew Mannion
Officer: Democratic Services
Email: matthew.mannion@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Telephone: 020 7364 4651

Forward Plan March 2023

The Forward Plan is published 28 days before each Cabinet meeting.

In addition, new issues and changes to existing issues will be published on the website as soon as they are known.

The web pages also contain past Forward Plans and publication deadlines for future Plans. To visit the web pages go to <http://democracy.towerhamlets.gov.uk/mgPlansHome.aspx?bcr=1>.

Tower Hamlets Council **Forthcoming Decisions Plan**

What is this document?

The Forthcoming Decisions Plan (or 'Forward Plan') contains information on significant decisions that the Council expects to take over the next few months.

As a minimum this will include notice of:

- All Key Decisions to be taken by the Mayor or Cabinet.
 - This could include decisions taken at public meetings or taken individually at other times.
- Budget and Policy Framework Decisions (for example the Budget Report itself and major policies to be agreed by Council as set out in the Constitution)

In addition the Council aims to publish all other decisions to be taken by the Mayor and/or Cabinet.

Key Decisions

The Council is required to publish notice of all key decisions at least 28 days before they are taken by the Executive. Key decisions are all those decisions which involve major spending, or savings, or which have a significant impact on the local community. The precise definition of a key decision adopted by Tower Hamlets is contained in Section 3 of the [Constitution](#). Key Decisions can be taken by the Mayor, the Mayor in Cabinet or an officer if it has been expressly delegated.

Publication of Forthcoming Decisions

Individual notices of new Key Decisions will be published on the website as they are known on the 'Forthcoming Decisions' page, whilst this 'Forthcoming Decisions Plan' collating these decisions will be published regularly, as a minimum at least, 28 days before each Cabinet meeting. The Plan will be published on the Council's website and will also be available to view at the Town Hall and Libraries, Ideas Centres and One Stop Shops if required.

Urgency

If, due to reasons of urgency, a Key Decision has to be taken where 28 days' notice have not been given. Notice will be published (on the website) as early as possible and Urgency Procedures as set out in the Constitution have to be followed.

Make your views known

The most effective way for the public to make their views known about a Forthcoming Decisions is to contact the lead officer, or Cabinet Member (where stated), listed. You can also view the Council's [Consultation Calendar](#), which lists all the issues on which the Council and its partners are consulting.

Information about the Decision Makers

Further information on the Mayor and Members of the Cabinet can be found on the Council's [website](#).

Notice of Intention to Conduct Business in Private

The Council is also required to give at least 28 days' notice if it wishes to consider any of the reports on the agenda of an Executive meeting (such as Cabinet) in private session. The last row of each item below will indicate any proposal to consider that item in private session. Should you wish to make any representations in relation to item being considered in private please contact Democratic Services on the contact details listed on the front page.

The notice may reference a paragraph of Section 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act. In summary those paragraphs refer to the following types of exempt information (more information is available in the Constitution):

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority handling the information)
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matters arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes:-
 - a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

Contact Details for this Plan

Contact: Matthew Mannion
Officer: Head of Democratic Services
Email: matthew.mannion@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Telephone: 020 7364 4651

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* New Issues published since the last Forward Plan

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Title of Report	Liveable Streets Review	Ward Bethnal Green West; Spitalfields & Banglatown; St Katharine's & Wapping; Weavers	Key Decision? Yes
Summary of Decision	Review of proposed removal of traffic management schemes implemented under the Liveable Streets programme.		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 26/04/23		
Community Plan Theme	A clean and green future		
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency		
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	Relevant internal and external stakeholders including, but not limited to, emergency services, local schools and Transport for London have also been consulted. Surveys on the proposals have been issued to residents in the areas directly affected. The survey is also available for the general public to complete.		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	Yes		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Dan Jones (Director, Public Realm) dan.jones@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	N/A		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Corporate Equalities Plan 2023-2026	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? No
Summary of Decision	This report sets out the Council's corporate equality priorities over the next three years to achieve our vision to build a strong, inclusive and fair borough addressing inequalities through the services we provide, the money we spend, the people we employ and working effectively with our partners to ensure better outcomes for those living, working and studying here. Working in parallel to		

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ensure our workforce reflects the community.

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 24/05/23		
Community Plan Theme	All Priorities		
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Equalities and Social Inclusion		
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	N/A		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	N/A		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Sharon Godman (Director, Strategy, Improvement and Transformation) sharon.godman@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	N/A		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Neighbourhood Planning: Determination of Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum Redesignation Application	Ward Bow East; Bow West	Key Decision? Yes
Summary of Decision	Neighbourhood forum designations expire five years after they are initially granted. The Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum designation expired on 16 August 2022. The Forum has submitted an application for the designation to be renewed. This report assesses the application against the relevant legislation and guidance.		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 26/04/23		
Community Plan Theme	A council that works for you and listens to you		
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding		

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<p>Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place</p>	<p>All people who have asked to be added to the planning policy database have been sent an email regarding the consultation; all local councillors have also been contacted. A public notice has been placed in the East End Advertiser to reach further stakeholders.</p> <p>A public consultation is taking place between 17 November 2022 and 12 January 2023. This is beyond the statutorily required six weeks, to account for the holiday period. There is a statutory timeframe which means a decision on the designation must be made within 13 weeks of the consultation beginning. Because of this, and the internal Tower Hamlets reporting timeframes, it is not possible to wait until the consultation has finished to bring this issue to DLT. At the DLT and CLT stages, this report therefore recommends that the decision be moved to the next stage of reporting, and that the final decision will be conditional on an assessment of the consultation responses. The CAB report will be accompanied by a consultation statement as an appendix.</p>		
<p>Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?</p>	<p>Screening tool completed - no further action required.</p>		
<p>Contact details for comments or additional information</p>	<p>Jennifer Peters (Divisional Director, Planning and Building Control, Place) Jennifer.Peters@towerhamlets.gov.uk</p>		
<p>What supporting documents or other information will be available?</p>	<p>Appendix 1: Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum Application Form Appendix 2: Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Area Map Appendix 3: Roman Road Bow Neighbourhood Forum Constitution Appendix 4: Basic Conditions Statement Appendix 5: Equalities Impact Assessment Screening Appendix 6: Consultation Statement (to be appended for CAB)</p>		
<p>Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?</p>	<p>No, Unrestricted</p>		
<p>Title of Report</p>	<p>Contracts Forward Plan 2022/23 - Quarter 4</p>	<p>Ward All Wards</p>	<p>Key Decision? Yes</p>
<p>Summary of Decision</p>	<p>This report presents the contracts being procured during quarter four. The report also sets out the Contracts Forward Plan at appendix 2 to this report.</p> <p>The report asks for confirmation that all contracts can proceed to contract award after tender.</p>		

<p>Decision maker Date of decision</p>	<p>Cabinet 26/04/23</p>
<p>Community Plan Theme</p>	<p>All Priorities</p>

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Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living		
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	Where required, consultation with service users and stakeholders will be undertaken as part of the project and budget approval process. Necessary consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures.		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	No. Contract specific EQIA is expected to be completed by respective contract owners as part of the directorate approval.		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Nisar Visram (Director of Finance, Procurement & Audit) nisar.visram@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	Report and appendices include details of all contracts to be awarded.		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Budget Monitoring 2022/23 Quarter 3 including Capital	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? No
Summary of Decision	Budget Monitoring 2022/23 Quarter 3 including Capital		

Decision maker	Cabinet
Date of decision	29/03/23
Community Plan Theme	All Priorities
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	N/A
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	N/A
Contact details for comments or additional information	Nisar Visram (Director of Finance, Procurement & Audit) nisar.visram@towerhamlets.gov.uk

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What supporting documents or other information will be available?	N/A		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Mudchute Farm, Park and Allotments, Pier Road E14; Variation of Lease Terms	Ward Blackwall & Cubitt Town; Island Gardens	Key Decision? Yes
Summary of Decision	<p>Cabinet approval was granted in June 2019 to surrender the existing Mudchute Association lease and grant a new 99 year term.</p> <p>The new lease has yet to complete, and the Mayor has requested that the lease term be reconsidered, therefore this requires a new Cabinet approval to vary the existing Cabinet decision.</p>		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 26/04/23
Community Plan Theme	A clean and green future
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	N/A
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	N/A
Contact details for comments or additional information	Stephen Shapiro (Acting Director of Property and Major Programmes) Stephen.Shapiro@towerhamlets.gov.uk
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	June 2019 Cabinet Paper
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted

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Title of Report	Youth Investment Report	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? Yes
Summary of Decision	<p>A priority within the Mayoral Manifesto Pledge and Strategic Plan 2022-2026.</p> <p>To invest and transform services for young people in Tower Hamlets by delivering a new Local Authority youth service that provides safe spaces, enhanced staffing model and good outcomes for children.</p>		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 26/04/23
Community Plan Theme	
Cabinet Member	Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor)
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	N/A
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	N/A
Contact details for comments or additional information	Susannah Beasley-Murray (Divisional Director of Supporting Families) susannah.beasley-murray@towerhamlets.gov.uk
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	N/A
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted

Title of Report	Equality Policy Refresh	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? No
Summary of Decision	Refresh of the council's Equality Policy for 2023. The current policy is scheduled for periodic update.		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 26/04/23
Community Plan Theme	All Priorities

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Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Equalities and Social Inclusion		
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	Place DLT, Resources DLT, C & C DLT, HAC DLT, CLT Policy will be taken to DLT's and CLT for comments and input		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	No		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Sharon Godman (Director, Strategy, Improvement and Transformation) sharon.godman@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	N/A		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Strategic Delivery and Performance Reporting Q3 – 2022/23	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? No
Summary of Decision	This report provides the Mayor in Cabinet with an update on the delivery and implementation of the council's Strategic Plan.		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 29/03/23
Community Plan Theme	
Cabinet Member	Mayor
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	N/A
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	N/A
Contact details for	Sharon Godman

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comments or additional information	(Director, Strategy, Improvement and Transformation) sharon.godman@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	N/A		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Report on the outcome of public representations received in response to the statutory Notice on the proposal for the amalgamation (merger) of The Bishop Challoner RC Federation Girls' and Boys' Schools	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? Yes
Summary of Decision	<p>This report informs the council of the outcome of the four-week period of public representation in response to the statutory notice on the proposal for the amalgamation (merger) of The Bishop Challoner RC Federation Girls and Boys Schools</p> <p>It recommends that the Mayor and cabinet consider a decision on whether or not to formally proceed with plans for the schools' merger that would take effect from the 1st September 2023.</p> <p>The report includes a summary of representations received and any responses made; risk and opportunities; officer's recommendations; decisions available to the Mayor in Cabinet.</p>		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 29/03/23
Community Plan Theme	A council that works for you and listens to you
Cabinet Member	Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor)
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	<p>Along with the general public, the following stakeholders were invited to make representations:</p> <p>Parents and carers, students, Roman Catholic and Church of England Dioceses, Council of Mosques, Head Teachers, school staff, school governors, neighbouring Local Authorities, the National Education Union. Secretary of State</p>

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	<p>for Education</p> <p>A stage one consultation was held in the early Autumn term 2022. This was followed by Cabinet on 26 October 2022, agreeing to publish a statutory notice and proposal, for a four week formal consultation between November and December 2022. During this statutory consultation period all interested stakeholders were invited to send any comments and or objections to the Council. The statutory notice was published at the schools' and on the Council website and advertised in the Docklands & East London Advertiser.</p>		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	Will require an EA		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Steve Nyakatawa (Director of Education) steve.nyakatawa@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory Notice • Copies of all representations received in response to the statutory proposal • Analysis of feedback from the statutory proposal • Summary analysis on the current financial position of The Bishop Challoner RC Federation Girls and Boys Schools • Equalities Assessment (to be updated) Organisational Change Policy (HR) • Organisational Change Policy (HR) 		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Adoption of the Code of Construction Practice 2023	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? Yes
Summary of Decision	The Code of Construction Practice 2023 replaces the 2006 version of the document and sets out the Council's expectations on and around construction sites in the borough. It seeks to keep the public and workers safe whilst mitigating adverse impacts including noise, dust and traffic issues. It also responds to the latest legislation, policies and best practice guidance as well as feedback received from residents during public consultation.		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 26/04/23
Community Plan Theme	A clean and green future
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding

Forward Plan March 2023

Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	N/A Officers across the Place Directorate have inputted into the document. There have also been two separate public consultation events. These took place from 14th January – 25th February 2022 (6 weeks) and 24 October – 2nd December 2022 (6 weeks) and included drop-in events.		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	N/A		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Jennifer Peters (Divisional Director, Planning and Building Control, Place) Jennifer.Peters@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	Appendix 1 – Code of Construction Practice Appendix 2 – Consultation Feedback Report		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Award of Highways and Street Lighting Contract	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? Yes
Summary of Decision	This report is to seek approval to award the highways and street lighting contract, following an agreed procurement process and associated evaluation		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 29/03/23
Community Plan Theme	TH Plan 1: A better deal for children and young people: aspiration, education & skills
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	N/A
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	N/A
Contact details for comments or additional information	Dan Jones (Director, Public Realm) dan.jones@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Forward Plan March 2023

What supporting documents or other information will be available?	N/A		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	Partly Exempt (Part of the report will be exempt) Report will contain contract information.		
Title of Report	Voluntary and Community Sector – Grants Policy & Outcomes Framework	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? Yes
Summary of Decision	The report sets out the Council's new Grants Policy and outcome framework for the voluntary and community sector. This will replace corporate grants policy and programmes from Oct 2023.		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 29/03/23
Community Plan Theme	A council that works for you and listens to you
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	Council team, VCS organisations, residents, members On-Line Survey 6 Workshops with VCS organisations Resident engagement events Engagement with SLTs Members Seminar x 2
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	Yes
Contact details for comments or additional information	Sharon Godman (Director, Strategy, Improvement and Transformation) sharon.godman@towerhamlets.gov.uk
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	Consultation Report, Equalities Impact Assessment
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted

Forward Plan March 2023

Title of Report	Recommendations for the delivery of Universal Free School Meals (UFSM) to all Secondary School Pupils	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? Yes
Summary of Decision	<p>In May 2022 Mayor Rahman made a manifesto pledge to provide Universal Free School Meals (UFSM's) to all KS3 & KS4 Secondary Pupils. This commitment has since been reflected in LBTH's Strategic Plan 2022-26 with implementation from September 2023.</p> <p>This report sets out the recommendations for the delivery of Universal Free School Meals (UFSM) to all Secondary School Pupils.</p>		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 24/05/23
Community Plan Theme	Accelerate Education
Cabinet Member	Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor)
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	<p>Children and Culture Directorate leads, Secondary Schools Head Teachers, Contract Caterers, Pupils and Parents</p> <p>A Project Initiation Board was established with representatives from LBTH Finance, Public Health, Legal, Comms, Secondary School HT's, Caterers & External Consultants.</p> <p>An external catering specialist was commissioned in December 2022 to conduct feasibility studies to determine the implications and capacity of the 22 secondary schools to feed every student a healthy lunch every day. The findings of the feasibility exercise will be presented to the Board on 10th March 2023.</p> <p>The feasibility studies will inform the Council's approach and will include an assessment of current uptake, meal prices, food offer, kitchen production capacity, counter flow and number of tills, restaurant seating and options for additional service points.</p> <p>A Catering Logistics Forum was set up made up of School Head Teachers and Contract Caterers to consult/discuss/plan the logistics of the project.</p> <p>A survey will be conducted on Survey Monkey with x students to establish and understand pupil's eating habits at school and how the offer of free meals would impact them?</p> <p>A survey will be conducted on Survey Monkey with parents of Secondary school pupils to understand the impact of UFSM on families and the cost-of-living crisis</p> <p>Conditions of the Grant – A working Group will be set up Schools to consider and debate the proposed conditions of the Grant. The working group was lead by an external consultant and included representatives from LBTH Healthy Lives Team, Public Health, Finance, School Business Manager and Catering Contractors.</p>
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the	N/A

Forward Plan March 2023

result of this Assessment?	
Contact details for comments or additional information	Steve Nyakatawa (Director of Education) steve.nyakatawa@towerhamlets.gov.uk
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	N/A
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	Fully Exempt (the whole report will be exempt) Some details of the survey – not for public viewing?
Title of Report	Tower Hamlets Healthier Advertising Policy
	Ward All Wards
	Key Decision? Yes
Summary of Decision	<p>Tower Hamlets has very high levels of child excess weight. Evidence shows that advertisements for unhealthy food and drink products directly and indirectly impact what we eat. Young people who recall seeing junk food adverts every day are more likely to be obese.</p> <p>The paper considers how we can protect children and young people from the advertising of unhealthy food and drinks (foods and drinks that are high in fat, salt and sugar), in order to contribute towards our priority to promote children's healthy weight and healthy life expectancy. This is part of a wider programme of work to support child healthy weight in the borough.</p>

