

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda

Tuesday, 9 July 2024 at 6.30 p.m.
Council Chamber - Town Hall, Whitechapel

Members:

Chair: Councillor Jahed Choudhury

Vice Chair: Councillor Bodrul Choudhury

Councillor Suluk Ahmed, Councillor Ahmodur Khan, Councillor Abdul Mannan, Councillor Bellal Uddin, Councillor Sabina Akhtar, Councillor Amina Ali, Councillor Asma Islam, Councillor Amy Lee and Councillor Nathalie Bienfait

Co-opted Members:

Jahid Ahmed and Halima Islam

Substitutes: Councillor Ahmodul Kabir, Councillor Saif Uddin Khaled, Councillor Amin Rahman, Councillor Maisha Begum, Councillor Mufeedah Bustin, Councillor Marc Francis and Councillor James King

[The quorum for this body is 3 voting Members]

Contact for further enquiries:

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



Public Information

Viewing or Participating in Committee Meetings

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A Guide to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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

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

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

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

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

The committee's quorum is three voting members.

Public Engagement

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

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 9 July 2024

6.30 p.m.

SECTION ONE

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

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

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

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

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

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES (PAGES 9 - 14)

To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21 May 2024.

4. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE QUERY AND ACTION LOG

5. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

No decisions of the Mayor in Cabinet were 'called in'.

6. REQUESTS TO HEAR PETITIONS

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



7. REVISED SCRUTINY LEAD PORTFOLIO AREAS (PAGES 15 - 18)

Note the revised scrutiny lead portfolio areas

8. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT

8.1 Corporate Restructure (Pages 19 - 38)

To review and apply critical friend challenge to the proposed restructur

9. Women's Safety Action Plan Response Progress (Update) (PAGES 39 - 58)

Track the implementation of recommendations from the scrutiny challenge session on Women's Safety.

10. Work Plan and Scrutiny Improvement Plan Update (PAGES 59 - 84)

Receive an update from scrutiny leads on work planning

11. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

12. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS

13. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF UNRESTRICTED CABINET PAPERS

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

14. FORTHCOMING DECISIONS

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

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

16. 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



Tower Hamlets Council
Tower Hamlets Town Hall
160 Whitechapel Road
London E1 1BJ

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

17. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the restricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on

18. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

No decisions of the Mayor in Cabinet (... date ...) in respect of exempt/ confidential reports on the agenda were 'called in'.

19. 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).

20. 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

Tuesday, 23 July 2024 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.

APPENDIX A: Definition of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

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

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

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD AT 18:34 ON TUESDAY, 21 MAY 2024

COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL

Members Present in Person:

Councillor Jahed Choudhury
Councillor Suluk Ahmed
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury
Councillor Ahmodur Khan
Councillor Abdul Mannan
Councillor Bellal Uddin
Councillor Sabina Akhtar
Councillor Asma Islam
Councillor Amina Ali
Councillor Amy Lee
Councillor Nathalie Bienfait

Other Councillors Present in Person:

Mayor Lutfur Rahman

Co-optees Present in Person:

Halima Islam
Jahed Ahmed

Officers Present in Person:

Stephen Halsey	(Chief Executive)
Julie Lorraine	(Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director for Resources)
Robin Beattie	(Director of Strategy, Transformation & Improvement)
Matthew Mannion	(Head of Democratic Services)
Afazul Hoque	(Head of Corporate Strategy & Communities)
Daniel Kerr	(Strategy and Policy Lead)
Thomas French	(Democratic Services Officer (Committees))

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received from members.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST AND OTHER INTERESTS

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

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

The Chair Moved and it was:-

RESOLVED

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22 April 2024 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings.

4. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2024-2025

Cllr Bodrul Choudhury was elected Vice Chair.

5. MAYOR'S SPOTLIGHT

The Mayor gave a presentation on the Council's year end delivery and presented the priorities for 2024-25, with Stephen Halsey, Chief Executive and Julie Lorraine, Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director for Resources.

The committee raised the following comments and questions:

- What will the governance be for Tower Hamlets Homes? Will there be any instability within the insourcing? The Mayor confirmed that he is pleased with the officer planning around the insourcing, to allow for minimal instability in the service. Officers confirmed that senior management from Tower Hamlets Homes did not join the council in the transition and there will be a management restructure. The insourcing will improve housing within the borough, including homelessness.
- Customer service is at the heart of how the council deals with residents. How do you feel the council has grown in this area and what can be improved? The Mayor stated that the customer journey is still not where it should be. But plans have been put in place to ensure that residents will see improvement.
- What plans are being put in place to deal with homelessness in the borough? The Mayor stated the current homelessness prevention plan, including two different grants to help and support residents and families. Additional funding has been placed to invest in additional front line staff to help with housing issues. The council is currently acquiring homes, 100s per year, which will help with finding places for residents to live. Officers detailed the funding that is available, which amount to £6.35M in support for residents.

- Will the council be opening a serious case review, based on a recent family court case, which saw patterns of serious domestic abuse? The Mayor stated that the case will be reviewed and the council will do everything necessary to see improvement in this area.
- What are the key challenges the council is facing and what is the council doing to tackle these challenges? The Mayor reflected on various issues affecting the council, like adult social care, and tackling homelessness and funding for youth services. But if the council works to its savings plan, it can deliver on the services that residents need.
- Recycling and waste collections are not where they should be, what is the council doing to address this? The Mayor highlighted the current investment in waste collection. Officers detailed investment of £5M of a work program to address recycling and waste issues in the borough.
- What are the current plans to ensure that council becomes a council of sanctuary. The Mayor stated that council will be actioning this work as soon as possible and its important to become a council of sanctuary.
- Can the committee be given an update on the recent housing options protests and what the council has done to meet with them and action concerns raised. Officers confirmed that the group has been met with and updates will be sent to committee as casework has been resolved.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the presentation.

6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Establishment of Scrutiny Lead Members, Sub-Committees and Appointment of Members 2024/25

Matthew Mannion Head of Democratic Services presented the Establishment of Scrutiny Lead Members, Sub-Committees and Appointment of Members 2024/25.

Councillor Bellal Uddin was elected Scrutiny Lead for Adults and Health Services (including Chairing the Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee)

Councillor Abdul Mannan was elected Scrutiny Lead for Children & Education (including Chairing the Children & Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee).

Councillor Bodrul Choudhury was elected Scrutiny Lead for Housing and Regeneration (including Chairing the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee).

Councillor Amhadour Rahman was elected Scrutiny Lead for Resources

Councillor Suluk Ahmed was elected Scrutiny Lead for Community Safety

Members of the committee agreed to add a new scrutiny lead portfolio. Councillor Nathalie Bienfiet was elected Environment and the Climate Emergency.