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 24/05/23
Community Plan Theme	Invest in public services
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	<p>Internal: Directorates: •Children's Services •Place •Resources (Financial) •Governance (Legal, Communications BAME; Older People: and Women's networks</p> <p>Consultation with a broad audience has been undertaken using a mixed methods approach, with a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods. A meeting with the Youth Board will take place in March 2023, followed by a short survey to invite their views. Parents/Carers have been engaged with through primary school visits, speaking at Healthy Families Programme sessions, and through attendance and</p>

Forward Plan March 2023

	<p>presentation at the Festival of Family Health on 15th March. Meetings and presentations are being arranged with the following equalities groups: BAME network, Older people and Women’s network. A meeting with Dr Sam Everington, Bromley by Bow centre, took place on the 4th November 2022. We have shared a short survey with local businesses to invite their views on the policy. We have liaised with council staff in Greenwich, Southwark, Merton and Haringey, who have overseen the policy development and implementation in their councils. We have liaised with Dr Penny Breeze, one of the researchers at the University of Sheffield, who, alongside researchers at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, developed an advanced mathematical method to estimate the health and economic benefits that restricting junk food advertising on the Transport for London network had in 2019. A public consultation by the Greater London Authority, launched in May 2018, found 82% of Londoners support a junk food advertising restriction. As part of the Transport for London advertising policy process, large multinational companies including JCD Decaux were extensively consulted with, to ensure they were aware of the policy and what it would mean for their advertising. Since then, these companies have utilised the nutrient profiling model and have switched out their unhealthy products for healthier ones and have continued to advertise.</p>		
<p>Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?</p>	<p>N/A</p>		
<p>Contact details for comments or additional information</p>	<p>Dr Somen Banerjee (Director of Public Health) somen.banerjee@towerhamlets.gov.uk</p>		
<p>What supporting documents or other information will be available?</p>	<p>N/A</p>		
<p>Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?</p>	<p>No, Unrestricted</p>		
<p>Title of Report</p>	<p>Response to Overview & Scrutiny Committee’s Recommendations on Increasing Female Sports Participation</p>	<p>Ward All Wards</p>	<p>Key Decision? No</p>
<p>Summary of Decision</p>	<p>This is a proposed response to the Overview and Scrutiny recommendations on Increasing women and girls’ participation in sports provision and physical activities</p>		

Forward Plan March 2023

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 24/05/23		
Community Plan Theme	Boost culture, business, jobs and leisure		
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation		
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	Consultation with Women and girls, stakeholders and key partners will be undertaken as part of the Youth Service & Leisure Insourcing consultation programmes, consultations with schools. Consultation methods will include online surveys and in person workshops		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	N/A		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Matthew Eady (Director of Commissioning and Culture) matthew.eady@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	N/A		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Record of Corporate Directors Actions 2022/23 Q4	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? No
Summary of Decision	This report sets out, for noting by Cabinet, the Corporate Director's Actions taken under Rule 10 (section 50 Record of Corporate Director's Actions (RCDA) - Waiving of Procurement Procedures) in Part C – Codes and Protocols of the Council's constitution. The section states that Corporate Director's Actions in respect of contracts over £100,000 must be reported to Cabinet for noting and this report fulfils this requirement.		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 24/05/23		
Community Plan Theme	All Priorities		
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living		

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Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	N/A		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	N/A		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Nisar Visram (Director of Finance, Procurement & Audit) nisar.visram@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	N/A		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Change and amendments to the Permit Transfer Scheme (PTS) Criteria	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? Yes
Summary of Decision	To make sure that the PTS continues to be clear, transparent, and fair to our residents, as well as addressing the day-today operational issues. Extend the scheme to residents in under-occupied properties with three or more bedrooms.		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 24/05/23
Community Plan Theme	A clean and green future
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	The briefing note was sent to Housing Options for their comments, and we attended their management meetings for Q&A sessions. Internal consultation only
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	Yes
Contact details for	Dan Jones

Forward Plan March 2023

comments or additional information	(Director, Public Realm) dan.jones@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	Data on permits, the housing register, and future developments		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	London City Airport: Neighbouring Authority Agreement	Ward Blackwall & Cubitt Town; Poplar	Key Decision? Yes
Summary of Decision	This report seeks approval to enter into a Neighbouring Authority Agreement with London City Airport. Entering into a Neighbouring Authority Agreement will enable Tower Hamlets Council to oversee and enforce the Section 106 Legal Agreement signed on 27th April 2016 attached to planning permission 13/01228/FUL issued by Newham Council, where it affects properties within Tower Hamlets Borough. This includes the Noise Insulation Payment Scheme.		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 29/03/23
Community Plan Theme	A clean and green future
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	N/A
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	N/A
Contact details for comments or additional information	Jennifer Peters (Divisional Director, Planning and Building Control, Place) Jennifer.Peters@towerhamlets.gov.uk
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	Draft Neighbourhood Authority Agreement Map of the Eligible Properties
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so	No, Unrestricted

why?	
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Street Cleanliness

O&S spotlight

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24/04/2023

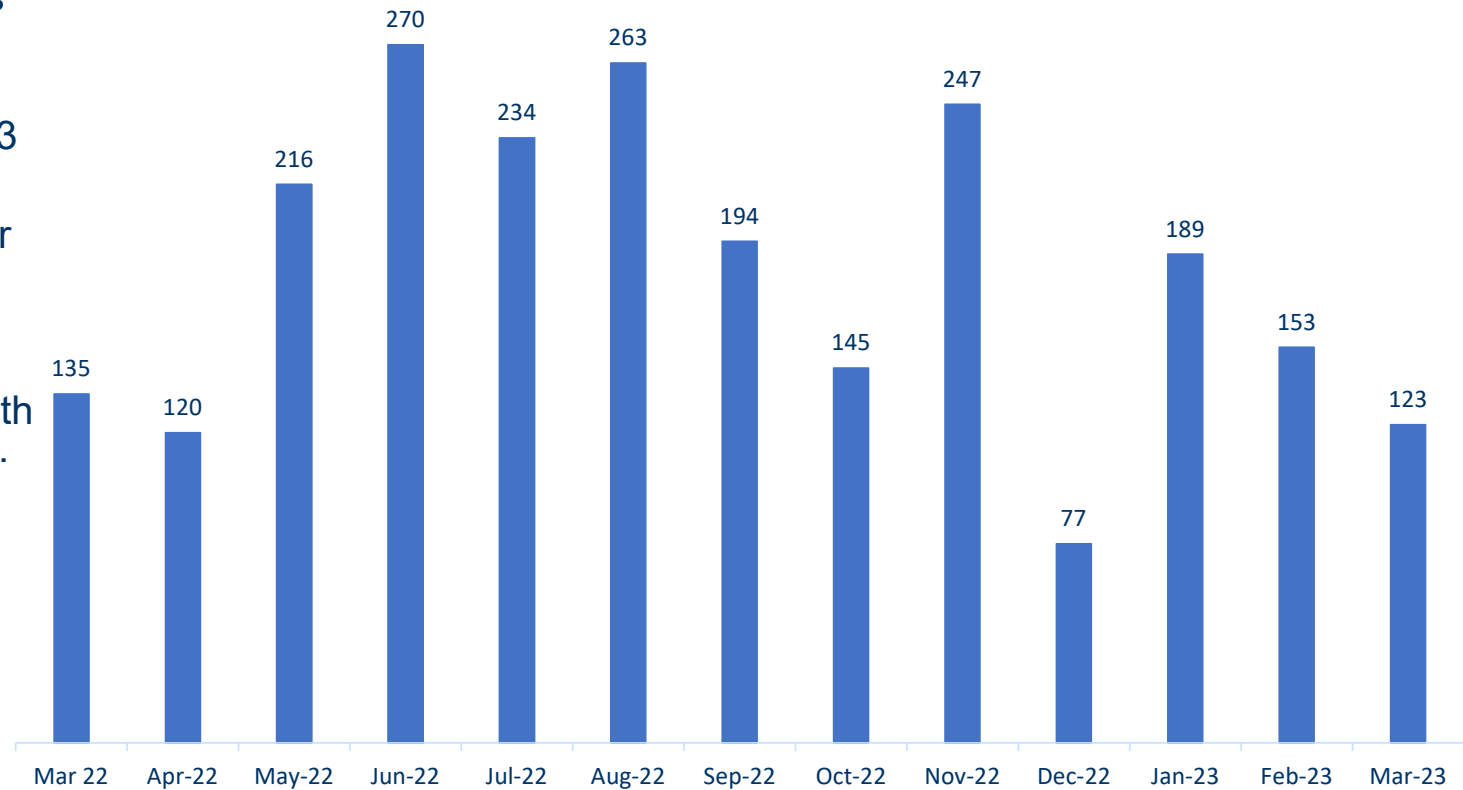
Oli Kapopo – Head of Waste Operations



Performance- street cleansing



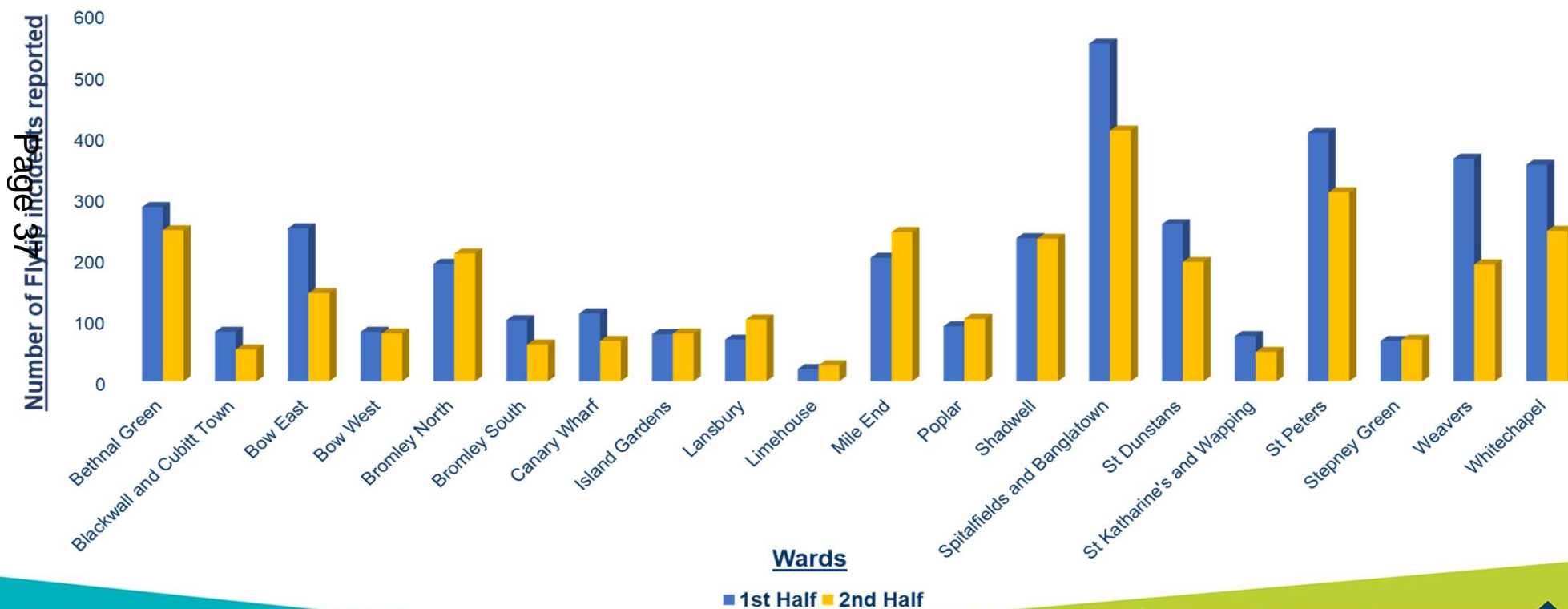
- A total of 2366 Proactive inspections of streets were conducted 2022/23.
- Proactive inspections of streets by the service doubled for 2022/2023
- Streets that appear in the top 5 reported dirty streets are targeted for inspection the following week to monitor improvement.
- Inspection reports will be completed on Whitespace and accompanied with photos to validate cleansing grading.



Reported Flytip incidents by Ward 2022/23



- 7,431 incidents of flytips reported for 2022/23
- 3864 reported Fly Tip incidents in the first half of the year (Apr-Sept) compared to 3107 in the second half of the year (Oct-March)



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Improvements – Street Cleansing



Operational changes

- Increased collection of dumps and fly-tips at night with 2 vehicles currently in operation
- Increased clearance in the west of the borough with an additional vehicle deployed
- Increased cleansing activities along "mainlines"
- Increased inspections
- Hit squad targeting problem areas

Community Engagement

- Employment of 4 x Environmental Coordinators
- Develop partnerships with local businesses, residents and organisations
- Building community engagement
- Publicise and communicate



Timescale - operational changes



Service	Key changes	Due dates
Cleansing	Reviewing frequency and timing of street cleansing service to improve performance, accounting for 24/7 economy and differences to geography and footfall across the borough	Implementation and improvements to commence in June 2023
Domestic collection	Borough wide realignment of how and when the residual and recycling wastes will be collected.	Implementation and improvements to commence in June 2023
Commercial waste	Separated service from the current comingled collection and to operate 7 days per week twice per day	Implementation and improvements to commence in June 2023
Waste Disposal and future planning	Contract extension for MRF contract – Bywaters Government changes Environment Act 2021	Commenced 01/03/2023 Unknown but expected from 2024/25 onwards

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Community Engagement



Introduction

The administration has made the following commitments:

- Encourage our communities to become involved in community walkabouts to check standards are being maintained across the borough
- Encourage the community to report eyesores and problem areas



What we are doing

We have recruited a team of Environmental Coordinators to meet these pledges and tasked them with the following objectives:

- Monitor and report on council on-street services affecting the Local Environmental Quality
- Review, follow up and respond to area specific problems, including web form and LYN/Fifi reports
- Build a portfolio of key community, business and visitor group contacts
- Identify key areas for LEQ improvement & instigate community walkabouts
- Develop and implement stakeholder partnership activities to support the adoption of a shared ownership of the LEQ - Litter picks/community engagement events/Clean Up Partnerships

 Grade A No litter or refuse	 Grade B Predominately free of litter and refuse apart from some small items	<p>✓ We want your street to look like this - Acceptable</p> <p>✗ Unacceptable – But if its like this report it</p>
 Grade C Widespread distribution of litter and/or refuse with minor accumulations	 Grade D Heavily affected by litter and/or refuse with significant accumulations	



Building Community Engagement



Developing Partnerships

By patrolling the streets of Tower Hamlets and holding community engagement events Team EC have forged new connections with invested individuals and organisations looking to promote positive behaviour change



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- Resident walkabouts & engagement events
- Commercial investigations
- Joint working with Our ESO and THEO teams
- Identifying the root causes of litter and fly tipping



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Amplifying the Impact



Positive Communication

Working with our supporters and our internal Communications team we aim to spread the word and increase interest in these hands-on opportunities. The more our community share in the desire to work with us to keep the shared Public Realm tidy the greater the level of behaviour change we will see across the borough.

CLEAN & GREEN

Help to make Bethnal Green sparkle with our big clean up

Posted in All Company

Marshall Savage
Feb 28 · Edited

Another great clean up! Our friends from KPMG vs litter in Brick Lane. I've never seen it so clean!

Making a great team day out. As our warmer months approach, we'll be looking for more team day out activity. Fosters a sense of community and pride.

Thank · Comment · Share

Posted in All Company

Marshall Savage
Oct 13, 2022 · Edited · @2

Another great successful litter picking event with Christine Gennings and Elsa Baxter. Had great fun with Canary wharf group and JP Morgan cleaning up Mile End Park. Not as many people as I hoped but quality over quantity I say.

I'm looking to line managers to engage some office based or WFH teams for few events. Great for team building and to reconnect for teams who may have not seen one another a while. It's fun, relaxed and helps the environment. Send me an email or a message on team if you are interested!!!!

Like · Comment · Share · You and 13 others

lar vandalizing, leaving graffiti or fly • The clean up will be running from 10am to 4pm on October

Tower Hamlets Council
@TowerHamletsNow

Big thank you to the team from @kpmguk who got together to help clean up Brick Lane!

For more information on how to get involved in a local community clean up (either as a business/organisation or a resident), check out our website: orlo.uk/YvQA2

10:41 am · 9 Mar 2023 · 787 Views

Marshall Savage
Oct 3, 2022 · Edited · Seen by 1,909

What a day!!! A fantastic and productive event. Spoke to so many proactive and passionate residents. Never underestimate the drive of our residents which makes Tower Hamlets a community. It was truly inspiring seeing our residents, the people we work for, being so active in the community. I couldn't pry off the litter pickers off their hands even if I tried.

The pride our residents have for the environment is inspiring and reminds me why it is so important we should constantly strive to improve our public realm.

#TeamEC

Posted in All Company

Marshall Savage
Sep 28, 2022 · Edited · @1 · Seen by 1,880

Had such a great first experience in my new role as Environmental Coordinator.

Today I worked with KPMG and our Councillor, [Sabina Khan](#), to clear up litter in our borough and we absolutely smashed it.

In 2 hours the KPMG group filled half a van load off rubbish.

I can't wait to properly start my new post.

Like · Comment · Share · You and 24 others

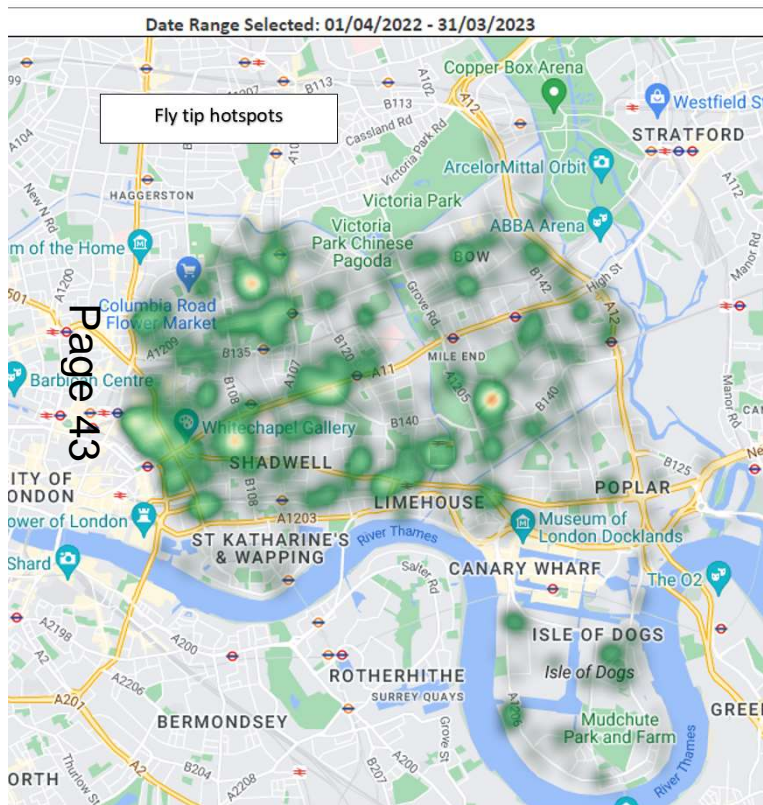
Like · Comment · Share · Jacqueline Kearney and 19 others

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Wage war on fly tipping

Annual delivery plan commitments



Wage war on fly tipping, using our boroughwide CCTV and a policy of prosecuting offenders

1. Identify hotspots and agree locations that will be targeted with existing and newly procured re-deployable CCTV sets (Sep 22) 01/10/2022
2. Launch 'wage war on fly tipping' communication campaign (Oct 22) 01/11/2022
3. Consult, workshop, design and pilot new behavioural interventions to tackle householder fly-tipping (Dec 22) 01/01/2023
4. Target hotspots using CCTV, with education, advice and enforcement action (Mar 23) 01/04/2023



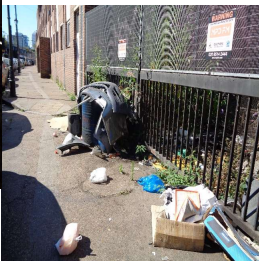
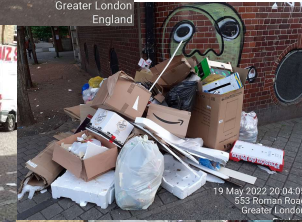
Education, advice and enforcement



To reduce fly tipping so it's no longer a problem:

- Reduced loss of income from illegal waste disposal
- Reduced costs of clearance
- Reduced cost of illegal waste disposal
- Reduced impact on cleanliness of borough
- Reduced complaints and levels of concern

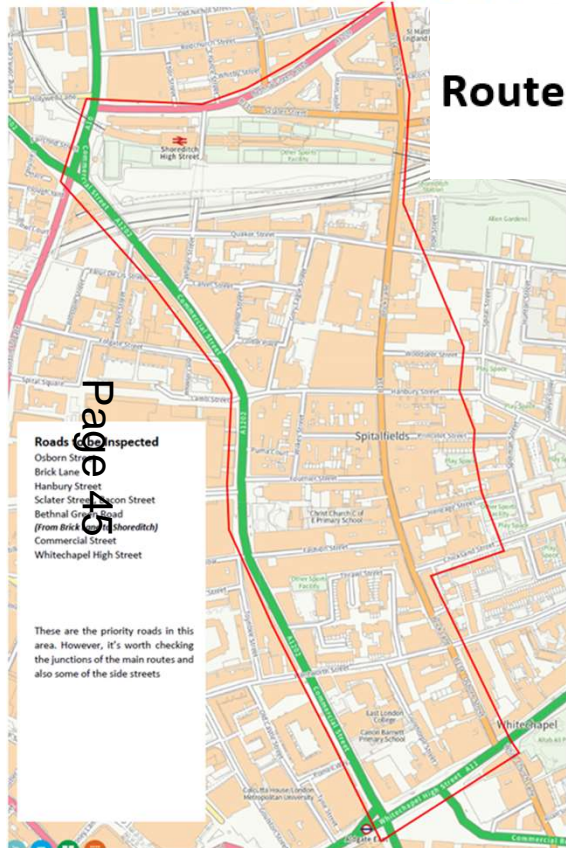
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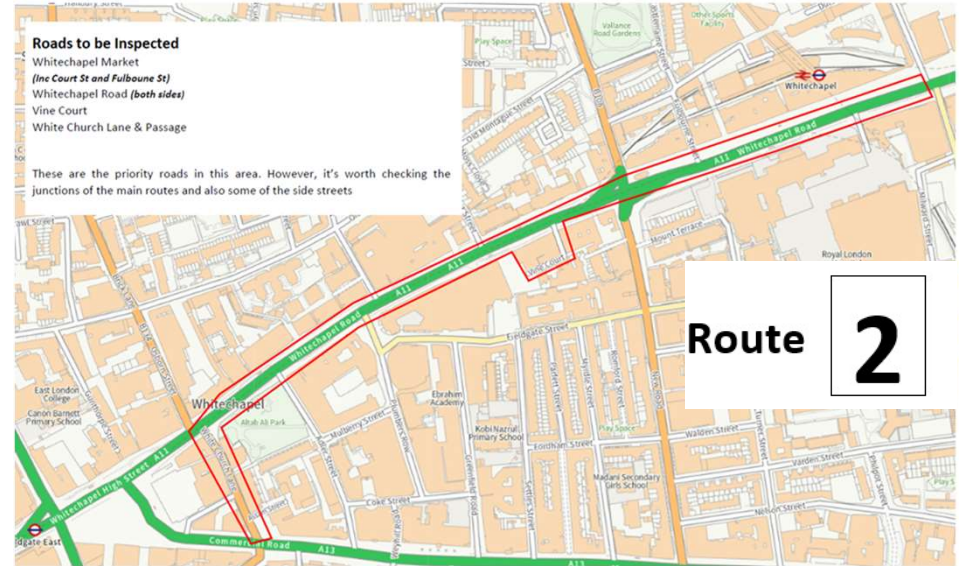
Targeted patrol areas



Route

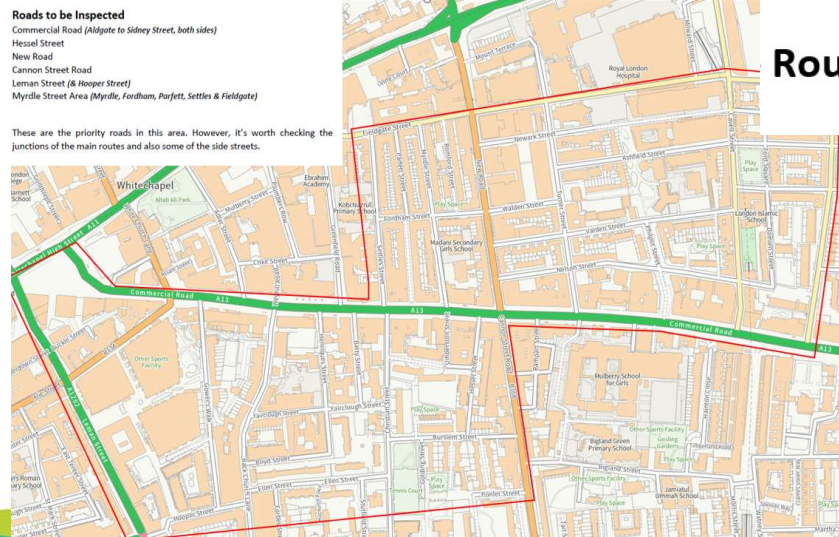
1

- Patrolling areas Monday to Sunday
- Increased focus Thursday to Saturday from 4am and after 12 midnight in key areas



Route

2



Route

3



Summary of enforcement plans

- Focus on hotspots with increased enforcement action, education and advice - additional cost of resources working early and late covered by increased FPN's
- Environmental co-ordinators supporting with increased communication, education and advice to residents and business
- Launch of communication and engagement campaign in early 2023, with development of different communication messages to help stop residents and business fly tipping and littering
- Installation of additional CCTV cameras to support targeting of hotspots 24/7
- Increased co-ordination with waste operations and commercial waste team to target increase in use of pre-paid sacks
- Increased community engagement and reporting, monitoring of results and checking for improvement



Businesses... Don't use black sacks for your rubbish

This is **ILLEGAL** dumping and fly-tipping
Use a commercial waste service, or risk a **FINE**

Challenges to service improvement



- Resident, landlord and business owners behaviour
- Work underway to review the hours and frequency of operation of street cleansing function
- Capacity to deliver the changes whilst managing business as usual
- Changes in legislation requiring categories of waste to be separated at the point of collection - Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)
- Introduction of timed waste collections on main roads to reduce the time waste is seen in streets
- Physical environment in which the service operates
- Lack of suitable depot and available waste transfer facilities
- Lack of waste restriction policies
- Challenges with access to sites
- Funding for Community Engagement Team ends September 2023




Priorities and next steps



- The main priority is to support the delivery of the Mayor's pledges through working closely with the Environmental Service Team and Environmental Coordinators to tackle fly tipping enforcement and speedy removal.
- Improve the visual amenity of the borough by purchasing additional smart bins to be deployed in high footfall areas and increase litter capacity.
- Continue with community engagement activities and comms
- The review of street cleansing will include seeking alternative approaches to deploying resources to remove fly tipped waste from streets and increasing the visible presence of cleansing staff.



<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Finance and Resources Scrutiny Lead</p> <p>24th April 2023</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Sharon Godman, Director of Strategy, Improvement and Transformation</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Understand the impact of food insecurity on residents and review whether the council and its partners response to tackling food poverty is effective and sustainable.</p>	

Originating Officer(s)	<p>Afazul Hoque, Head of Service, Corporate Strategy and Communities</p> <p>Jaber Khan, Senior Strategy and Policy Officer, Corporate Strategy and Communities</p>
Wards affected	All Wards

Executive Summary

This report sets out the findings and recommendations from the scrutiny review on food insecurity in the Borough. The report seeks to understand the impact of food insecurity on residents, and how council and its partners response to food insecurity can be more effective and sustainable. The report makes eleven recommendations for agreement by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the attached scrutiny review session report and agree the recommendations; and
2. Agree to submit the attached report to the Mayor and Cabinet for executive response to the recommendations.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 This paper submits the report and recommendations of the scrutiny review sessions on the impact of food insecurity on residents, and how council and its partners response to food insecurity can be more effective and sustainable for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Take no action. This is not recommended as the scrutiny review provides evidence based recommendations for improving access to food provision and to reduce food insecurity in the Borough.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

3.1. The rise of cost of living in the country due to unprecedented rise in inflation rates, along with high energy costs, has impacted on many people's ability to buy basic essentials including food. As Tower Hamlets has the highest rate of poverty in the country this has a significant impact on the local population, exacerbating food insecurity already existent in the Borough.

3.2. As part of this scrutiny review a session was held on 1st December with key stakeholders including the Overview and Scrutiny members. The session was chaired by Cllr Sabina Khan. There were subsequent sessions in the community hearing the lived experiences of residents facing food insecurity and site visits to a food pantry, food bank and a food redistribution organisation to help with gathering evidence for the review.

3.3. The review aimed to:

- understand the extent to which food poverty is affecting local residents and the contributing factors
- review the current food model provisions, it's accessibility and effectiveness
- examine the sustainability of council's current and future plans to tackle food poverty in the Borough

3.4. The review was underpinned by the following areas of enquiry:

- How widespread is food poverty in the Borough? What are the impacts of food poverty on local people? Which groups of people are being affected the most?
- What are the key challenges the council and its partners face in tackling food poverty in the Borough?
- What are the key barriers local residents struggling with food insecurities face in accessing appropriate services? How do we ensure there is accessibility to good quality food provisions for all those in need?

3.5. How is sustainably being ensured across the different projects and programmes tackling food poverty? How much capacity does the council have to meet the demands of food insecurity in the long run and are any alternative ways being sought?

- 3.6. What is being done to work with partners, voluntary, community and faith groups to develop a strategic and coordinated approach to poverty reduction in the Borough?
- 3.7. The review involved a range of stakeholder witnesses including:
- Cabinet Member for Resources and Cost of Living supported by council officers
 - Representatives from the Youth Council
 - Society Links
 - Bow Food Bank
 - Sustain
 - Felix Project
 - Public Health
 - Tackling Poverty Team from the council
- 3.8. The scrutiny review resulted in the following recommendations:

Communications

Recommendation 1

Effectively communicate information about support provisions to those facing food insecurity and to front-line workers. As part of this Develop an up-to-date directory of services that can be easily accessible and understood by different beneficiary groups, food banks and front line services

Food Aid

Recommendation 2

Provide a longer term commitment to continue funding the LBTH Food Hub so that there is more certainty in delivery of food aid to local food aid organisations and retention of expertise and experience to help with continuity

Recommendation 3

Council to work with food aid providers to grow and sustain an independently run food aid network to ensure better joined up delivery of food aid in the Borough

Recommendation 4

Continue developing dignified approaches to accessing food for those facing food insecurity including increasing the number of food stores to reduce reliance on food banks.

Recommendation 5

Facilitate opening up food aid provisions in the evening or weekend to support those who may not be able access these services in the weekday specially for the 'working poor'

Quality of Food Provisions

Recommendation 6

Improve the quality of secondary school food. As part of rolling out universal free school meals in secondary schools, improve the quality of food provision, ensuring it is healthy, filling and appetising.

Recommendation 7

Work with foodbanks to improve nutritional value provided in foodbanks and engage foodbank users to promote healthy start vouchers, nutritional and health related services to improve health and reduce health issues happening because of poverty.

Recommendation 8

Increase uptake of Healthy Start Cards and expand fruit and vegetable voucher schemes, developing a plan and funding to meet targets.

Maximising income

Recommendation 9

Stipulate within commissioning specifications for information and advice services, that the services need to often operate from foodbanks

Recommendation 10

Council and partner services to work with food banks to provide opportunities for residents in low paid employment to develop their skills and to get into better employment

Sustainability

Recommendation 10

Develop closer collaboration with private sector to unlock financial resources to help tackle food insecurity in Tower Hamlets

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1. The scrutiny review examined the impact of food poverty on residents and how access to food provisions including food with nutritional value can be improved, and how food insecurity can be reduced.. The recommendations arising from the scrutiny review aim to benefit all residents facing food insecurity regardless of age, gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity, disability and religion.

5. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

5.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. In considering its response to the recommendations from the scrutiny review on food insecurity in the Borough, Cabinet will need to consider the financial implications of any decisions to increase or expand provision, for example a

separate report is being presented on the roll out of universal Secondary School meals.

6. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 6.1. S.9F of the Local Government Act 2000 requires that a Council's overview and scrutiny comment be allowed to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive on matters which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area. Therefore, this report and the recommendations demonstrate compliance with the law.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

6. NONE

Appendices

7. Scrutiny challenge session report on how the council and its partners can increase women and girls access and participation with sport provisions and physical activities in the borough

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.

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

Officer contact details for documents:

Jaber Khan, Senior Strategy and Policy Officer, Corporate Strategy and Communities.

1.2

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Tower Hamlets Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Food Insecurity in Tower Hamlets

Scrutiny Review



April 2023

Chairs Forward

I am pleased to present this report which explores the level of food insecurity in the borough and the impact it has on our residents. In delivering this review, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee aims to ensure our residents are provided with appropriate support to navigate an extremely challenging cost of living crisis. One of the council's key priorities is to tackle poverty and food insecurity in the borough. To do this, we first need to grasp and understand the current scale of the problem. I hope this review, through our close engagement with food banks and listening to the lived experiences of residents, supports the council to gather the intelligence it needs to provide robust and comprehensive action.