RESOLVED:

Members agreed to the recommendations within the report.

7. REVISED STATUTORY GUIDANCE FOR COUNCILS ON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Afazul Hoque, Head of Corporate Strategy & Communities, presented Revised statutory guidance for councils on Overview and Scrutiny.

The committee raised the following comments and questions:

- Members expressed interest for scrutiny leads to hold events with residents to engage on a range of issues.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the updated guidance within the report.

8. FORTHCOMING DECISIONS

RESOLVED:

Members noted the forward plan.

9. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE QUERY AND ACTION LOG

RESOLVED:

Members noted the action log.

10. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

Nil items

11. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT

Nil items

12. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF UNRESTRICTED CABINET PAPERS

13. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

Nil items

14. ATTENDANCE OF SCRUTINY CO-OPTEEES 2023/24

Thomas French, Democratic Services Officer presented the attendance statistics for co-opted members of the Committee in the previous municipal year.

The committee raised the following comments and questions:

- Members stated that co-opted members need support from officers to attend meetings, if they have expressed any barriers to attending meetings.

RESOLVED:

Members agreed for officers to put support in place for co-opted members and report back to committee.

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

The Chair allowed Stephen Halsey, Chief Executive, with Robin Beattie, Director of Strategy, Transformation & Improvement, to present a report Improving the Council's Scrutiny Function, that was presented at the 16 May 2024 Cabinet Meeting.

The committee raised the following comments and questions:

- Members expressed concern that the Chief Executive would take a report on Scrutiny to Cabinet, without consulting members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members should have fed into this report before it was placed on the cabinet agenda. Officers stated that the report for cabinet was only for noting and no actions have been agreed, committee is now able to discuss the actions within the report.
- Members expressed concerns that a lot of the content of the report is very top down in what is proposed and has not been sourced from members and residents.
- Members asked for clarification on the amount of call ins received by committee and if it is more than under the previous administration.
- As housing is a complex issue within the borough, will the council allow more recourse to the Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub Committee? Officers agreed that the work of the sub-committee needs additional resource and officers will engage with sub-committee members on how this should be deployed.
- Will an opposition members be invited to chair committees like Overview and Scrutiny Committee? Officers confirmed that while chairing has been considered, there does not appear to be any other council that does practice this chairing. It is important that changes add value, rather than more opportunities to be more political. This will continue to be reviewed.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the report.

16. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

17. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Nil items.

18. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

Nil items.

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

Nil items.

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

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 20:42

Chair, Councillor Musthak Ahmed
Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item 7

<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>09 July 2024</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Linda Walker, Interim Director of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>REVISED SCRUTINY LEAD PORTFOLIO AREAS</p>	

<p>Originating Officer(s)</p>	<p>Thomas French, Democratic Services Officer (Committee)</p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All wards</p>

Recommendation:

The Committee is recommended to agree the revised Scrutiny Lead Portfolios Areas.

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Scrutiny Portfolio

OSC

Strategy & Performance
Strategic partnership
Budget scrutiny
Policy framework
Tower Hamlets
Partnership & Plan
Policy development and
Implementation
Cohesion, integration and
community relations
Council Transformation
and continuous
Improvement
Council inspections
Communications
Equalities
Arts and Events
Cultural Creative
Industries
Member Support

Health and Adults

Adult Social Care
Adults with Disabilities
Mental Health
Carers
Loneliness
Tackling Health
Inequalities
Public Health
Leisure Sport and Physical
Activity
NHS Health Services
Integrated Services
Adult Safeguarding

Children and Education

Children Services and Ofsted
Children Social Care
Looked After Children and Corporate
Parenting
Family Support and Child protection
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
(MASH)
Children's Regulated Services and
Resources
Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
Services
Social Work Learning Academy
Youth Offending and Youth Justice
Early Years, Learning and Play
Children Centres
Children With Special Educational
Needs (SEN) and Educational
Psychology
Pupil Access and School Sufficiency
School Governance Support
Corporate School for Vulnerable
Children
School Improvement
Further & Higher Education
Young Tower Hamlets
Tackling Child Poverty
Children's commissioning

Community Language Services
Young Tower Hamlets
Tower Hamlets Arts and Music
Education Service (THAMES)
Contract Services including Free
School Meals

Housing and Regeneration

Housing Options and Advice
Council Housing – Housing
Management and
Neighbourhoods
Registered providers
Private Sector Housing
Housing Strategy
Economic Regeneration
Fire Safety and Compliance
New Council Homes
Local Plan and
Regeneration strategy and
Asset Management
Planning Services
Building Control / Enforcement
Major Projects
Employment Partnership
Economic Development
Work Path
Apprenticeship and Training
Support for local businesses
Market and Town Centres

Community Safety

Community Safety
THEO's Enforcement
Crime prevention
Antisocial Behaviour
Drugs and Alcohol Crime
prevention
Tackling radicalisation /
Prevent
Policing

Finance and Resources

Finance, Budget
Development and
Monitoring
Capital Strategy and
Delivery
Capital Delivery and
Property Services
Grants and Voluntary and
community Sector
Procurement and
Corporate programmes
Value for money
Revenue Services
Human Resources
ICT
Risk management
Tackling poverty and
welfare reform
Customer access and Local
Presence
Idea Stores and Libraries
Digital inclusion and
Internet access

Environment and
Climate
Emergency

Waste management and
recycling
Street management and
cleanliness Environmental
Health and Protection
Environment enforcement
Parking Services
Parks and Open Spaces
Transport Services
Neighbourhood refresh
programme
Licensing, Policy and
Strategy
Trading Standards
Air Quality
Sustainability

<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Human Resources Committee</p> <p>16 May 2024</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Stephen Halsey, Chief Executive</p>	<p>Classification: Part exempt</p>
<p>Overview of the Next Phase of the Corporate Restructure</p>	

Originating Officer(s)	Stephen Halsey, Chief Executive
Wards affected	All wards
Exempt information	<p>This report and/or its appendices include information that has been exempted from publication as the Monitoring Officer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has deemed that the information meets the definition of a category of exempt information as set out in the Council’s Access to Information Rules; and • has deemed that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. <p>The exempt information is contained in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendices 2 and 3 <p>The exempt information falls into this category:</p> <p>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority handling the information)</p>

Special circumstances justifying urgency consideration / Reasons for urgency

Work to complete this report took longer than expected. However, it is vital that the Committee notes the following restructure proposals at this meeting to ensure that members have the ability to inform and steer the Council’s transformation agenda.