Tower Hamlets is wonderful, exciting, and diverse borough. Rich in history and cultures. Many come to the borough to experience the unique and dynamic communities that coexist. However, Tower Hamlets is also a place of contrasts and contradictions, where a thriving economy co-exists with high levels of poverty. Despite the economic power house of Canary Wharf and the banking sector and the City of London on our door step, Tower Hamlets remains one of the poorest boroughs in London, with one of the highest rates of poverty in the country, 39 percent or more people living in poverty in the Borough. Tower Hamlets also has the highest rates of child poverty in the UK, and highest rates of elderly people in the country who live in low income households. It is devastating to comprehend that the residents in our borough continue to experience some of the highest levels of poverty in the UK. The situation has been exacerbated by the current national cost of living crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Food insecurity is a symptom of poverty; if families do not have enough money, they will not be able to afford enough food to make up a healthy diet. It is suggested that people living in more deprived areas are more likely to be overweight or obese. This is not surprising; although food insecurity can be triggered by a crisis, all too often it is a long-term situation for people living in poverty, without the ability to access or afford enough food for a healthy diet.

The findings from this review have been deeply concerning, with some of our residents facing an imminent and desperate food poverty crisis. Such was our level of concern as we heard evidence from residents and food banks, the Committee called on the Mayor and Cabinet to take immediate and emergency action to support residents during the Christmas and new year period through providing additional financial support to the food banks and food pantries. This would allow them to increase the amount of food parcels and resources they can provide.

The Committee was pleased to see a swift response with a further £200,000 funding commitment to provide vulnerable families with direct food support through Tower Hamlets food hubs during this difficult period. We would now like the Mayor and Cabinet to consider our longer term recommendations which we hope will ensure a more sustainable response to this on-going crisis.

I would like to thank all of the council officers, food banks, residents and a wide range of organisations from across the borough who gave their time and effort to contribute to this Review. I am also grateful to my Overview & Scrutiny colleagues for their support, advice and insights.

Councillor Sabina Khan

Finance and Resources Scrutiny Lead



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1. Recommendations

Our key recommendations:

- A. Provide a longer term commitment to continue funding the LBTH Food Hub so that there is more certainty in delivery of food aid to local food aid organisations and retention of expertise and experience to help with continuity
- B. Council and partner services to work with food banks to provide opportunities for residents in low paid employment to develop their skills and to get into better employment
- C. Facilitate opening up food aid provisions in the evening or weekend to support those who may not be able access these services in the weekday, especially for the ‘working poor’.

Communications	
R1	Effectively communicate information about support provisions to those facing food insecurity and to front-line workers. As part of this Develop an up-to-date directory of services that can be easily accessible and understood by different beneficiary groups, food banks and front line services
Food aid provisions	
R2	Provide a longer term commitment to continue funding the LBTH Food Hub so that there is more certainty in delivery of food aid to local food aid organisations and retention of expertise and experience to help with continuity
R3	Council to work with food aid providers to grow and sustain an independently run food aid network to ensure better joined up delivery of food aid in the Borough
R4	Facilitate opening up food aid provisions in the evening or weekend to support those who may not be able access these services in the weekday specially for the ‘working poor’.
R5	Continue developing dignified approaches to accessing food for those facing food insecurity including increasing the number of food stores to reduce reliance on food banks.
Quality of food provision	
R6	Improve the quality of secondary school food. As part of rolling out universal free school meals in secondary schools, improve the quality of food provision, ensuring it is healthy, filling, and appetising.’
R7	Work with foodbanks to improve nutritional value provided in foodbanks and engage foodbank users to promote healthy start vouchers, nutritional and health related services to improve health and reduce health issues happening because of poverty.
R8	Increase uptake of Healthy Start Cards and expand fruit and vegetable voucher schemes, developing a plan and funding to meet targets.
Maximising Income	
R9	Stipulate within commissioning specifications for information and advice services, that the services need to often operate from foodbanks

R10	Council and partner services to work with food banks to provide opportunities for residents in low paid employment to develop their skills and to get into better employment
Sustainability	
R11	Develop closer collaboration with private sector to unlock financial resources to help tackle food insecurity in Tower Hamlets

2. Introduction:

- 2.1. The Tower Hamlets Overview and Scrutiny Committee identified food insecurity in the Borough as a subject for a Scrutiny Review. The rise of cost of living in the country due to unprecedented rise in inflation rates, along with high energy costs, has impacted on many people's ability to buy basic essentials including food. As Tower Hamlets has the highest rate of poverty in the country this has a significant impact on the local population, exacerbating food insecurity already existent in the Borough. The evidence gathering for the report provided stark confirmation of this.
- 2.2. The purpose of the scrutiny review was to:
 - understand the extent to which food poverty is affecting local residents and the contributing factors,
 - review the current food model provisions, its accessibility and effectiveness,
 - examine the sustainability of council's current and future plans to tackle food poverty in the Borough.
- 2.3. Tackling the cost-of-living crisis is the number one priority for the Executive Mayor as set out in the Mayor's manifesto. This is reflected in Tower Hamlets [Council Strategic Plan 2022 -2026](#), where priority 1 is focused on tackling cost of living crisis. This priority has a number of commitments which relate to this review on food poverty including:
 - Set up a Holiday Food programme to feed children entitled to free school meals during the school holidays.
 - Support children and young people through a package of measures including universal Free School Meals throughout primary and secondary school.
 - Develop our local safety net in partnership with food banks and voluntary organisations.
- 2.4. It must be noted that food insecurity happens as a result of poverty. Therefore, tackling poverty is key to reducing food insecurity in the Borough. The Committee notes that the Executive Mayor has announced a number of initiatives over the past few months that will ease the financial pressure on households facing poverty, this includes:
 - Setting up of a series of warm hubs for residents who may be struggling to heat their homes due to soaring energy prices.
 - Introduction of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) to support sixth form schools and colleges.
 - Putting a freeze on council tax.
- 2.5. At the first scrutiny review session on 1st December, Committee members recommended urgent funding for foodbanks to support residents facing food insecurity over the winter period. The Committee was pleased to see that the Executive Mayor subsequently announced extra 200k for urgent funding to support foodbanks over the winter period. In March 2023 the Executive Mayor committed a further £814k into local Food Hubs, to improve provision and nutritional offering.

3. Review approach

- 3.1. The review was led by Cllr Sabina Khan the scrutiny lead for Finance and Resources and supported by Jaber Khan, Senior Strategy and Policy Officer, and later Zaid ul-Islam (Graduate Management Trainee) and Ayaan Gulaid (Strategy and Policy Officer)
- 3.2. To inform the review evidence was gathered through one session with service providers and Overview and Scrutiny committee members, in addition to a few smaller sessions hearing lived experiences of residents and a number of sites visits.

Review session with service providers - Thursday 1st December 2022

The first evidence gathering session set out the context to the review, and invited relevant stakeholders from the council, VCS organisations who provide a service to residents facing food insecurity, along with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) members. The Committee heard presentations from both internal and external service providers as well as contributions from those present.

Site Visits:

The Committee conducted several site visits at key locations across the Borough. This included Bow Food Bank, Limborough food pantry and Felix Project (food redistribution organisation). The aim was to see first-hand the work taking place to tackle food poverty and gather intelligence on effectiveness from providers, and where possible, service users.

Experiences of local residents and service users.

Two face to face focus group sessions were held to collect the views and experiences of service users. This helped develop a picture of how effective the current support systems are to tackle food poverty, and what they feel needs to be done to improve provision.

As part of gathering evidence of peoples lived experiences, a written submission was received from the Disability Network on their experiences of local residents and service users. All of these sessions and submission covered the following key areas:

- Their experiences of food insecurity in the Borough.
- Their experiences of accessing services related to food insecurity and any barriers to access.
- What can the council and its partners do to improve the situation.

At the OSC Committee held on 12th December 2022, a briefing paper with [some urgent recommendations](#) was agreed to help residents facing food insecurity over the winter period that went to Cabinet members.

As part of the Review evidence was received from a range of officers, partners, and committee members, including:

Name	Designation
Cllr Sabina Khan	Scrutiny lead for Finance and Resources
Cllr Saied Ahmed	Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living
Cllr Marc Francis	Member, Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Bodrul Choudhury	Member, Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Ellie Kershaw	Interim Divisional Director, Growth and Economic Development

Dominic Hinde	Household Resilience Team Leader, Growth and Economic Development
Vincent Wood	Food Security Officer • Growth & Economic Development
Katy Scammell Natalie Lovell	Associate Director, Public Health Public Health Programme Manager for Healthy Environments
Muhammad Hafizur Rahman Zarrah Rahman Muhammad Habib	Tower Hamlets Youth Council
Joyce Archbold	Director, Society Links
Joanna Read Steve Gilbin	Executive Director, Bow Food Bank Trustee, Bow Food Bank
Sufia Alam	London Muslim Centre
Halima Islam	Co-opted member (Overview and Scrutiny Committee)
Jahid Ahmed	Co-opted member (Overview and Scrutiny Committee)
Isabel Rice	London Food Poverty Campaign Coordinator, Sustain
Damian Conrad	Community Partnerships Manager, Felix Project
Bethan Mobey	Toynbee Hall
Membership organisations from	Disability Network

4. Defining Food Insecurity

- 4.1. Food insecurity is an individual's "limited access to food due to lack of money or other resources". Food insecurity can be defined as "limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, or the ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways"¹. Several terms such as 'food poverty', 'food insecurity' and 'hunger' are often used interchangeably.
- 4.2. This definition takes into account a number of variables, such as one's capacity to acquire and purchase food as well as the social stigma frequently connected with using foodbanks or other similar programmes to obtain food. The capacity to prepare food, which necessitates the tools and energy sources needed to store and prepare the food, together with the abilities and knowledge necessary to produce wholesome meals, is another aspect.
- 4.3. Food insecurity is commonly a symptom of broader financial insecurity (housing, fuel costs, employment, education, etc.). The issues are exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis. It can also be impacted by:
- Availability issues (supply chain disruption, panic buying)
 - Access issues (food deserts)
 - Environmental issues (crop yields, effects of the climate emergency)

5. National and regional context

- 5.1. The UK's food poverty rate is [among the highest in Europe](#). Around one in five people (20%) were in poverty in 2020/21, which equates to 13.4 million people. Of these, 7.9 million were working-age adults, 3.9 million were children and 1.7 million were pensioners.²

¹ [State-of-Hunger-2021-Report-Final.pdf \(trusselltrust.org\)](#) p.19

² [uk_poverty_2023 - the essential guide to understanding poverty in the uk 0 0.pdf \(jrf.org.uk\)](#)

- 5.2. In June to July 2022, of the 91% of adults in Great Britain who reported an increase in their cost of living, 95% saw the price of their food shopping go up, and [44% had started spending less on essentials including food](#). According to a [Food Foundation report](#), 9.7 million adults faced food insecurity in September 2022. More than half (53.8%) of universal credit claimants were food insecure.
- 5.3. Food price inflation reached [17.1 percent](#) by end of January 2023, amounting to over £643 rise in the average annual food cost.
- 5.4. The government published a [Food Strategy](#) in 2022 which focuses on longer-term measures to support a resilient, healthier, and more sustainable food system that is affordable to all.
- 5.5. Inadequate income is the primary cause of food insecurity nationally. Low income (39%) was the [leading cause of referrals to Trussell Trust food banks from 2019 to 2020](#), followed by benefit delays (17%) and benefit adjustments (15%).
- 5.6. London has the highest rate of poverty of any region in the UK, with more than a quarter (27%) of London residents in poverty after housing costs.
 - 1 in 5 adult Londoners have low or very low levels of food security
 - 1 in 6 parents in London have children living in low or very low food security-around 400,000 children.
 - Trussell Trust (food bank) usage, often used as a measure of acute food poverty, is up 284% since 2012. In 2017, 10% of its 1,332,952 food packages were distributed in London.
 - Due to rising costs, 42% of 500 surveyed London parents reported cutting food purchases; 30% reduced fruit and veg; and 21% skipped meals for their child to eat.
- 5.7. In 2018, the Mayor of London announced the [London Food Strategy](#), a five-year plan which outlines key priorities for ensuring that all Londoners have access to healthy, affordable, and sustainable food.

6. Local Context

- 6.1. Tower Hamlets is one of the most deprived Boroughs in the country. In 2019/20 the overall poverty rate in Tower Hamlets was 39 percent, the highest rate in London.³
- 6.2. It has the highest level of child poverty in the UK with over 50% children living in households below the poverty line (after housing costs) . Over the past 5 years, the number of children estimated to be living in low-income families in Tower Hamlets increased by more than 6000.
- 6.3. 44% of older people in Tower Hamlets live in low income households which is also the highest proportion in the UK. Overall 14.2% of Tower Hamlets households are in fuel Poverty but for households of older people this is almost certainly higher.
- 6.4. Poverty in employment is high. Although more people are working than ever before, rising living costs, the effects of the pandemic, and benefits at a 35-year low in real terms have had a disproportionate impact on those on the lowest wages. According to the Borough Profile (2020):
 - more than three-quarters of poor children live in families where at least one person works
 - 29,000 employees in Tower Hamlets earned less than the London Living Wage
 - 63% of families receiving tax credits were working
 - nearly half (47%) of housing benefit claimants were working
- 6.5. 4,591 low income households identified by internal data⁴ as food insecure in Tower Hamlets (where food cost is higher than income after expenditure).

³ Taken from Tower Hamlets Borough Poverty Profile from Trust for London [Tower Hamlets | Trust for London](#)

⁴ Food Poverty - LIFT Data October 2022

Of those households identified:

- 2,833 are low income single people
- 2,751 are social tenants
- 3,585 are not in work (1,006 are in work)
- 1,031 live with disabilities

Absolute numbers of food insecure people likely to be much higher.

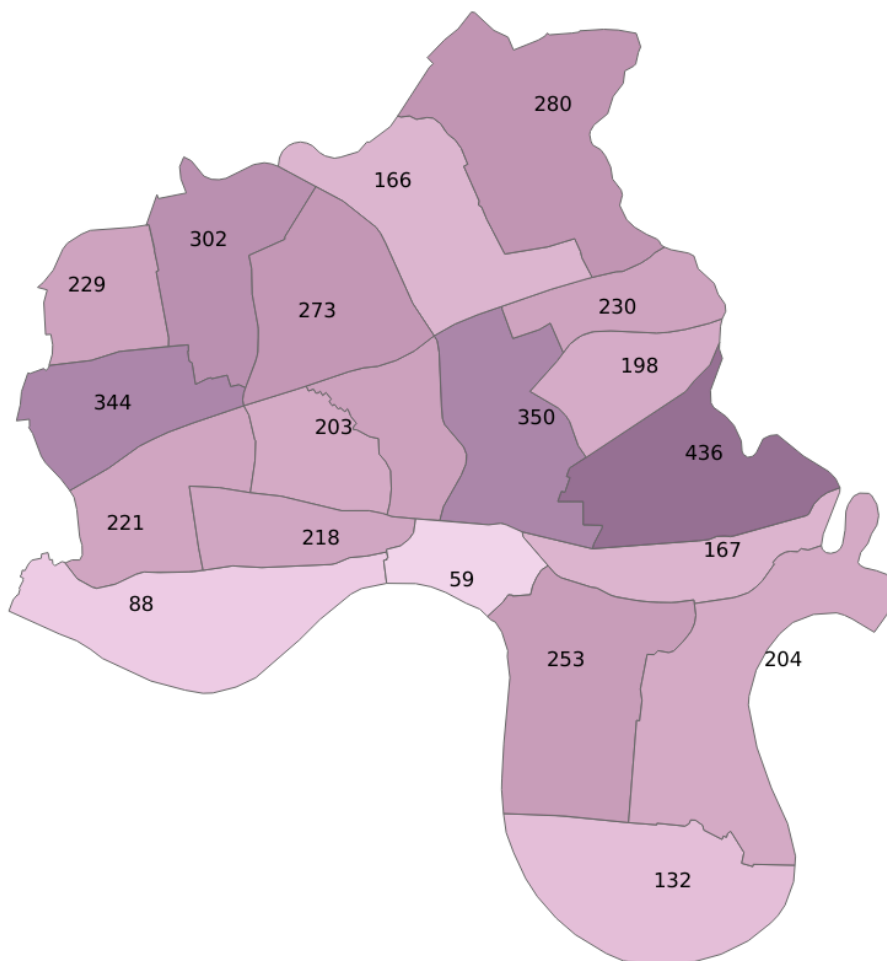


Figure 1 Low income household by ward

7. Responses to Food Insecurity in LBTH

7.1. In the Borough there are various responses to food insecurity from both the council and VCS organisations

Council responses:

7.2. Council has a multipronged approach to tackling food insecurity in the Borough. This includes:

- Delivering projects that directly assist food insecure residents.
- Empowering local grassroots organisations through grants, food, and equipment.
- Supporting advice services with funding to provide wrap around provision.
- Continuing work to meet financial insecurity and maximise incomes.