Executive Summary

Following the appointment of the Chief Executive in July 2023, Tower Hamlets Council embarked on its ambitious ‘People First’ transformation journey. As covered in the ‘Transformation Journey’ paper considered at Cabinet on the 16th May, there has been significant progress made in these key areas:

- Fostering a more collaborative and performance-driven culture.
- Securing greater financial understanding, compliance & stability.
- Embedding a resident-centric focus.
- Demonstrated measurable progress across key performance indicators and achieved external recognition.

- Making significant strides in the delivery across all strategic priorities.
- Ensuring continued adherence to the Best Value Duty.

Moving the organisation to a new Target Operating Model is a key part of this Transformation Journey. This report: updates the HR Committee on changes made so far; sets out the strategic outline and timetable for the next phases of the corporate restructure and brings forward proposals to improve areas that need focused support now including:

- Strengthening core functions including HR, Procurement, and Scrutiny functions.
- Optimising the Corporate Centre to establish a leaner, but more effective central structure.
- Mainstreaming elements of the Mayor's Office to seamlessly integrate with the broader council operations.
- Addressing challenges in Housing and Regeneration, with a focused restructure of this directorate to address several pressing issues including new regulatory and consumer standards, a challenging external environment, and the insourcing of THH.

Recommendations:

The Human Resources Committee is recommended to

1. Note progress on the organisation's transformation journey so far, the strategic framework and timetable for Phase 2 of the corporate restructure and proposals to strengthen HR, Procurement and Scrutiny functions.

DETAILS OF THE REPORT

1. Phasing and Strategic Drivers for the Corporate Restructure

1.1 Tower Hamlets is committed to continuous improvement. This corporate restructure will move the council to a new Target Operating Model, supporting the council to:

- Deepen resident engagement with enhanced consultation
- Build on long-term financial strength for sustainable service provision
- Drive innovation and efficiency through empowered directorates
- Enable a highly skilled and motivated workforce

1.2 Phase 1 (agreed in August 2023) split the Place Directorate into Communities and Housing and Regeneration, creating an additional Corporate Director role and built senior capacity to deliver insourcing commitments.

1.3 Phase 2 of the corporate restructure will resolve key risks in the Corporate Centre and Housing and Regeneration Directorates that need focused, corporate attention now:

- a. The current HR Function is experiencing growing challenges and is not fully meeting the needs of the council. This is leading to frustration across the organisation and hindering efforts to achieve optimal performance. *Appendix 2* sets out the case for change and plans to resolve these issues.

- b. Procurement challenges and action being taken to mitigate these are summarised in *Appendix 3*.
- c. The Scrutiny function is an important part of the governance arrangements of the Council and a key element of the Council's arrangements to ensure continuous improvement and meet its statutory best value duty. A report going to Cabinet on the 16.05.2024 identifies areas for improvement in the Council's Scrutiny function and a set of dedicated actions to address them. It calls for Cabinet to note, endorse and or approve these actions. A Scrutiny Improvement Plan is being considered at Cabinet on the 16th May 2024, the paper is included for information as *Appendix 4*.
- d. The Corporate Centre will be redefined and the current hub and spoke model for provision of key transformation, improvement, performance and strategic support services revisited. This review will be completed within the next three months.
- e. Executive Support will move from being a centralised function to being directly accountable to Corporate Directors and Directors.
- f. The Mayoral Office structure was established to meet a need at a point in time. Mutual trust, confidence and effective working processes between the respective leadership teams creates an opportunity to disband the current arrangement and adopt a mainstreamed integrated approach to meeting the council's priorities. The plan to mainstream the Mayor's Office and future structure is set out in *Appendix 5*.
- g. With new regulatory and consumer standards, a challenging external environment and the insourcing of THH there is a need to restructure the Housing and Regeneration Directorate to: align functions currently sitting across different Director responsibilities and ensure we are set up to meet these challenges in the short to medium term.
- h. The new structure will also provide greater focus on key strategic objectives for Housing and Regeneration e.g. all activity related to the delivery of new homes will come under one Director.

1.4 Phase 3 (from October 2024) will complete organisation's move to a new Target Operating Model. There are limited changes at this stage to Health and Adult Social Care, Communities and Children's Services Directorates. Following the appointment of new Corporate Directors these Directorates will be reviewed and structural changes considered as part of Phase 3 of the corporate restructure. Any additional structural changes considered necessary to bring the Council into full alignment with the new target operating model will also be made at this stage.

1.5 The CEO will progress these changes as informed by the outcome of consultation, organisation change procedure and in accordance with the council's constitution.

2. Additional context and principles for the proposed restructure

2.1 The Tower Hamlets Strategic Plan (2022 – 26) embeds the Mayor's vision for the Tower Hamlets. It also sets out our ongoing work to improve the Borough and meet and exceed the standards we are held to account to deliver. The Strategic Plan sets out an ambitious delivery agenda across these 8 priorities:

- Tackling the cost-of-living crisis: with measures including freezing council tax for four years, and additional financial support for residents
- Providing homes for the future: By working with developers and housing associations to deliver a minimum of 1000 social homes for rent each year.
- Accelerating education: through a series of learning interventions and financial support, investing in youth services, and increasing opportunities for younger people to go into further education.

- Boosting culture, business, jobs, and leisure: with measures including supporting small businesses, start-ups, and markets; creating jobs and training opportunities; and one hour free parking at our markets.
- Investing in public services: for example by bringing outsourced services back into public hands.
- Empowering communities and fighting crime: for example by working with the police to have more uniformed officers on the streets.
- Working towards a clean and green future: by establishing a Mayor’s advisory board to guide our response to climate change and a host of green measures including green heating systems on housing estates and electric vehicle charging.
- A council that listens and works for everyone

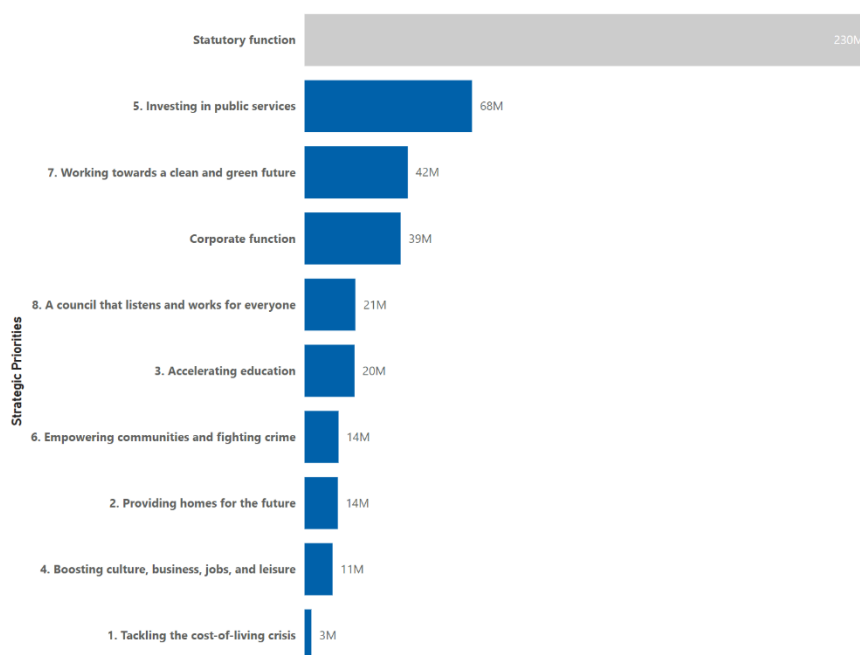


Diagram 1: Budget by priorities

2.2 The new TOM and structure the council is moving towards supports the delivery of these objectives, ensuring we have the skills, capacity and leadership to deliver on our ambitions.

2.3 The objective of the departmental approved restructures agreed as part of the budget setting process was cost reduction, and these agreed changes will take place. The objectives of this wider organisational structure exercise are wholly service improvement focussed and do not relate to further savings requirements.

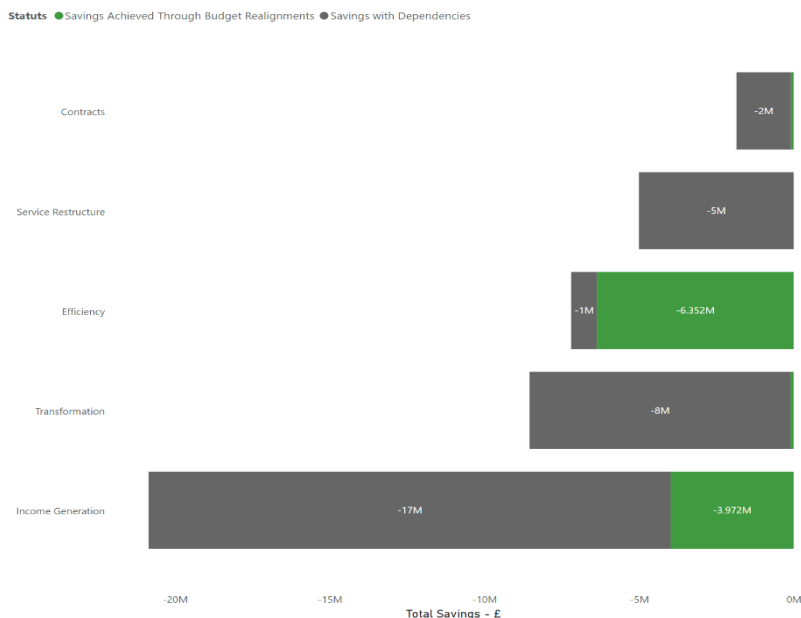


Diagram 2: MTFS Savings by Directorate, secured and to deliver.

3. New Target Operating Model

3.1 The new Target Operating Model was sufficiently developed to guide the structural changes that the council needed to make as part of phase 1 of the corporate restructure. Development of the new TOM has included comprehensive engagement with all stakeholders, including staff, council members, the Young Mayor, community groups, and, most importantly, the residents themselves. Phases 2 and 3 of this corporate restructure will continue to move the organisation to this new TOM.

3.2 The final version of the TOM, launching in October 2024, will be accompanied by a clear and accessible blueprint, developed in-house.

3.3 The new TOM is built upon the following six core principles, that will guide decision-making and shape the council's new way of working:

- Value-driven and cost-effective: prioritises efficient resource allocation while maximising resident value.
- Community-led: places residents at the centre of decision-making processes, where it impacts them.
- Collaborative: promotes teamwork and knowledge-sharing across the council.
- Transparent: ensures clear communication and open access to information.
- Empowered to innovate: encourages directorates to lead creative solutions to improve resident services.
- Accountable: establishes clear lines of accountability for achieving resident-focused outcomes.



Diagram 3: Draft new Target Operating Model (April 2024)

3.4 Alongside developing the new TOM the council has built the corporate capacity and created the governance needed to deliver this transformation programme, including a new Transformation Management Office, Transformation Dashboard, and governance framework that includes the external expertise of the Transformation Advisory Board, to support and steer the council’s transformation.

4. Previous Structure and Operating Model:

- 4.1** In 2022 there were five directorates including the Chief Executive’s Office: Resources, Place, Children and Culture and Health Adults and Community (see *Appendix 1*).
- 4.2** Early in the previous administration’s tenure the decision was taken to reduce the number of directorates from five to four. Services that sat within the Directorate of Communities Localities and Culture were shared out amongst the remaining Directors. A 2023 review of this structure found that some Directorates were demonstrably too large to manage effectively. Service adjacencies within some directorates lacked synergy and the original core focus of these directorates was diluted. With the commitment to insource: Tower Hamlet’s Homes, Waste, Leisure Services and the Youth Service, these Directorates would have become even bigger, making them still more complex and difficult to manage.
- 4.3** The previous Tower Hamlets TOM and blueprint were internally focused and financially driven, as opposed to customer driven and did not address some of the most pressing issues facing the borough, such as poverty, crime, and inequality (see 3.3.2 of the *Transformation Journey report, attached as Appendix 6 for information*).

5. Phase 1 of the Corporate Restructure:

- 5.1** The first phase of the restructure moved the Council to a 5 Directorate structure in August 2023 to assist the Council in developing more efficient and effective services and improving corporate grip and performance. Realigning services and strengthening senior oversight also enables the Council to better focus on its statutory obligations and compliance with

national policy and programmes. The current structure (including first phase changes) and previous structure are shown in *Appendix 1*.

- 5.2** Through this service realignment, the Directorate of Place became Housing and Regeneration. The Directorate of Children and Culture became Children's Services. The Directorate of Health, Adults and Community became Health and Adult Social Care.
- 5.3** The creation of the new Communities Directorate involved the transfer of Public Realm, Community Safety and Culture functions from the Place, Health Adults and Community and Children and Culture Directorates respectively. The Community Languages Service was transferred to the Director of Education.
- 5.4** In the case of the Housing and Regeneration Directorate Phase 1 structural changes supported the necessary focus on insourcing of Tower Hamlets Homes and responding to the Cost-of-Living Crisis. Phase 2 of the restructure builds on this work to fully integrate THH.
- 5.5** Now these structural changes have taken place:
- The Directorate of Children's Services can focus upon raising educational attainment in schools and supporting and safeguarding young people.
 - The Directorate of Health and Adult Social Care can focus more consistently upon improving the health and wellbeing of the community.
 - The new Communities Directorate can better exploit the compatibilities that exist between the services that have been brought together within it. For example, street cleanliness is a key factor in perceptions of public safety and links to Community Safety.
 - By creating the Communities Directorate capacity is freed up in the new Housing and Regeneration Directorate to cope with the addition of the housing management functions carried out by Tower Hamlets Homes
 - The structural changes already made to the Housing and Regeneration Directorate support the necessary focus on insourcing of Tower Hamlets Homes, housebuilding and responding to the Cost-of-Living Crisis.