7.3. There are a number of projects that directly assist food insecure residents including a food hub, Food Store Network, Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, and some additional food specific support:

- Food Hub:** Collates and distributes food to more than 60 VCS organisations in the Borough. It has delivered more than 2,000 tonnes of food to date (equivalent to 4.8 million meals). The projected impact of distribution of food from the Food Hub in 2022-23 will be equivalent to 2.25million meals, which is enough to feed 2,503 families in the borough every day of the year (based on a typical family size of 2.47 people).
- Council has a **Food Store Network** which is a 'Pantry-style' model targeting medium and long term food insecurity with a focus on service user dignity. It offers significant quantities of repurposed food for a £3.50-per-week members fee, alongside wrap-around support. Over the course of the project seven sites will:
 - Provide a net benefit of £627,900 in food costs to residents.
 - Support 2,100 service users directly.
 - Benefit an estimated 12,397 people.
 There are ambitions to increase the number of Food Stores in the Borough to at least twenty which will ensure every ward in the borough can be served using this model.
- Holiday Activities and Food (HAF):** DfE funded programme designed to tackle food insecurity and bridge experience gap for Free School Meals (FSM) eligible children in the holidays. 35 organisations were delivering HAF clubs in 2021.
- Cash first schemes:**
 - Providing more than £2.6m of supermarket vouchers to FSM eligible children and those identified as vulnerable in the holidays since 2020.
 - Piloting market voucher schemes delivered by Public Health with Fresh Street and Alexandra Rose.
 - Promoting the Healthy Start Voucher Scheme to those who are eligible. Pregnant people and families with children under the age of 4 may be eligible for help to buy healthy food and milk if they are on certain benefits.
- Additional food specific support:**
 - Almost 20,000 meal boxes provided to FSM eligible and vulnerable children including breakfast bags in partnership with School Food Matters
 - More than 20 industrial fridges and freezers provided to maximize delivery from food aid groups
 - Convening organisations through the Food Partnership and the Fair Food For All subcommittee
 - Operational support for The Felix Project to assist their delivery and maximize surplus in the borough

Voluntary and community Sector (VCS) Response:

7.4. There are various forms of VCS responses to tackling food insecurity. A number of organisations are catering for emergency food aid provision, primarily food banks. Felix Project is also a key stakeholder in the Borough which redistributes surplus food and hot meals to local food aid organisations so that the food reaches the residents who are in need.

Felix Project:

[The Felix Project](#) is a food redistribution organisation that rescues safe and nutritious surplus food from the food industry in order to reduce food waste and food poverty.

This is accomplished by obtaining food from supermarkets, wholesalers, and other food suppliers that is both fresh and nutritious but cannot be sold for a variety of reasons. It is then redistributed and delivered to a variety of charities across London that provide meals, snacks, or food parcels, ensuring that food that would otherwise go to waste reaches vulnerable Londoners. The Felix Project provides funding to many food aid organisations in Tower Hamlets. The council works closely with the Felix project.

Food banks:

There are different types of foodbanks that operate from the Borough, this includes:

- **Open Access** – A food bank that anyone can go to for food.
- **Limited Access/referral only** – A food bank that needs someone to refer you into the service. Please contact the organisation for more details.
- **School food provision** – A food bank or food aid service that specifically works with students and parents who attend the school.
- **Hot meals service/Hostel** – Provides hot meals or premade goods to residents.

The Tower Hamlets Food Partnership

7.5. The council is a member of and supports the Tower Hamlets Food Partnership, a multi-sector network hosted by Women's Environmental Network (WEN) that brings together charities, businesses, social landlords and statutory services with an interest in food. Along with meeting immediate food needs, the partnership is committed to working on upstream solutions to address the root causes of poverty and reduce the need for food banks, as well as to championing models of food provision that are sustainable, dignified, offer choice, and provide pathways to other advice and support services.

8. Findings

Impact of food insecurity on residents:

- 8.1. The review heard from a number of stakeholders and residents on the impact of poverty and food insecurity. Some of the key impacts are stated below.
- 8.2. Cost of living has been increasingly affecting more residents in the Borough which has impacted many residents ability to buy essential items including food. As a result the number of residents needing emergency food support increased rapidly, with demand for emergency food support surpassing pandemic levels over the winter. Bow Food Bank - one of the largest food banks in the Borough -increased their support to 800 households a week. Other food support provisions have reported similar issues and a rise in demand.
- 8.3. The review found many people in low paid jobs are increasingly needing to access emergency food aid to be able to sustain themselves. Bow Food Bank has reported that 50 percent of people accessing their food bank are in some kind of employment.
- 8.4. The desperation has led to an increase in theft. Shoplifting of essential items and medicine have increased. The number one shoplifting item according to Safer Neighbourhood Team is Calpol. Theft of essential products for babies is also on the rise.
- 8.5. Some residents, especially those on pre-payment metres, are often taking extreme measures to balance the books and prioritising paying rent, council tax and energy bills over food. The Committee heard that many households were skipping meals and going hungry, and amongst other measures are using the toilet multiple times before flushing to save on pre-payment meters.
- 8.6. Residents have mentioned that they have little option other than to feed their families unhealthy food due to higher cost of healthy food which is likely to have long-term consequences on their health.
- 8.7. Demand for cold tinned food in food banks has gone up due to rise in energy bills with many preferring cold food over using energy to heat or cook food.
- 8.8. The review heard that stigma and shame is often preventing residents including young people from accessing food provisions and the help they need for their families. Language is also a key barrier accessing various support
- 8.9. Loneliness: due to cost of living situation many residents stated that they avoid inviting guests to their houses. On the other hand, some people have refused invitations because they are unable to afford to reciprocate. This is reducing the opportunities for social interaction within some communities, hence creating loneliness and isolation which is likely to have a significant impact on residents health and wellbeing.
- 8.10. Many from the diaspora are supporting family members abroad outside their own immediate family. This has put further strain on their budgets.
- 8.11. The review heard from the Disability Network that People with disabilities experienced greater risk of food insecurity due to additional disability related costs which have increased.

Food aid provisions

- 8.12. As stated in section 7, Tower Hamlets has a number of different provisions from emergency food aid to more sustainable approaches to reducing food poverty such as the Food Stores. The evidence gathering examined some of the food aid provisions with the key findings stated below.

Food Hub

8.13. The council's Food Hub has been central to ensuring residents facing food insecurity are supported through local food aid provisions. Continuing to provide the necessary funding to the Food Hub is essential for local food aid providers to be able to support residents with food. The Food Hubs importance can be understood by some of the following key functions it undertakes without which many of organisations providing food aid will be unable to do so:

- It creates a point of contact for 60 disparate VCS organisations, allowing to quickly communicate with this cohort and deliver messaging via couriers completing food deliveries
- It provides an adaptable service that can provide logistical support based on emerging needs and opportunities – for example serving as the delivery mechanism for this year's Christmas gift appeal at short notice, and facilitating the collection and delivery of repurposed foods to specific new projects as needed
- It provides key supplies to the Tower Hamlets FOOD Store network, which would struggle to maintain provision without access to this food.
- It provides delivery services to VCS which other parties have struggled to replicate
- It provides a mechanism for LBTH to directly influence the quality and quantity of charitable food in the borough, which has been particularly important during the cost of living crisis due to supply chain disruptions that have impacted partners
- It is providing key soft skills and opportunities for a team of 25 volunteers. In particular the hub has provided a platform towards employment in local industries for several young people, and provides a consistent benefit to several people with disabilities and additional needs.

8.14. The review was pleased to note that an extra £200,000 had been allocated for the Food Hub to support residents over the winter period however at the time of this review funding has yet not been allocated for Food Hub to continue in the next financial year. The review strongly recommends that funding is allocated early to the Food Hub and over a longer period of time for the purposes of planning, continuity and retention of experience and expertise along with certainty of delivery to local food aid providers. Whilst finalising the report for the review its come to our attention that in March 2023 the Executive Mayor committed a further £814k into local Food Hubs, to improve provision and nutritional offering which could help with continuity.

<p>Recommendation: Provide a longer term commitment to continue funding the LBTH Food Hub so that there is more certainty in delivery of food aid to local food aid organisations and retention of expertise and experience to help with continuity</p>
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Emergency food aid

8.15. A number of VCS organisations are providing emergency food aid for residents facing need. A key challenge faced by food aid organisations include often demand outstripping supply. At the same time more recently food aid organisations have reported that donations and funding they receive is reducing. Storage space for foodbanks are often at

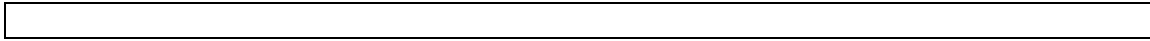
a premium as the venue can be used for multi-purposes during the week, which means they can't always stock up essential items at the venue.

- 8.16. The review heard from food aid organisations who felt there was non-adequate communication and collaboration between the different food aid providers which meant that they were not as effective as they could be in supporting residents who were facing food insecurity. A number of reasons were identified for this. One of the key reasons was not being aware of the different food aid organisations that exist in the Borough, the services they provide and how to contact them. Mapping all food aid providers and regularly updating the list of food aid organisations with their services and contact details will help individual food aid organisations and other stakeholders connect with each other and collaborate where necessary. We understand that the council has a list of food aid providers and previous Women's Environmental Network developed a list which is now outdated.
- 8.17. Along with the information, the food aid services we spoke to felt strongly on the need to have a network of food aid organisations that meet regularly to ensure better sharing of knowledge, information, resources, and minimising waste. They felt it will also enable collaborative applications for funding to maximise impact and to help understand how much of the need is being met and where the food aid needs to be targeted. For a period of time there has not been any operational food aid network to develop and enhance collaboration. Especially during the cost of living crisis there is definitely a need for one.
- 8.18. The review was pleased to note that recently the Fair Food for All sub-group got revived with first meeting being held on 3rd February 2023. The participants included Bow Food Bank, Felix Project, LBTH Food Hub and representative from Tower Hamlets Community Advisory Network (THCAN) . It was chaired by an officer from the council's Tackling poverty team. The purpose of the meeting included providing more operational information, discuss wraparound support and share information from the different organisations present at the meeting. As it was the first meeting numbers invited and attending were limited.
- 8.19. However feedback from food aid organisations expressed a need for a network which is led independently by the food aid organisations will result in much more collaboration between the food aid organisations enabling more effective results. We understand that some discussions are taking place to explore if the Fair Food for All sub-group could be that group with food aid organisations leading it or whether an independent food aid network is the way forward.

Recommendation: Council to work with food aid providers to grow and sustain an independently run food aid network to ensure better joined up delivery of food aid in the Borough

- 8.20. The review found that nearly all the food aid provisions operate in the day time. This means that some people, especially the working poor who are unable to make it to the food provisions in the day due to work can miss out. Felix project receives lot of surplus food from supermarkets that can be distributed in the evening in certain days but due to no food aid provision open in the evening they have been unable to distribute the food in the Borough. Feedback from Bow Food Bank suggests that some people who are working in the day do struggle to access emergency food aid so an evening or weekend provision is likely to help these people.

Recommendation: Facilitate opening up food aid provisions in the evening or weekend to support those who may not be able access these services in the weekday especially for the 'working poor'.



Beyond food banks

- 8.21. It is understood that emergency food aid though necessary, only provides a temporary solution to those facing food insecurity and does not reduce food insecurity. According to [a report on cost of living](#) by Institute of Health Equity, there is good evidence that food aid providers that offer one-on-one advice, more food options, and membership-based models have a greater impact on reducing food insecurity over time than traditional food banks that only provide food.
- 8.22. The council's Food Store model is an effective initiative that enables people to maintain their dignity through paying a small amount to buy large quantities of food rather than being dependent on food banks. It also has food provisions with better nutritional value. So far 7 food stores have been established in the Borough catering for people on a ward basis and there are plans to have at least 20 food stores in the Borough. Expanding these at least to each ward will really help residents in need and reduce the reliance on foodbanks.
- 8.23. During site visit and Limborough food store it was observed that the residents accessing food stores are being referred to various wrap around services which can help with maximising their income and support them on different issues. The review heard when visiting Limborough Food Store that residents accessing the food store were also benefiting from other services within the same venue due to developing familiarity with the venue. Along with being able to access support this has also helped develop friendships and connections which is helping them with their wellbeing .

Recommendation: Continue developing dignified approaches to accessing food for those facing food insecurity including increasing the number of food stores to reduce reliance on food banks.

- 8.24. Along with food stores, other approaches to restoring dignity in accessing food could be looked at by the council. This will provide more options for local residents and to reach a wider audience. Supporting food banks to transition to social super markets could be a way sustainable way of doing that. In Lewisham for example food aid providers for people who are food-insecure are transitioning from offering a food bank to offering a 'social supermarket'. Six food projects are in the process of becoming a place where residents can shop for their weekly basket of food for a small membership fee only⁵.

Quality of food provision

- 8.25. The first session of the review heard youth council representatives speak about young people's experiences of food insecurity. One of the strongest points from their presentation was on the quality and quantity of food provided in secondary schools. They mentioned young people in secondary schools including sixth forms are going hungry because of inadequate meal portion size or for not being able to meet the income threshold for free school meals. There are times that food runs out leaving young people to opt for cold food. The school meals in secondary schools were described to be of poor quality and extortionate in price for what they get and therefore, pushes many sixth formers to make unhealthy choices like eating out in local chicken shops. This same feedback about secondary school meals was reiterated at evidence gathering sessions held in the

⁵ <https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/evidence-review-cost-of-living-and-health-inequalities-in-london/click-here-to-read-the-report.pdf>

community where parents mentioned how their children will come home hungry despite being given money to buy food from the school. This meant some go hungry and others opt to eat outside of the school, in places like chicken and chips shops where food is unhealthy.

“I give my son money for school meals, but I find out that he has not used it and not eaten during his lunch. He comes back home hungry and when I ask why he did not spend money on food in school he says that that he can’t eat the food as it has no taste”.

Recommendation: Improve the quality of secondary school food. As part of rolling out universal free school meals in secondary schools, improve the quality of food provision, ensuring it is healthy, filling, and appetising.’

- 8.26. The quality of food that residents can access in food banks can vary. The review found that food banks tend to distribute food with lower nutritional value in comparison to food stores. This is of course partially due to food donations the food banks receive and the resources that has at their disposal. It is strongly advisable that the council should work with food aid providers so that the standards of food provided by the food aid organisations can be improved.
- 8.27. Healthy start vouchers support people who are 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4 to buy healthy foods and get free vitamins. However since registration has gone online for the voucher scheme in early 2022 there has been an estimated shortfall of £412,00 as shown in the [interactive map](#). These changes meant that all existing recipients were required to re-apply online in order to continue to receive this support. A number of challenges during digitisation of the Healthy Start scheme by the government has hampered uptake to the scheme which is summarised [here](#). At a local level Public Health are taking a number of actions to increase uptake of the scheme including creating awareness through promotion of the scheme using various methods and training frontline staff.
- 8.28. In order to tackle diet related health conditions and barriers to accessing healthy food, Public Health has been piloting fruit and vegetable voucher projects to improve residents' access to healthy affordable food, whilst also improving the good food economy (the vouchers are redeemable in local markets and greengrocers). Currently 2 models of delivery are being piloted – Alexandra Rose Scheme in Children’s Centres and Fruit and vegetable on prescription pilot. More details on the 2 schemes can be found in Appendix 1. It is recommended that the current schemes continue and expanded once the pilot is completed in order to support residents facing food insecurity during the cost of living crisis.

Recommendation: Work with foodbanks to improve nutritional value provided in foodbanks and engage foodbank users to promote healthy start vouchers, nutritional and health related services to improve health and reduce health issues happening because of poverty.

Recommendation: Increase uptake of Healthy Start Cards and expand fruit and vegetable voucher schemes, developing a plan and funding to meet targets.

Communications and engagement

- 8.29. During the different evidence gathering sessions it became apparent that many residents were not aware of the various forms of support available to help with food insecurity. Same could be said about some front-line workers awareness of the support available. Despite council's current promotion of the different support provisions it appears that information is not reaching all the people that really need it. Some of the barriers mentioned included language, digital exclusion and not generally having access to the information. Many of the residents we spoke with who needed emergency food support were not aware of food banks in the Borough. It may be worth reviewing and strengthening the communications and engagement approach so that local residents are more aware about the support available to them including accessing short-term and long-term food aid provisions. Some of the frontline workers we spoke to (i.e. parental engagement workers, VCS frontline workers) who work with these residents were also not informed enough to be able to sign post to different services.
- 8.30. Similar feedback about not being aware of information was also received from member organisations from the Disability Network who mentioned that publicity of these services should also cater for those facing cognitive impairments by providing 'easy to read and easy to understand' sources that explain food banks and how they can be accessed. Along with the information member organisations of the Disability Network also mentioned that their clients cognitive and physical impairments restrict them from gaining easy access to food provisions.