6. Operational restructures in the MTFS

- 6.1** Phase 1 of the restructure commissioned a series of detailed efficiency reviews, carried out by the management teams of each Directorate. These reviews, supported by the work of CMT, the new Efficiency and Budget Boards and a targeted early retirement/ voluntary redundancy programme generated additional proposals for structural changes within and between directorates. As a result 16 operational restructures were committed to in the MTFS, with a saving target of £5m and are now being progressed.
- 6.2** These operational restructures are distinct from the strategic, corporate restructure addressed in this paper, however realising the savings for some of these operational restructures is dependent on Phase 2 of the corporate restructure. An update on how these restructures are progressing went to Budget Board on 25/04/2024.
- 6.3** In addition a paper on 'Improving Homelessness Service' at Cabinet on the 16/05/2024 proposes new roles to manage increasing demand and complexity and deal with the backlog in existing cases.

7. Impact of ER/ V.R

- 7.1** In November 2023 Council launched the Early Retirement / Voluntary Redundancy scheme. By 5th January 2024, of 4629 eligible employees, 245 expressed interests in the scheme. Among the 245 applicants, 58 were approved. Out of approved applicants, the cost of exit for 8 employees exceeded £100k.

7.2 ER/VR scheme incurred a one-off cost of £3.3 million and ongoing savings of £2.9 million for year 1. In just over a year, the Council will break even and will continue to accrue savings throughout the current MTFS lifespan. Below please find the breakdown of the costs, savings, and payback period by Directorates and for the entire council:

DIRECTORATES	Cost	Savings (year 1)	Payback
Resources	£ 1,557,113.05	£ 1,381,824.16	1.13
Communities Housing & Regeneration	£ 1,033,282.00	£ 691,225.00	1.49
Children's HASC	£ 399,304.25	£ 519,974.00	0.77
CEX	£ 194,485.16	£ 239,304.28	0.81
	£ 92,314.98	£ 53,788.20	1.72
	£ 57,808.79	£ 81,750.00	0.71
GRAND TOTAL:	£ 3,334,308.23	£ 2,967,865.64	1.12

Diagram 4: Impact of ER/VR

7.3 It is projected that by deleting the posts of the exiting employees, the savings in year 2 will reach £5.9 million and by year 3 – the Council will have saved £8.9 million. Work is underway with the Heads of Services to determine the status of the ER/VR approved employee posts. The revision to working arrangements or exit on redundancy or retirement must take place by Friday 31 May 2024.

8. Pilot to introduce Assistant Director roles

8.1 As of Phase 2 we will pilot a new Assistant Director level with four new roles. These Assistant Director roles will be piloted in Resources and Housing and Regeneration where we can use the new posts to create efficiencies, compete effectively with other organisations where there is a difficult recruitment market to attract and retain the best staff and to provide appropriate senior oversight and drive for areas with complex delivery challenged e.g. housing delivery.

8.2 As well as improving career development and our ability to attract and retain the best staff in areas where there is strong market competition, these AD roles are needed to move the organisation to a smaller, stronger corporate centre with appropriate oversight and controls. In some areas AD roles could help us rationalise multiple layers of management into a more coherent and cohesive structure driving out more efficiencies.

8.3 If this pilot is judged successful by the CEO, additional AD roles may be introduced subject to further discussion with the Executive.

The following section covers the objectives and rationale underpinning each Directorate's restructure proposals in turn (detailed proposals will be brought forward and are subject to organisational change procedure).

9. CEO's Office restructure proposal

9.1 A lean CEO's Office will support the Chief Executive to focus on strategic questions and outward facing responsibilities including:

- strengthening corporate decision making and accountability and ensuring that the whole organisation mobilises behind our ambitious delivery agenda
- strengthening our relationships across the sector and with Government to share and learn from best practice, influence policy making and attract policy pilots and new initiatives

- ensuring our Strategic Partnerships are realising transformational benefits for our residents and place
- overseeing the development of corporate wide initiatives and transformation
- Fulfilling statutory Head of Paid Service role and line managing Corporate Directors

9.2 This Division will be led by a new Assistant Chief Executive post (Director level) with responsibility for: Comms; Corporate Performance; Oversight; Strategy and Transformation. These functions, alongside the wider Strategy, Improvement and Transformation functions across the organisation will be reviewed over the next 3 months (see section 15).

9.3 Other corporate functions currently in the CEO's Office including the Mayor's Office, Legal and Scrutiny functions will, subject to the organisation change procedures, move to the Resources Directorate where they will be better integrated and supported.

9.4 The Corporate Director Resources is the Deputy CEO.

10. Resources restructure proposal

10.1 The Resources Directorate restructure will comprise a stronger core of central services equipped with the expertise and the capacity to support empowered operational and embedded support teams across the council. This restructure acts to resolve pressing risks that need focused corporate attention and investment now and brings forward detailed plans to mainstream the Mayor's Office and improve the: HR; Procurement and Scrutiny functions.

10.2 Subject to the Council's Organisation Change procedures, The **Communities and Inclusive Growth Division** will include:

- A mainstreamed, 7 person **Mayor's Office** focused on the Mayor's Executive Support alongside a small Strategy and Policy Liaison function (*see Appendix 5*)
- A **Customer Services** team designed to maximise the benefits of the new, accessible Town Hall bringing together a refined Front Office, Resident Hub's including the Town Hall and Town Hall FM.
- **Community Growth**, bringing together strategic Economic Development, and Equality and Inclusion work with employment, skills and support for small businesses.

10.3 The **Legal and Democratic Services Division** will, subject to the Council's organisation change procedures, move to Resources with new responsibilities including: registrars; scrutiny; information governance; complaints; fraud and investigations and our compliance with the public sector procurement rules.

10.4 The **HR and OD Division** will include the 12-month Capacity Team to deliver the MTFs and IT. Detailed plans to strengthen the HR and OD functions are included as *Appendix 2*. This will include senior recruitment, a move to a business partnering model and an opportunity to re-set the reputation of the service and build better relationships across the organisation.

10.5 The **Finance Division** introduces 2 new Assistant Director roles to strengthen our Business Partnering, real time financial reporting and strong treasury and capital governance. The Financial Services function will cover revenues, benefits, Business Rates, Temporary Accommodation, Rent Collection, Debt Management and Hardship Support. The function will help us understand holistic user journeys and collect revenue and debt in a contemporary, humane way, improving the Customer journey and collection rates. Grants programmes administered by the Corporate Centre will also sit here.

11. Housing and Regeneration Restructure Proposal

11.1 This new Directorate, created in 2023 as part of Phase 1 of the corporate restructure faces significant challenges meeting its strategic priorities, in delivery of housing growth and homelessness ambitions. These include leading on the next major phase of THH integration and transformation.

11.2 There are also significant external challenges facing the housing sector including inflation, energy prices, the cost-of-living crisis and interest rate rises all of which have resulted in a slowdown of new housebuilding. The Government is introducing new regulations to widen consumer standards, there is increasing focus on fire safety, dampness and mould from the Housing Regulator and Housing Ombudsman and it is anticipated that the Social Housing (regulation) Act 2023 will commence on 1 April 2024 with new transparency and safety standards.

11.3 The upcoming phases of the corporate restructure will strengthen this new Directorate to ensure that the council is set up to achieve its strategic housing objectives to create 4000 affordable homes and reduce homelessness, it will:

- Create customer centric services (improving services to residents)
- Support the increase in demand for new homes and community buildings
- Deliver the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) resourcing strategy
- Fully integrate THH into the Council and reduce duplication between teams
- Increase accountability for delivery
- Reduce salary overheads
- Meet new/ strengthened regulatory standards

11.4 The target outcomes for the Housing and Regeneration restructure are:

- Increased customer satisfaction
- Ongoing reduction of £3m per year in temporary accommodation
- 50% of new homes to go to existing Council tenant to reduce overcrowding.
- Compliance with new Regulatory standards.

11.5 All functions have been reviewed to create this new structure with the exclusion of Housing Options where an expansion to operational capacity is being expedited through c£1.8m additional allocation as summarised in the 'Improving Homelessness Services' report going to Cabinet on the 16/05/2024.

11.6 **The proposed Divisions are:**

- **Housing Management (led by a new Director role):** creating a single housing management function across day to day management of and investment in current housing assets.
- **Housing Options and Homelessness (led by a new Director role):** will focus on improving the customer journey for people needing temporary accommodation under the Council's statutory obligations and accessing homes through a strengthened acquisition approach and PRS function and reducing homelessness.

- **Regeneration, Housing Supply and Assets (led by a new Director role):** brings housing supply and delivery programmes together, alongside major programmes (non-housing) and commercial assets.
- **Planning and Building Control** will remain structurally as it is, with a focus on becoming more customer and solution led.
- **Housing Policy and Strategy (led by a new Director role):** A strengthened policy function for housing and homelessness strategy, embedding coherent forward-looking governance, shaping future services and ensuring that we have a robust approach to compliance with regulation and new national policy initiatives.

11.7 The Economic Development and Growth Division will move from Housing and Regeneration, with most functions joining the Communities and Inclusive Growth Division. This will include Tackling Poverty projects and outreach work, Economic Growth (business liaison, skills including work with those furthest from the workforce, careers advice and social mobility). These areas will benefit from close joint working with Resident Hubs where these services will be co-located where appropriate and possible. Town Centre Management work will move to the Communities Directorate and Grants currently administered by the Growth and Economic Development Team will move to the Finance Division, overseen by the Director of Finance. The strategic case for these moves was considered and supported by CELT to bring these areas closer to their natural networks of operational support.

12. Children's Services Directorate update

12.1 The Director of Young Tower Hamlets role is currently under review. There aren't any other changes to the Children's Services structure as part of Phase 2. There may be further changes needed as part of Phase 3 of the corporate restructure to meet the Council's objectives around attainment and positive destinations and SEND (managing demand, delivering quality); to bring Children's Services in line with the new TOM and introduce more manageable spans of control for the Education and Children's Social Care Divisions.

13. Health and Adult Social Care Directorate update

13.1 There aren't any changes to the HASC structure as part of Phase 2 of the corporate restructure. There may be further changes needed as part of Phase 3.

14. Communities Directorate update

14.1 The Communities Directorate was created in January 2024 to increase our organisational capacity and control to manage the risks and realise the benefits of these complex operational areas including:

- a. More cohesive / coordinated relationship between council services which drive the quality of local environment.
- b. Cohesive response to arts, leisure and culture offer within the borough
- c. Maximise resident's interaction within borough in which they live, work and visit.

14.2 There are limited changes to the core structure of the Communities Directorate as part of Phase 2 of the corporate restructure. Idea Stores will move from Customer Services

to Culture and Town Centre Management will join the Public Realm Division from Housing and Regeneration.

14.3 There will be a review of the Leisure Service structure once insourced and there may be further work to bring Communities in line with TOM and create more manageable spans of control as part of Phase 3.

15. SIT Review

15.1 The Enabling Functions review created the current Strategy, Improvement and Transformation structure in early 2022. This created a large, centralised hub for Strategy, Improvement and Transformation service in the CEO’s Office, with spoke Strategy, Policy and Improvement teams in Directorates. Staff working within this structure and staff seeking to engage with it have found it confusing and poorly defined. SIT and SPI staff generally did not consider the review to have been a success. The adoption of a new Target Operating Model requires a review of the core support structures and presents an opportunity to rework this area of service provision to better meet the needs of directorates and the councils strategic objectives.

15.2 The SIT review will cover all teams involved in Strategy, Policy, Performance and Commissioning (in the hub and spokes). An external specialist will be appointed to lead this review supported by members of the SIT team. The review will engage relevant staff in shaping the future of policy and strategy work across the Council and will conclude in August 2024.

15.3 There are some areas where we are clear there is a misalignment of SIT functions and we have improvement plans in place to address. These areas will move before the review has concluded as part of Phase 2 of the Corporate Restructure e.g. Scrutiny and Grants.

16. Forward look

Different elements of the corporate restructure will move at different speeds as the organisational change processes and governance best practice is followed. The changes described in this paper will be implemented by October 2024.

May 2024	Corporate Directors will take proposed Directorate restructures through appropriate Governance and Consultation
May 2024	Permanent appointment Corporate Director Children’s Services; Corporate Director Health and Adult Social Care and Director Legal Services (MO)
May 2024	Scrutiny Improvement Plan agreed
June 2024	Housing Options service strengthened with additional frontline capacity
From June 2024	As consultations complete, and Director roles are appointed, teams will migrate to the new structure
June 2024	Permanent Appointment Corporate Director Housing and Regeneration
August 2024	SIT and Comms reviews complete

October 2024	To support savings targets in the MTFs, Phase 2 of the restructure will be implemented by October 2024 (subject to consultation)
October 2024	Launch of new TOM with detailed blueprint at the Full Staff Conference
October 2024	Mainstreaming of Mayor's Office complete
May 2025	Organisation substantially moved to new Target Operating Model

19. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

19.1 There are no equality implications directly resulting from this report. Corporate Directors will be responsible for monitoring and mitigating potential equalities implications as part of the detailed design work underpinning this strategic paper.

20. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

20.1 Overall, the initiatives outlined in this report directly align with the principles of Best Value by demonstrating the council's commitment to:

- **Efficiency:** the focus on continuous improvement, data-driven decision-making, and streamlining the corporate centre will lead to more efficient use of resources.
- **Economy:** the emphasis on financial sustainability and eliminating waste will ensure the council operates in a cost-effective manner.
- **Effectiveness:** by prioritising resident needs, addressing performance shortfalls, and fostering a culture of collaboration, the council will become more effective in delivering high-quality services to the community.

20.2 A number of the proposals in this report have implications for roles and responsibilities, we will consult with impacted staff wherever there is a statutory duty to do so.

21. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

21.1 The report sets out the progress on the organisation's transformation journey so far and the future actions. As set out in paragraph 6.1, £5m of operation restructure savings were included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

21.2 In order to provide capacity in the short term to allow the Council to move to the TOM, for example piloting of AD roles, the general contingency will be used. Where ongoing growth is identified as being required these will be funded through efficiencies.

22. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

22.1 The council is empowered to appoint such officers as it thinks necessary for the proper discharge by the authority of such of their or another authority's functions as falls or is agreed to be discharged by them. Section 112 Local Government Act 1972.

22.2 Appropriate revisions may be required to the Councils Constitution and scheme of delegation in due course to reflect the transformation proposals.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Reports

- See appendices 4 and 6 below

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Organisational Charts
- Appendix 2: Business Support proposals (exempt)
- Appendix 3: Procurement challenges and action being taken to mitigate (TO FOLLOW exempt)
- Appendix 4: Improving the Council's Scrutiny Function. Item 6.4, Cabinet, Thursday 16 May 2024 [Tower Hamlets Council - Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 16th May, 2024, 4.00 p.m.](#)
- Appendix 5: Mainstreaming the Mayor's Office
- Appendix 6: Transforming Tower Hamlets Council: building a stronger future Item 6.1, Cabinet, Thursday 16 May 2024 [Tower Hamlets Council - Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 16th May, 2024, 4.00 p.m.](#)

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

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

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

- NONE.

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A

Appendix 1 Organisational charts

Previous Structure (Feb 2022)



Current Structure (May 2024)

CEO	CD Resources + S151 Officer + Deputy CEO	Interim CD Housing & Regeneration	CD Communities	CD Health & Adult Social Care	CD Children's Services
Int Dir of Strategy, Imp & Transformation	Director Finance	Director of Housing	Director of Public Realm	Director of Adult Social Care	Director of Supporting Families
Director of Marketing & Communications	Director of Workforce, OD & Business Support	Dir of Integrated Growth & Economic Dev	Director of Culture	Director of Public Health	Director of Education
Interim Director of Legal	Director of IT	Director of Planning & Building Control	Director of Community Safety	Joint Dir of Integrated Commissioning	Director of Youth & Commissioning
Head of Mayor's Office	Director of Customer Services	Director of Property & Major Programmes			
	Head of Revenues and Benefits	Director of Neighbourhoods			
	Head of Procurement	Director of Housing Asset Management			

Improves alignment with strategic priorities and reduces reliance on temporary leadership, fostering stability and long-term vision.

New Structure (Oct 2024)



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Mainstreaming the Mayor's Office

The Mayoral Office structure was established to meet a need at a point in time. Mutual trust, confidence and effective working processes between the respective leadership teams creates an opportunity to disband the current arrangement and adopt a mainstreamed integrated approach to meeting the council's priorities. This document provides a high-level summary of activity planned to mainstream the Mayor's Office.

Mayor's Office Plan: May – December 2024

Phase 1: Culture change (April 2023 – April 2024)

- Collaborative and productive relationship between Mayor's Office and Leadership Team established
- Improved liaison with Directorates
- Strong joint work on MTFS and other corporate priorities
- Effective governance and oversight in place to provide the Mayor with assurance that the organisation is working to achieve the administration's priorities

Phase 2: Move to a single casework team (April – June 2024)

- Operational restructure agreed through MTFS to save £327k
- Consultation meetings with staff, Trade Unions and Human Resources are underway
- Recruitment for some posts live to make agreed improvements before staff are moved to their new teams
- Restructure assessed green to deliver by June

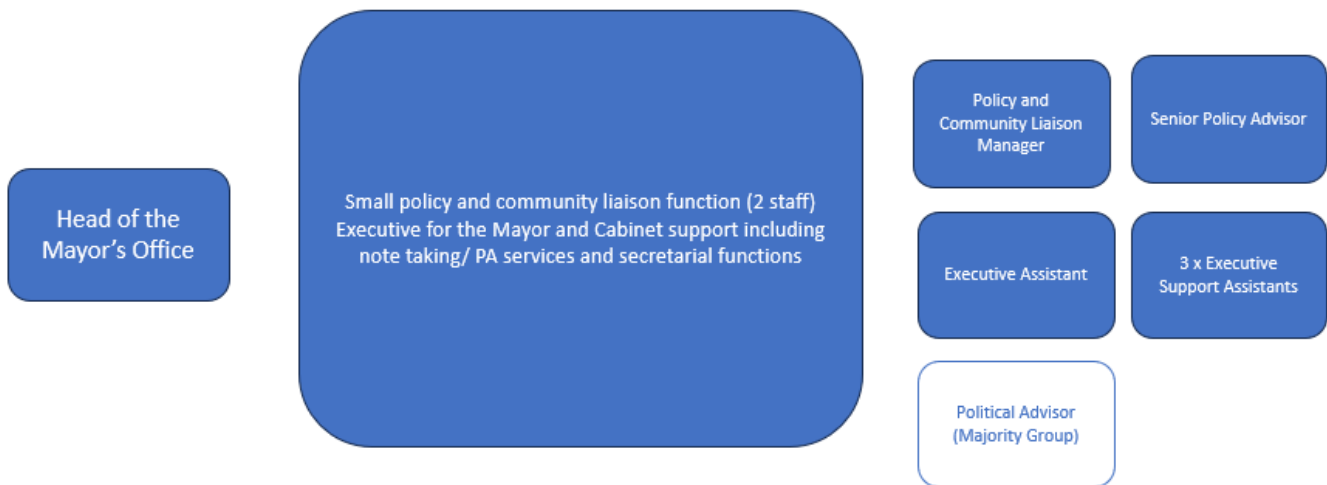
Phase 3: Agree broad principles and scale of new Mayor's Office (April – May 2024)