Recommendation: Effectively communicate information about support provisions to those facing food insecurity and to front-line workers. As part of this Develop an up-to-date directory of services that can be easily accessible and understood by different beneficiary groups, food banks and front line services

Maximising Income

Access to information, advice, and guidance (IAG)

- 8.31. It was noted during the review that currently there does not appear to be onsite information, advice, and guidance (IAG) services being provided from the food stores though residents can access the services through referrals. Good practice examples suggest that people are more likely to access advice sessions when it is co-located with food banks and community food provisions to help people access housing and employment support and claim benefit entitlements For example, in Cheshire, the ['Meeting Place Project'](#), which implements and supports emergency charitable community food provision, had advice services based at the venue, allowing people to access advice, particularly those who are less likely to seek advice outside of community settings. The primary goal of this pilot was to create conditions that made advice more accessible to people who would otherwise avoid seeking advice outside of their organisations. It is recommended that when commissioning some of these wrap around services ensure delivering sessions on site is stipulated in the commissioning documentation during procurement in order to maximise attendance

Recommendation: Stipulate within commissioning specifications for information and advice services, that the services need to often operate from foodbanks

Employment and skills

8.32. As stated previously in the report that over 29,000 people in the Borough are in low paid employment, Bow Food Bank had also reported that over 50 percent of those accessing their food bank are in some kind of employment. Therefore providing opportunities for those in low paid employment to upskill and those not in employment to gain skills and get into employment will enable people to maximise their income and reduce food insecurity. In order to do this it is recommended that council and partner services work with food aid organisations to provide with these opportunities for residents accessing their services.

Recommendation: Council and partner services to work with food banks to provide opportunities for residents in low paid employment to develop their skills and to get into better employment

Sustainability

8.33. The councils food security provisions through the tackling poverty team are delivered via various funding sources including LBTH funding and Central government funding. Below is the breakdown of 2022/23 funding for projects delivered through the tackling poverty team

Project	Annual Budget
LBTH Food Hub	£400,000
Food Pantries	£15,000 per site (approximate)
HAF (2022)	£1.75million (fully DfE funded)
FSM voucher programmes (2022)	£3.13million (of which £1.75million is local funding)

Public Health also delivers initiatives that strives to tackle food insecurity including through providing healthy and affordable food options for those facing food insecurity. For example the total cost for Alexandra Rose and Fresh Food Scheme is £120k per annum (with an additional £60k investment from our partner)


- 8.34. The resources to tackle food insecurity is finite and it can be argued that the funds within the sector is reducing. As stated for example food banks have reported reduction in donations and higher demand from residents is impacting on their ability to meet the need. Therefore it is paramount that resources are used more efficiently to tackle food insecurity in the Borough.
- 8.35. Stronger collaboration and partnership work is necessary to ensure that the resources are used effectively and new resources can be unlocked. Tower Hamlets has a strong food partnership, however there are areas that could be tapped into more in order to maximise the use of existing resources and where possible unlock new resources.
- 8.36. It was observed that there could be stronger partnership with both the private sector and faith sector in this regard. Some of the food aid providers are benefitting from private sector cooperate volunteers. Felix project for example rely on a large number of cooperate volunteers for their day to day activities. However with the depleting financial capacity for food aid organisations it is important to explore if private sector organisations can support

food aid organisation or projects working on tackling food insecurity in the Borough financially.

Tower Hamlets has a thriving faith sector and faith organisations have played a crucial role in the Borough during times of crisis such as during the Covid pandemic and also now in tackling food insecurity. However a more strategic collaboration with the faith sector can help in unlocking resources and getting access to residents in need.

<p>Recommendation: Develop closer collaboration with private sector to unlock financial resources to help tackle food insecurity in Tower Hamlets.</p>

- 8.37. Some food aid organisations feedback on the need to have strategic collaboration to understand the needs of those facing food insecurity and assess if their needs are being met. At the moment there does not seem to be an effective way to work collaboratively on this between VCS organisations and the council which may mean people are not provided effective intervention or others falling through the gaps. There is a desire from some food aid providers to have a central point of coordination to engage in research across the delivery sector to best understand the need (while remembering many local people use services specifically that keep their data confidential) and support the development of a joined-up strategy and support smaller providers to join in with that strategy.

Non-Executive Report of the: Overview & Scrutiny Committee 24 April 2023	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Sharon Godman Divisional Director Strategy, Policy and Performance	Classification: Unrestricted
Women’s Safety – Scrutiny Review Report	

Originating Officer(s)	Afazul Hoque – Head of Corporate Strategy Paul Burgess - Strategy and Policy Officer, Corporate
Wards affected	All (All Wards);

Executive Summary

This report sets out the findings and recommendations from the Scrutiny Review Sessions on women’s safety in the borough. The Report makes seven recommendations for agreement by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the attached Overview and Scrutiny Committee Scrutiny Review Report and agree the recommendations;
2. Agree to submit the attached report to the Mayor and Cabinet for executive response to the recommendations;

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 This paper submits the report and recommendations of the scrutiny review sessions on women’s safety in the borough for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 To take no action. This is not recommended as the scrutiny review sessions provides recommendations for improving women’s safety in the borough.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 In appreciating the work that the Council had undertaken since developing the Violence Against Women Girls Strategy, it became evident that there was a need to review aspects of the strategy pertaining to Women's safety in the borough. London (including Tower Hamlets) as a region had significant challenges to Women's Safety and this was further compounded by the high-profile cases in the wider media.
- 3.2 The strategy lends itself to meet the council's commitments and strategic priority of 'Empowering communities and fighting crime' by setting three priority areas including:
- support and protection for victims,
 - holding perpetrators accountable,
 - engaging the community and challenging misogyny.
- 3.3 This scrutiny review was chaired by Cllr Abdul Malik (Scrutiny Lead for Environment and Community Safety and Overview and Scrutiny Committee Member). This review was held over two distinct sessions, taking place on Monday 6th February and on Thursday 23rd February 2023.
- 3.4 The first session allowed the Committee to hear from the Cabinet Member for Safer Communities and council officers and several representatives from local women's voluntary sector groups. The focus was domestic violence and the scope set out the following key questions:
- What are the main barriers to tackling violence against women and girls?
 - Do refuges meet the needs of women in the borough?
 - What more can the council do to address domestic abuse?
- 3.5 The second session focussed on women's safety in the public spaces in the borough.
- 3.6 The scope set out the following key questions:
- What are the key issues personal safety that Women face when in or using public spaces;
 - How are the public authorities addressing the women's concerns and providing reassurance; and
 - What are the gaps and what more could be/needs to be done
- 3.7 The review sessions involved a range of stakeholders including:
- Cabinet Member for Safer Communities and supported by council officers;
 - Metropolitan Police
 - Representatives from women's voluntary and communities sector organisations; and
 - Overview and Scrutiny Committee Member

3.8 The review sessions resulted in the committee making the following recommendation:

Recommendation 1

Tower Hamlets Councillors to support and champion the 'more male allies' agenda and actively promote this across their work

More Male allies needed – Encourage elected members to become Champions and promote this at their member surgeries and joining on walkabouts that are focussed on women's safety.

Recommendation 2

Increase capacity at schools on raising awareness of domestic abuse (DA) and support available.

Recommendation 3

The Council to review current funding arrangements and increase the capacity to support women's groups that offer domestic abuse services to the community.

Recommendation 4

The council and partners to collaborate to improve the awareness of women of the programmes and help available directly that support women's safety on the streets.

Recommendation 5

Improve self-defence access.

Recommendation 6

The Police to actively target its recruitment and retention strategy for recruiting representative women from the community in Tower Hamlets.

Recommendation 6

The Council and RSL partners should work closely to tackle women safety issues on RSL estates.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising from the recommendation in 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 The actions in the attached report are made as part of the Committee's role in helping to secure continuous improvement for the council, as required under its Best Value duty.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires a public authority, in the exercise of its functions, to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act, (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7.2 Furthermore Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 imposes a duty on the authority to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment).

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE.

Appendices

- Draft Women's Safety Scrutiny Review Report

Officer contact details for documents:

Paul Burgess - Strategy and Policy Officer, Corporate

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Scrutiny Review of Women's Safety in Tower Hamlets
Women's Safety in the Borough

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Chair's Foreword

I am pleased to present this report which focuses on how the Council and its key partners can improve the safety of our women and girls in this borough.

This scrutiny review offered Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) an opportunity to scrutinise the current and future provision of women's safety in Tower Hamlets. It provided a platform to hear from a range of witnesses and collate evidence on this subject. The evidence heard by Committee Members suggests that the Council, its delivery partners and other local stakeholders need to collaborate and have a stronger joined up approach to increase the safety of women and girls across the borough. This includes closer working with women's charities and local groups to improve women's safety and informing women of support that is available.

Data trends also suggests that Tower Hamlets has the 2nd highest number of reported domestic abuse in London. We must take action to reduce the level of domestic abuse in our community if we are to make Tower Hamlets a safer borough for women.

The Committee agreed seven recommendations for the Council to consider and advocates for stronger partnerships with the police and local community to drive forward the Council's policy approach to ensure the safety of all women in the borough.

The Committee encourages the Mayor and Cabinet to take forward the recommendations and work with OSC to ensure we have a safer borough for all women and girls.

Finally, I would like to thank all the members, officers, external partners, local voluntary groups and residents who attended and supported the discussions, provided valuable insights and helped to shape the recommendations of this report.

Cllr Abdul Malik

**Overview and Scrutiny Committee Member and Scrutiny Lead for
Environment and Community Safety**



Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1	Tower Hamlets Councillors to support and champion the ‘more male allies’ agenda and actively promote this across their work. More Male allies needed – Encourage elected members to become Champions and promote this at their member surgeries and joining on walkabouts that are focussed on women’s safety.
Recommendation 2	Increase capacity at schools on raising awareness of domestic abuse (DA) and support available.
Recommendation 3	The Council to review current funding arrangements and increase the capacity to support women’s groups that offer domestic abuse (DA) services to the community.
Recommendation 4	The council and partners to collaborate to improve the awareness of women of the programmes and help available directly that support women’s safety on the streets.
Recommendation 5	Improve self-defence access.
Recommendation 6	The Police/THEOs to actively target their recruitment and retention strategy for recruiting representative women from the community in Tower Hamlets.
Recommendation 7	The Council and Residential Social Landlord (RSL) partners should work closely to tackle women safety issues on RSL estates.

Reason for Enquiry

In appreciating the work that the Council had undertaken since developing the Violence Against Women Girls (VAWG) Strategy, it became evident that there was a need to review aspects of the strategy pertaining to women’s safety in the borough. London (including Tower Hamlets) as a region had significant challenges to women’s safety and this was further compounded by the high-profile cases in the wider media.

The strategy lends itself to meet the council’s commitments and strategic priority of ‘Empowering communities and fighting crime’ by setting three priority areas including:

- support and protection for victims,
- holding perpetrators accountable,
- engaging the community and challenging misogyny.

Methodology

This scrutiny review was chaired by Cllr Abdul Malik (Scrutiny Lead for Environment and Community Safety and Overview and Scrutiny Committee Member). This review was held over two distinct sessions, taking place on Monday 6th February and on Thursday 23rd February 2023.

Session one

The first session allowed the Committee to hear from the Cabinet Member for Safer Communities and council officers and several representatives from local women's voluntary sector groups.

The focus was domestic abuse and the scope set out the following key questions:

- What are the main barriers to tackling violence against women and girls?
- Do refuges meet the needs of women in the borough?
- What more can the council do to address domestic abuse?

Members in attendance:

Councillor Abdul Malik	Scrutiny review session chair and OSC Member
Councillor Musthak Ahmed	OSC Chair
Councillor Abdul Mannan	OSC Member
Councillor Maisha Begum	OSC Member
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury	OSC Member
Councillor Ahmodur Khan	OSC Member
Councillor Sabina Khan	OSC Member
Councillor Nathalie Bienfait	OSC Member
Jahid Ahmed	Co-opted OSC Member
Halima Islam	Co-opted OSC Member
Councillor Ohid Ahmed	Cabinet Member for Safer Communities

Evidence heard from council officers, witnesses and guests:

Ann Corbett	Director of Community Safety
Charles Griggs	Head of Community Safety
Menara Ahmed	Senior VAWG, Domestic Abuse and Hate Crime Manager
Ben Gladstone	Deputy Director of Commissioning of Older People
Rafiqul Hoque	Head of Housing Options
Mila Acharya	Solace Women's Aid
Safia Jama	Women's Inclusive Team

Session two

The second session focussed on women's safety in the public spaces in the borough.

The scope set out the following key questions:

- What are the key issues personal safety that women face when in or using public spaces;
- How are the public authorities addressing the women’s concerns and providing reassurance; and
- What are the gaps and what more could be/needs to be done

Members in attendance:

Councillor Abdul Malik	Scrutiny review session chair and OSC Member
Councillor Musthak Ahmed	OSC Chair
Councillor Abdul Mannan	OSC Member
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury	OSC Member
Councillor Ahmodur Khan	OSC Member
Councillor Sabina Khan	OSC Member
Jahid Ahmed	Co-opted OSC Member
Halima Islam	Co-opted OSC Member
Councillor Ohid Ahmed	Cabinet Member for Safer Communities

Evidence heard from council officers, witnesses and guests:

Keith Stanger	Head of Safer Neighbourhood Operations
Menara Ahmed	Senior VAWG, Domestic Abuse and Hate Crime Manager
Rafiqul Hoque	Head of Housing Options
Tom Lewis	Team Leader, Licensing Services
Sufia Alam MBE	Maryam Centre
Toni Meredith MBE	Account 3
Chief Inspector Jai Singh	Metropolitan Police
Jennie Savage	Public Realm Project Officer

Key Findings and Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Tower Hamlets Councillors to support and champion the ‘more male allies’ agenda and actively promote this across their work

More Male allies needed – Encourage elected members to become Champions and promote this at their member surgeries and joining on walkabouts that are focussed on women’s safety.

The Committee heard evidence from the Cabinet Member and council officers who outlined the safety issues experienced by women from the context of outcomes and service provision. The VAWG

strategy¹ is in year three and sets out the strands for tackling all forms of gender violence and sits alongside the manifesto commitments as well as the strategic plan and charter that the council has published.

The Committee considered the data from a national YouGov² Poll which suggests:

- Three quarters of women (76%) say men in society do not pull their weight in keeping women and girls safe. Men tend to agree (63%).
- Seven in ten women (69%) say the government's efforts are lacking, compared with 59% of men. A majority of women (62%) similarly feel the police are not doing enough, while around half of men (52%) agree.
- 85% of women and 77% of men believe better-lit streets could help improve safety for women, while increased CCTV coverage in public places is also regarded as effective (78% of women vs 65% of men).

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) Annual Residents' Survey also highlights that women feel significantly less safe after dark compared to men.

The Committee also heard evidence from council partners such as the Metropolitan Police on their efforts to improve women's safety and some of the challenges and pressures they faced. The Committee felt it was important to hold a robust discussion which included hearing evidence from the community and engaged representatives from the Women's Inclusive Team; Maryam Centre and Account 3, (local voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations) that offer bespoke support to women in the borough. The Committee noted that the representative's feedback (based on their women services users) suggests a different perception and experience faced by women on feeling safe in public and that there is more work to do by the authorities. The Committee felt that all elected Members should support the council's actions on DA in becoming Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Champions and committing to the educational and training seminars on the topic. Members should also be actively encouraged in joining organised walkabouts that are focussed on women's safety. The Committee also considered and felt that, members should actively promote to male residents (in their wards) to become 'male allies', encourage them to condemn DA within the communities and to challenge misogyny when they see it. Additionally, Members should use the opportunity to raise awareness on the issue when they hold their members surgeries. Finally the Council and its partners should look to improve communication of their commitment to women's safety, for example by advertising on billboards and social media. The Committee believe this would be an important step in building the trust of women in officers and elected members, whether they be men or women, and that public bodies are working to improve women's safety.

Recommendation 2

Increase capacity at schools on raising awareness of DA and support available

The Committee considered and recognised that at a place level, Tower Hamlets has very high levels of DA reports. Since statutory recording began in 2011 the borough has had 14 domestic homicides.

¹ <https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Community-safety-and-emergencies/Domestic-violence/VAWGStrategy2019-24.docx>

² [What would make the UK safer for women, according to women? | YouGov](#)

The Committee noted that there are on average 6000 DA incidents reported to the police each year and that Tower Hamlets was one of the first boroughs to have a DA forum campaigns, training and an extensive women's safety programme thus highlighting several examples of good practice in terms of strategies and approaches.

The national YouGov poll also indicated that 81% of women see value in schools teaching boys about acceptable and respectable behaviour towards women and that 69% of men see value in the initiative.

The committee heard evidence that children are often the "hidden victims" of domestic abuse as many agencies focus upon the needs of adults. However, evidence has shown that there are significant implications for children in the household, for example if a woman needs to be placed in a refuge this will often involve placing the children there as well and brings its own challenges for child. The Committee considered evidence that for many women, the school might be the only outlet they visit without their abusive partner and therefore it is important that schools offer a supportive and safe environment for women facing DA.

The Committee recommends that the education and information services being provided to schools and youth services be increased to ensure that young people are aware of DA so that they are able to report it and that they should educate boys and girls to prevent the cycle of violence from continuing to the next generation.

Recommendation 3

The Council to review current funding arrangements and increase the capacity to support women's groups that offer domestic abuse services to the community.

The Committee felt that priority needs to be given to tackling DA as Tower Hamlets has one of the highest levels of reported DA in London. The Committee recognised examples of the good work being carried out in the community by voluntary sector organisations and felt that that the council could and should do more to support local community organisations that offer services DA services. Examples of such services include, but are not limited to, the following

- Signposting to specialist services
- Targeted training, outreach and awareness
- Multi-lingual communications and focus groups
- Economic abuse programmes
- Moving outreach services to groups where women in the community feel safe – e.g. women's spaces mosques

The Committee also heard evidence from VCS organisations who indicated that in recent years women who are victims of DA value the safe space that the women's groups can offer. The Committee noted that many of the people who need this support the most, are often people considered as 'hard to reach' by statutory agencies such as the Council or the Police. These are often individuals or groups that find it difficult to use (or are distrustful of) these services, such as those with an impairment, language or different cultural norms. Another example that was highlighted to the Committee was during the National Government's lockdown policy cause by the pandemic, where women living with perpetrators of DA were unable to leave their home for counselling

sessions, that many women were more comfortable having telephone counselling sessions with VCS organisations rather than contacting authorities, with one group reporting that their counselling sessions increased from 176 in 2019 to 797 in 2020.

Recommendation 4

The council and partners to collaborate to improve the awareness of women of the programmes and help available directly that support women's safety on the streets.

The Committee noted that extensive work had been done in regards to welfare and vulnerability training for licensees and their staff operating in the night-time economy including schemes such as 'pub watch' that provide information on how women can stay safe while in the night-time economy environment. Despite this the Committee noted that some activities to raise awareness, like the 'walk and talk' event have had a low uptake.

The Committee recommends that more dedicated and consistent communications from the Council and its partners is needed to ensure the women of Tower Hamlets expand their awareness of available support. Also the Committee recommends that the Council engage third-sector organisations to improve the engagement of people from communities that are considered hard to reach.

Recommendation 5

Improve self-defence access to women and girls as a form of self-protection

A recent report by the Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee (CESSC)³ highlighted the concerns from a range of witnesses on women and girls' safety in public spaces being a barrier to their participation with sports borough wide. This Committee also heard evidence from a number of women's group witnesses that raised their concerns about women's access to self-defence classes to help them feel safer in public spaces. The Committee recommended that the Council works with local provisions in improving access to self-defence classes. The Committee also suggests that the Council could benefit from considering this alongside the proposed recommendations from the CESSC report on increasing women and girls' access and participation in sports.

3

<https://democracy.towerhamlets.gov.uk/documents/s212384/Appendix.%201%20for%20Increasing%20wome n%20and%20girls%20access%20and%20participation%20with%20sports%20provision%20and%20physic.pdf>

Recommendation 6

The Police/THEOs to actively target their recruitment and retention strategy for recruiting representative women from the community in Tower Hamlets

The Committee heard evidence from the Metropolitan Police on the work they are doing to improve women's safety. This included:

A review by the police on the most effective way to police vice hotspots. The Committee noted that many women involved in selling sex on the street have complex vulnerabilities which make them more likely to be victims of crimes committed by men and may not to report these crimes. The "Pizza with police" initiative was set up as way for the women (who are residents at the Riverside Hostel) to build trust and confidence with police engagement.

Welfare and Vulnerability Engagement (WAVE) Training/Ask for Angela campaign - This training is recommended for those working in the licensed industry providing them a crucial awareness of people's vulnerability and their responsibilities towards people visiting their premises. It enables them to identify interventions that assist in preventing and reducing harm to vulnerable people in licensed premises and VAWG type offences such as drink spiking.

With Women We Run – is a partnership initiative by the police with Adidas who organise a women's-only running group on a Wednesday evening. The aim of the initiative is to increase women's confidence whilst running and this primarily targets individuals who call out remarks when women are running.

Walk and Talk - These are an opportunity for women to meet with their local officers and show them areas that they feel unsafe and talk about past experiences.

The Project Vigilant initiative is part of Tower Hamlets Police's response to concerns about the safety of women and girls. The police use this initiative to prevent and deter predatory offending in the night-time economy. Teams of uniformed and plain clothed officers will be working together to make the area a hostile place for predatory offenders.

The Committee noted these positive initiatives, however, the Committee expressed their concerns that many women in Tower Hamlets were just not aware of the 'Ask for Angela' campaign, or the other work being done. This raised questions on how effective the campaign had been. Furthermore, in light of several national high-profile incidents of police failing to protect women, both Members and women's group representatives raised their concern that there is a lack of confidence in the police from women that are victims of DA including women from communities that are not well represented in the local police force.

The Committee recommends that more active work needs to be and should be done to recruit women as police officer and Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers (THEOs). They added that there should be a drive to particularly focus on recruiting women from communities that represent the demography of the borough and ensuring that women from Black Asian and Multi Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds are made to feel comfortable and at ease to report issues regarding both DA and their safety in public spaces. The Committee also felt that the Council should consider ways to support the police in their efforts demonstrate police accountability on transparency and restoring public

confidence in the Metropolitan Police, such as making the police service more representative of the community they serve in the borough.

Recommendation 7

The Council and RSL partners should work closely to tackle women safety issues on RSL estates.

Whilst funding remains available for improving street infrastructure and work is currently being done to improve the public spaces in Tower Hamlets the Committee scrutinised if residents are truly aware of how they can report in dangerous areas where improvements should be made. Examples of such improvements are:

- better street lighting;
- installing CCTV;
- designing areas in such a way as to enhance natural surveillance;
- not allowing street furniture to be positioned in a way whereby people can hide and removing unnecessary clutter; and
- safety improvement at public transport areas like bus stop, railway stations and crossing points on roads; and safety in public parks.

The committee also recommends that the Council works with RSL in implementing Recommendation 4 and that RSLs and the Council provide better information on how to report and suggest improvement to areas of estates that are potential places of danger to women.

Conclusion

This scrutiny review provided the OSC an opportunity to scrutinise women's safety in the borough. It is clear to the Committee (from the evidence heard) that women in Tower Hamlets still face various threats to their safety both from DA and in public spaces across the borough.

The Committee noted that in the main Tower Hamlets Council works well with the police, local business and community groups to ensure that women in Tower Hamlets are safe and secure. The Council has over the years implemented a range of initiatives to improve the safety of women, including improved street lighting, CCTV, the Safer Neighbourhood Teams and running campaigns to raise awareness around personal safety. The Council also has a good relationship and work closely with organisations such as Victim Support, Refuge and Women's Aid who provide crucial and timely advice and support to women in Tower Hamlets.

However, despite the above the Committee made seven recommendations and felt that more could and should be done to scale up the support for women in the borough on women's safety issues including the council working with the police and local stakeholders dedicating focus to improving access and developing services that meet the needs of women in our borough. The Committee hopes the Mayor and Cabinet take forward our recommendations and work with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to ensure we have a safer borough for women in Tower Hamlets.

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Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2022-23



Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2022-23

I am pleased to introduce this year's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) annual report 2022-23. This provides a summary of the activities undertaken by OSC and its Sub-Committees.

With a new political administration in place since May 2022, who began the year by setting new strategic goals and ambitions for the council, such as tackling the cost-of-living crisis as many residents continue to face a squeeze on living standards and high inflation and high energy costs, OSC and its Sub-Committees focused its scrutiny on areas of strategic priority to ensure resident concerns were reflected.

Significantly, we reviewed the council's proposed budget 2023-24 that sets out an ambitious plan to protect residents in time of hardship, fund the delivery of key services and introduce investments

The best of London
in one borough

Chair's Foreword

to support social and local economic change.

OSC held key scrutiny spotlights on issues such as the challenges around waste services and level of recycling in the borough. We held a spotlight with the new borough commander, and examined his priorities focussing on some of the issues that residents have raised such as women's safety and seeking reassurance how the police intends to rebuild the relationship with the community.

OSC reviewed budget and policy items and fed into policy development, including Youth Justice Annual Plan and council's statutory responsibility on Gambling Policy.

We also held spotlights on Customer Services, reviewing the progress and improvements made to date.

We focussed on the environment and held a spotlight Climate Emergency and Street and Parks Cleanliness. As part of ongoing governance, we reviewed the progress of service action plans on air quality, swimming provision in the borough and parking.

Our committee has developed a short film to present some of the highlights that the OSC and its scrutiny Sub-Committees focussed on. I encourage you all to view this film and find out more about our work and how you can get involved in Scrutiny.

Finally I'd like to thank my 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.



**Cllr Musthak Ahmed, Chair of
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**





Highlights

- 25 Scrutiny Meetings (including Sub-Committees)
- 24 Scrutiny Spotlights
- 3 Scrutiny Reviews and 2 Challenge Sessions
- 2 Call ins
- 28 OSC Action requests
- 37 Recommendations across all Committees
- 3 Tracking recommendations reports
- Site visits included Bywaters Materials

Recycling Facility, Food Banks in Tower Hamlets, Refuge for Domestic Violence Victims, Care leavers Through Care Services and Foster Carers, GP practices and Royal London Hospital,

Scrutiny of Council's Budget

OSC made the following recommendations to the Mayor In Cabinet consideration:

Recommendation 1
Devise a financial strategy that delivers a sustainable budget without the need to rely on reserves

Recommendation 2
Provide the pro formas detailing growth and saving proposals in sufficient time for OSC to review as part of its budget scrutiny

Recommendation 3
Explore increasing Education Maintenance Allowance for those children above the threshold – even if only temporary during the cost of living crisis

Recommendation 4
Review funding arrangements for Resident Support Scheme.

For more details on the scrutiny of the council's budget and to read the

full report please see below:

[Budget Scrutiny Report](#)





Key Activities

The Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee (CESSC) held a number of spotlights focusing on improvements for Youth Justice Service, plans to help increase educational attainment, and reviewed the council's progress against the statement of action for the SEND Inspection in 2021

The Sub-Committee also reviewed the performance of Youth Provision and increasing capacity for girls.

The Sub-Committee also undertook a number of site visits through the year to better understand

the key issues and challenges of the borough. This included visiting local schools, meeting care leavers, foster carers for social care demand and SEND young people.

The Sub-Committee held a scrutiny challenge session which considered how the council and its partners can improve women and girls access and participation with sports and physical activities in the borough.

The committee made the six following recommendations on community engagement, affordability, campaign and publicity, female friendly infrastructure,

quality monitoring and intelligence capture and audit and women and girls safe routes to sports provision and physical Activities.

For more details on the scrutiny of the scrutiny challenge session see below:

[Challenge Session Report on Women and Girls access to Sports Provision](#)



**Cllr Bodrul Choudhury,
Chair of Children and
Education Scrutiny Sub-
Committee**





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Key Activities

The Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee(HASSC) held a number of spotlights including Integrated Care Systems delivery plans, improving access to GP services, and the performance of Adult Oral and Dental Health. Reviewing Black and Multi Ethnic inequalities on access to mental health services.

The Sub-Committee also undertook a scrutiny review examining the issues around work force shortages across the health and workforce sector in the borough and identified a number of issues including:

- The impact of cost of living and the pressures on doctors, nurses and other health professionals
- Recruitment processes often being bureaucratic Ageing workforce and the perceptual challenges of the sector not having parity particularly in social care
- A lack of clear data on workforce projections required to meet the demand
- Lack of collaboration between the health and local education establishments to promote careers with the health sector

communications campaigns used to drive recruitment and engage the community with opportunities

The committee will produce recommendations to address some of these challenges.

The Sub-Committee also undertook a number visits to GP services to understand the issues with access to appointments. Members also engaged with ASC practice week to understand hospital discharging services.

The Sub-Committee was also represented at quarterly Inner North East London Joint Health

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (INEL JHOSC), reviewing some of the regional issues faced including ones that impact Tower Hamlets such as the workings of the Integrated Care System and its decision making.



Cllr Ahmodur Khan,
Chair of Health and
Adults Scrutiny Sub-
Committee





Key Activities

The Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee (HRSSC) focussed their attention on reviewing the approach and support for homeless applications, and held spotlights covering topics such as parking on estates, approach to regeneration, Change in Private Sector Tenants rights and Developing a new local plan

The HRSSC held a scrutiny challenge session which considered the proposed consultation to bring housing management service back in house.

The challenge session help to identify the following recommendations:

The term ' tenancy' be added before conditions to make It clear to residents that there will be no change to their tenancy conditions

All questions to be asked of residents should include the options of a third possible response either: ' Don't know' Not sure or 'Undecided'

That the Frequently Ask Questions (FAQ) should emphasise the accountability for continuous improvement of service delivery in the new proposals,

that consultation with the staff of THH will need to be part of this process and to get the most out of the consultation, the council should consider using telephone surveys to garner residents views.

More details on the challenge session report findings is below: [THH Consultation Challenge Session](#)



Clive Mannan Chair of Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee





Key Activities

The economic downturn had a profound impact on local residents already impacted by rising energy prices, inflation and cost of living crisis.

As scrutiny lead for Finance and Resources, I held a scrutiny review on food insecurity in the borough.

The review focussed on understanding the extent to which food poverty is affecting local residents and contributing factors,

Also considered current food model provisions and accessibility, and how sustainable the council's plans to tackle

the issues are. The review led itself to engaging with a diverse range of stakeholders, including those who received support from food banks. It also offered opportunity to undertake site visits to understand the context and demand.

The scrutiny review led to the following themes for recommendations:

- Improving communication on support provisions, developing an up to date directory of accessible services
- Make longer term funding commitment for LBTH food hubs.

- Support growth and sustainability of independent food aid networks
- Develop dignified approaches to access food
- Opening up food aid provisions in evening and weekends
- Improving quality of secondary school food provision
- Work with foodbanks to improve nutritional value
- Improving residents employment opportunities to better employment

- Develop relations to private sector to secure funding to tackle food insecurity

More details on the Scrutiny review report [below \(add link\)](#)



Cllr Sabina Khan
Scrutiny Lead for
Finance and Resources





Key Activities

As the scrutiny lead for Environment and Community Safety, I carried out a number of estate walkabouts with the cabinet lead member and local police to understand some of the key issues on community safety

Over the last few years women safety has come to light becoming a significant issue for the borough

I held a scrutiny review, examining the level of provision and support for women safety, this included undertaking a site visit to one of the main women's refuge to

better understand some of the challenges and barriers that victims of domestic abuse and violence (DV) face

The scrutiny review considered the level of support for DV victims as this was significantly reported to the police in Tower Hamlets

The review also considered some of the challenges women face in feeling safe in public spaces and with the night time economy

The review led to a number of recommendations and include areas such as:

Councillors supporting

and promoting and championing 'more male allies' agenda

- Increasing schools capacity on raising DV awareness and available support
- Review current funding arrangements and increase capacity to support women's group
- Greater collaboration to improve women awareness programmes and support available for street safety
- Improve provision for women self defence

- Police to target its recruitment and retention focusing on representation
- Council and RSL to collaborate on women safety issues on RSL estates



Cllr Abdul Malik
Scrutiny Lead for
Environment and
Community Safety



Non-Executive Report of the: Overview & Scrutiny Committee 24 April 2023	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Janet Fasan, Director Legal and Monitoring Officer	Classification: Open (Unrestricted)
Appointment of Co-opted Members to Scrutiny Committee and Sub Committees	

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

Executive Summary

The Committee is asked to note the recruitment process for two of co-opted member roles and agree that the selected candidates be appointed to the Health Adults Scrutiny-Sub-Committee.

Recommendations:

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Agree the appointment of the persons listed in the table at paragraph 3.5 to the co-opted positions indicated, subject to any necessary pre-appointment checks in line with the Council’s current approach.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 To appoint persons to co-opted roles on the Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules and the relevant terms or reference.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The Committee could decide not to appoint one or more of the proposed persons. This is not recommended as it would weaken community involvement in scrutiny at LBTH.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

Introduction

- 3.1 As was reported to the Committee in June 2022, the Local Government Act 2000 provides that the Committee and its sub-committees may include persons who are not members of the Council. The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and the terms of reference for the Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee together provide that scrutiny at LBTH to include the following 2 co-opted member roles:
- a) Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub Committee has two co-opted members – a resident representative and a representative nominated from Healthwatch Tower Hamlets (see paragraph 3.3 below).
- 3.2 An open recruitment process has been undertaken to select preferred candidates for a resident representative on the Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee. This report advises of the outcome of this process and asks the Committee to formally appoint the selected preferred candidates.
- 3.3 The Council's scrutiny arrangements also provide for the appointment of the Healthwatch Tower Hamlets nominee to the Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub Committee.

Recruitment of Scrutiny Co-optees 2023

- 3.4 Following an unsuccessful recruitment round in 2022, an open, competitive recruitment process was undertaken in early 2023 to select the preferred candidate for the Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub Committee resident representative. An advert promoting the roles was put on the Council's website and the roles were also advertised through social media. Shortlisting and interviews for the role as a resident representative on the Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee was undertaken by a dedicated mixed interview panel including the Chair of the Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee and officers.
- 3.5 As a result of the selection process, Assan Ali was selected as the preferred candidate for the role of resident representative following an open and competitive recruitment exercise. In addition, Healthwatch Tower Hamlets have nominated Nicola Lawrence to the Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub Committee. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is therefore asked to formally appoint these two individuals (listed below) to the co-opted roles indicated for the period of the current administration.

Body	Role	Co-optee
Health And Adults Sub	Resident rep	Assan Ali
Health And Adults Sub	Healthwatch Tower Hamlets	Nicola Lawrence

- 3.6 The Council's Code of Conduct for Members applies to scrutiny co-optees. Training will be provided by officers to the co-opted representatives on the Code of Conduct which will include declarations of interest, exempt reports, and data protection.
- 3.7 The Council has established pre-appointment checks for co-opted members. These checks must be completed before appointment is confirmed. At time of agenda publication, not all checks had been fully resolved. The Committee is therefore asked to agree the appointments subject to satisfactory conclusion of all pre-appointment checks.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The open, competitive recruitment process has been designed to encourage applicants from a broad range of different backgrounds and interests within the local community. This is consistent with the aim of recognising and promoting the Council's equality duty. The appointment of co-opted members also brings local people's views to those discussions on issues of concern to local people, including services provided by other organisations. This helps to strengthen local community leadership, independent from Tower Hamlets Council.

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 The Council's Code of Conduct for Members applies to scrutiny co-optees. Training will be provided by officers to the co-opted representatives on the Code of Conduct which will include declarations of interest, exempt reports, and data protection.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 This report provides an update on the selection of co-opted representatives for the Committee and its sub-committees and asks the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to endorse the candidates selected.

6.2 Co-opted representatives are entitled to claim an attendance allowance of £136 per meeting. This will be funded within existing budget.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 Pursuant to section 9FA (4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 2000, an overview and scrutiny committee of a local authority, or any sub-committee of such a committee, may include persons who are not members of the authority. Only members of the local authority are entitled to vote at a overview and scrutiny committee, or any sub-committee of such a committee meeting, except where this is permitted under Schedule A1 to the Act.

7.2 Paragraph 11 of Schedule A1 permits a Local Authority to allow a co-opted representative to the Committee or sub-committee to vote in accordance with a scheme. The Council's Constitution permits the appointment of a Muslim representative to the Education sub-committee and for that representative to vote on education matters only.

7.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules provides that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be responsible for agreeing the appointment of co-opted representatives. This report is asking for the Committee to approve the appointment of two (2) co-opted representatives to the Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee and such request is within the Committees powers. Until such time as the Committee approves the appointment, the co-opted representatives cannot sit on the Committee.

7.4 When taking action, the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (the public sector equality duty).

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:

David Knight, Democratic Services Team (Committee)

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<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Dan Jones, Divisional Director Public Realm</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Parking Challenge Session – update on recommendations</p>	

Executive Summary

This report provides a progress update on the recommendations of the scrutiny challenge session on December 2021 on “the extent to which the council’s parking permit policy influences people’s behaviour”.

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the progress made on addressing the recommendations arising from the parking scrutiny challenge report “the extent to which the councils parking permit policy influences people’s behaviour”.
2. Note the intention to develop a new parking enforcement plan.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The Council’s constitution requires the Executive to respond to the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 N/A, this report is to update scrutiny on their recommendations.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 Overview and scrutiny produced a challenge session report in December 2021 entitled ‘*the extent to which the council’s parking permit policy influences behaviour*’.
- 3.2 The challenge session was underpinned by the following four questions:
 - How will the council manage the future demand for parking provision with the projected population growth and also support post pandemic business growth?

- How will the council continue to maintain its current levels of parking surplus given the extrinsic change factors
- How has the council encouraged residents and businesses to switch to EV's and ensure they understand the implications for ULEZ expansion schemes and any insights that helps to understand resident behaviour and receptiveness to change, particularly those from lower economic background?
- What has been the feedback from residents to date? How well is the transfer scheme working and level of monitoring in place to detect and manage online fraud?

3.3 Eight recommendations were made and the service produced an action plan to address those recommendations which was approved at Cabinet in March 2022.

Recommendations

Ref	Recommendation	Update
R1	<p>That the parking and mobility service reviews the parking and permit policies to ensure that:</p> <p>a) it embeds a documented approach such as a Parking Enforcement Plan for policies such as pricing, control parking zones, permit schemes and manage the highway and parking demand; and</p> <p>b) it should also detail how these relate to the other council priorities such as climate change, air quality and liveable street and school streets.</p>	<p>Recommendations one, three and six will be addressed through the refresh of the Parking Enforcement Plan. Reviewing the Parking Enforcement Plan (PEP) is a Mayoral pledge. A consultation is currently being procured to deliver the PEP. The award to the successful bidder is expected in the next week or so with an expected start of May 2023.</p> <p>There are currently 350 charging points in the borough made up of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23 Source London fast charging points • 179 Siemens-Ubitricity slow charging points installed on lighting columns • 148 Char.gy slow charging points installed on lighting columns (5kw charging).
R3	<p>That the Parking and Mobility Service considers ensuring EV charging points have a maximum stay policy in place to facilitate capacity for others to charge</p>	
R6	<p>That the Parking and Mobility Services considers the option of setting its emission-based pricing policy over a longer period (for example three years) to help influence buyer behaviour and make the change towards lower emission vehicles.</p>	
R2	<p>That the Parking and Mobility Service consider the following options to better utilise available parking space and incorporate health impact assessments alongside equality considerations to understand the impact they will have on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing business permit spaces where feasible and how multi-use bays can be better utilised to support the post pandemic economic recovery; 	
		<p>Delivering an additional 1,000 parking spaces over the next four years is a Mayoral pledge. Parking services have surveyed zone c identifying approximately 228 new spaces. Zone D now currently being surveyed. Cabinet Member receiving regular progress updates.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective use of removal of individual space markings within bays (where there is a high footfall and demand for parking) to support capacity within a limited footprint; and • Selective application for increasing the use of kerb parking where footways are unusually wide, increasing carriageway width and in some cases allowing the removal of yellow lines (where there is a high footfall and demand for parking) to support capacity within a limited footprint. 	
R4	That the Parking and Mobility Service reviews the current Permit Transfer Scheme and should include assessing flexibility for residents who may need a short break from vehicle ownership without it impacting their right of accessing the permit when they choose to purchase the vehicle	This has been implemented as part of the changes to the permit transfer scheme. The proposed changes to the permit transfer scheme improve the flexibility of the scheme. Residents who may need a short break from vehicle ownership now have the right to access the PTS when they are ready to purchase the vehicle, and therefore residents will be able to apply even if their current permit has expired.
R5	That the Parking and Mobility Services uses a targeted approach via CEO monitoring activities to address hotspot areas and co-ordinate with ASB and Enforcement officers to use sanctions where necessary such as ASB orders and temporary use CCTVs to act as deterrence, meet compliance and incentivise behavior change	The service is not legally able to use CCTV, however it will continue to work with the ASB team and CCTV to target the hotspots, to meet compliance and incentivize behavior change and address ASB on the public highway
R7	That the Parking and Mobility Service considers expanding the use of car clubs (EV's) as a single borough wide solution for the council, thus reducing further need for costly public service permits and encourage other large employer partners within the	Work to improve local car clubs is a Mayoral pledge. There are two main car club providers operating in Tower Hamlets. Across the borough there are currently around 80 dedicated car club bays. We are working with car club providers to introduce a number of dedicated car

	borough to sign up with the scheme such as home care providers (R7)	club vehicles for sole use of council officers between Monday-Friday and for public use at the weekends. We are reviewing the service level agreements for car clubs. We are undertaking a benchmarking exercise with other local authorities is being undertaken to support our negotiations. Fees have been reduced from £1,367 to £1,000 per car per year to support car club viability in the borough
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Appendices

- None

Officer contact details for documents:**Dan Jones, Director of Public Realm****Mick Darby, Head of Parking**

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The extent to which the council's parking permit policy influences behaviour

Update on scrutiny recommendations

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

March 2023

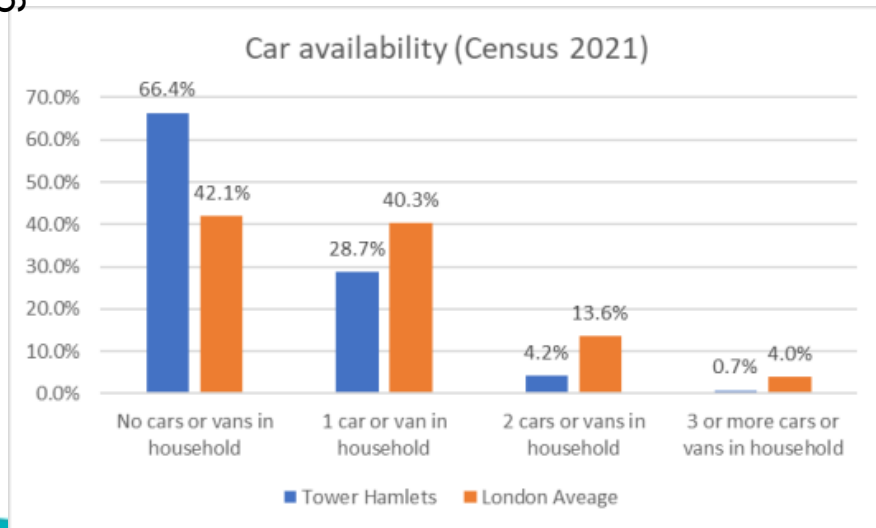


Introduction



- 66.4% of households in the borough do not own any cars/vehicles
- 3rd highest proportion of households that do not own a vehicle (behind City of London and Islington)
- 90% of residents owning a vehicle has reduced by 3.4 percentage points since 2011.

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- 27,500 marked bays for vehicle use of which 24,900 are available for residents to park.

- 24,800 active permits



Permit Types	No. of active permits	% of active permits
Resident Permit	21,322	86.01%
Resident Permit (Blue Badge Holders)	2,539	10.24%
Resident Permit Transfer Scheme	810	3.27%
Resident Permit for Decantees	120	0.48%
Grand Total	24,791	100.00%

- 81,198 PCNs issued in 2020-21.



Scrutiny review background



- Scrutiny review in December 2021 entitled ***the extent to which the council's parking permit policy influences behaviour***
- Underpinned by the following questions:
 1. How will the council manage the future demand for parking provision with the projected population growth and also support post pandemic business growth?
 2. How will the council continue to maintain its current levels of parking surplus given the extrinsic change factors
 3. How has the council encouraged residents and businesses to switch to EV's and ensure they understand the implications for ULEZ expansion schemes and any insights that helps to understand resident behaviour and receptiveness to change, particularly those from lower economic background?
 4. What has been the feedback from residents to date? How well is the transfer scheme working and level of monitoring in place to detect and manage online fraud?
- Scrutiny made seven recommendations. An action plan to address the recommendations was approved at Cabinet in March 2022
- This presentation provides an update on the progress made in addressing the recommendations



Recommendations



R1 That the parking and mobility service reviews the parking and permit policies to ensure that:

- a) it embeds a documented approach such as a Parking Enforcement Plan for policies such as pricing, control parking zones, permit schemes and manage the highway and parking demand; and
- b) it should also detail how these relate to the other council priorities such as climate change, air quality and liveable street and school streets.

R6 That the Parking and Mobility Services considers the option of setting its emission-based pricing policy over a longer period (for example three years) to help influence buyer behaviour and make the change towards lower emission vehicles.

Update

- New Parking Enforcement Plan (PEP) will address this
 - PEP closing date for advert advertising for tenders was 14 March 2023. After the closing date we will evaluate and score the bids.
 - Estimated contract start date is May 2023
- Reviewing PEP is a Mayoral pledge



Recommendations

R2 That the Parking and Mobility Service consider the following options to better utilise available parking space and incorporate health impact assessments alongside equality considerations to understand the impact they will have on:

- Page 9 of 19
- (a) Reviewing business permit spaces where feasible and how multi-use bays can be better utilised to support the post pandemic economic recovery;
 - (b) Selective use of removal of individual space markings within bays (where there is a high footfall and demand for parking) to support capacity within a limited footprint; and
 - (c) Selective application for increasing the use of kerb parking where footways are unusually wide, increasing carriageway width and in some cases allowing the removal of yellow lines (where there is a high footfall and demand for parking) to support capacity within a limited footprint.

Update

Mayoral pledge: 1,000 additional parking spaces over next four years.

- Staff surveying streets to identify potential locations for additional places.
- Options include removing individual bay dividers
- A survey for zone c has been completed and we have identified approximately 228 new spaces.



Recommendations

R3 That the Parking and Mobility Service considers ensuring EV charging points have a maximum stay policy in place to facilitate capacity for others to charge

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Update

- EV charging points will be looked at as part of the new parking enforcement plan
- There are currently **350** charging points in the borough made up of:
 - 23 Source London fast charging points
 - 179 Siemens-Ubitricity slow charging points installed on lighting columns
 - 148 Char.gy slow charging points installed on lighting columns (5kw charging).



Recommendations



R4: That the Parking and Mobility Service reviews the current Permit Transfer Scheme and should include assessing flexibility for residents who may need a short break from vehicle ownership without it impacting their right of accessing the permit when they choose to purchase the vehicle.

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R5 That the Parking and Mobility Services uses a targeted approach via CEO monitoring activities to address hotspot areas and co-ordinate with ASB and Enforcement officers to use sanctions where necessary such as ASB orders and temporary use CCTVs to act as deterrence, meet compliance and incentivise behavior change.

Update

- Due to be considered as part of the permit transfer scheme report to the cabinet.

Update

- Not legally able to use CCTV, however we continue to work with other services to address ASB on the public highway.



Recommendations



R7 That the Parking and Mobility Service considers expanding the use of car clubs (EV's) as a single borough wide solution for the council, thus reducing further need for costly public service permits and encourage other large employer partners within the borough to sign up with the scheme such as home care providers

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Update

- Working with car clubs is a Mayoral pledge
- We are working with car club providers to introduce a number of dedicated car club vehicles for sole use of LBTH officers Monday-Friday and public use at weekends.
- Benchmarking exercise with other LAs undertaken to supporting negotiations
- Fees have been reduced from £1,367 to £1,000 per car per year to support car club viability in the borough



Mayoral pledge progress update



1. Review car parking permit transfer scheme – on track

- The PTS review has concluded and made recommendations that have now been combined with the car free zones pledge. This is now under review and will follow the democratic process to Cabinet.

2. Create 1,000 parking spaces over four years – on track

- As part of the four-year plan for this mayoral pledge we have carried out a survey for zone c and Identified approximately 228 spaces.

3. Reintroduction of four main parent zones [completed]

- The reintroduction of the parent zones went live from 01/02/2023 residents were notified prior to go live by website and an email sent out to resident permit holders.



Mayoral pledge progress update



4. Review car-free zones to ensure those who require vehicles for work are not priced out of the local area

- The PTS review has concluded and made recommendations that have now been combined with the car free zones pledge. This is now under review and will follow the democratic process to Cabinet.

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5. Work to improve local car clubs – on track

- Introduction of new car clubs around the new town hall for officer's use Monday to Friday and public use on the weekends. Working with car club providers to carry out more comms on promoting their use.

6. 1-hour free parking for customers stopping to shop at our markets [completed]

- Implemented from 1st February 2023



How Overview and Scrutiny can help?



- Contribute to supporting the development of the parking enforcement plan
- Help to promote the use of car clubs as a sustainable means of transport and alternative to owning a vehicle



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