- New Mayor's Office will include 7 posts including:
 - Policy and Community Liaison Manager
 - Senior Policy Advisor
 - Executive assistant
 - 3 executive support assistants
- The Majority Group Political Advisor will continue to sit with the Mayor's Office but isn't formally part of the structure
- This 7 person Mayor's Office is significantly smaller than the Mayor's Office was under Mayor Biggs in 2022
- Overall principles and posts were agreed by CEO and the Mayor in April 2024
- The Mayor's Office will move from CEO's Office to Resources Directorate, in a new Communities and Inclusive Growth Division

Phase 4: Implementation (May to October 2024)

- Organisational Change Procedure will be followed including consultation where there is a statutory requirement to consult
- Implementation will be staggered, the move to the new structure will be complete by October 2024 but where possible to move more quickly we will do this

Structure and Functional Overview



- In line with wider moves from the Corporate Centre and the principles underpinning this restructure other roles currently in the Mayor's Office will move to teams with the closest alignment e.g. the media and comms advisors will move to Communications Division and the Sports Advisor to Communities.
- All Cabinet Support roles will move to Democratic Services
- The Somali, Women and Equalities, Social Inclusion, and Communities Advisors will move to mainstreamed functions within the Communities and Inclusive Growth Directorate alongside Equalities and Inclusion work currently in SIT and HR/ OD.

<p>Overview and Scrutiny</p> <p>9 July 2024</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Simon Baxter, Corporate Director - Communities</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Women’s Safety Action Plan – Update with regard activity and progress</p>	

Executive Summary

1. This report provides an update with regard to activity and progress against the Women’s Safety Action Plan developed and implemented as a result of recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2023. These recommendations are set out in the body of this report.
2. The recommendations were approved by the Mayor in Cabinet. The resultant action plan, and service comment and progress is attached at Appendix A.

Mayor/Lead Member

1. Noted the recommendations made by Overview & Scrutiny Committee with regard to Women’s Safety
2. Noted the Women’s Safety Action Plan and system-wide responses required to deliver a holistic response.
3. Noted that the next stage in developing this work to protect women and girls from gender-based violence and improve feelings of safety in Tower Hamlets is to produce a new Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy by July 2024.
4. Approved the women’s safety action plan at Appendix A to the report and made additions to the recommendations as outlined below and in Appendices.

Communications

1. Improve feelings of safety through dedicated campaigns that tackle misogyny and gender-based violence. Promote campaigns that target and educate perpetrators to change behaviours, highlight examples of good practice and encourage reporting, including bystander and third-party reporting.

1. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The current 2019-24 Tackling Violence against Women and Girls Strategy sets out the current priorities of the Council and partners on this issue. This strategy expired in March 24 and work is ongoing to develop an ambitious new Violence against Women and Girls strategy which is due for completion in July 2024. This strategy will also for the first time incorporate work to improve women's safety in the public space.
- 1.2 In February 2023 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed seven recommendations following two in depth scrutiny review sessions. These were as follows with the underlined elements in Recommendations 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 specified by Cabinet as part of their response.

Recommendation 1

The council and its strategic partners, including the Metropolitan Police, Faith Communities and the VCS to collaborate to improve the awareness of women of the programmes and help available directly that support women's safety on the streets.

Recommendation 2

The Council to review current funding arrangements and increase the capacity to support women's groups that offer domestic abuse services to the community. This to tie into a service-wide review of what is on offer to women of all communities.

Recommendation 3

The Council to ensure that it factors in improving self-defence access for women and girls when considering leisure, public health and physical wellbeing activities.

Recommendation 4

The Council's Children and Education Service, in particular Young Tower Hamlets to design support for increasing capacity at schools on raising awareness of domestic abuse and support available.

Recommendation 5

The Council and Residential Social Landlord (RSL) partners should actively strengthen their partnership workings to focus on tackling women safety issues on RSL estates, which will build on ongoing RSL work begun with the Ask the Ombudsman event.

Recommendation 6

The Police/THEOs to actively target and focus their recruitment and retention strategy to reflect recruiting representative women from the community in Tower Hamlets. This to be done in cooperation with faith communities and the Council.

Recommendation 7

All Tower Hamlets Councillors (male and female) to support and champion women's safety issues through the established channels such as male allies' Programme, women safety focussed walkabouts and building this within the roles when engaging the public within the constituencies and member surgeries.

- 1.3 This programme of work will be embedded into the VAWG Strategy 2024-2029 which is in development.
- 1.4 A significant number of actions have now been completed prior to submission of this report.

2. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 Gender based violence is predominantly a pattern of behaviour perpetrated by men against women. Prevention of VAWG and improving women's safety is a key priority for the Mayor.
- 2.2 It is recognised that prevention over the long-term can only be achieved by tackling the misogynistic attitudes and behaviours that can lead to these crimes. Consequently, a programme of training and awareness around VAWG (including digital abuse), healthy relationships, toxic masculinity and a Schools Pledge is available to Schools and Youth Services.
- 2.3 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee heard about the importance of "safe spaces" and that women feel significantly less safe after dark in Tower Hamlets compared to men. This appears to be part of a broader trend across the UK and internationally, whereby women tend to feel less safe in public spaces and fear crime more than men. As well as the significant impact on women's health and wellbeing as a result of being a victim of crime, safety fears more broadly affect women's behaviour and choices and restricts their freedom to be in public spaces.
- 2.4 Whilst this action plan has a focus on gender, it is important to note that this is not the only determining factor when it comes to feeling and being safe: Older and younger people also tend to report feeling less safe.
- 2.5 In recent local research women have described how they create routes that navigate around places where groups of men congregate and cat call, hot spots for drug dealing or where they have previously experienced threat. They

also navigate around streets that feel unsafe due to limited sight lines, escape routes or poor lighting and that this 'way' of getting around is precautionary. All women, girls, and gender diverse people, feel or perceive safety or public space differently. However, most women agree (96% of Let's Talk Survey respondents) that there must be a culture shift to improve attitudes towards women and girls.

- 2.6 Equally it is important to highlight the issue of intersectionality. Women of different ethnicities, women of different faiths, women of different sexual orientations, gender identities, age and disability will not all have the same experience of safety in public spaces.
- 2.7 The VAWG Needs Assessment 2024 found that faith leaders and men/boys have a key role to play in tackling misogyny. A programme of work is in place with Tower Hamlets Inter-faith Forum, Council of Mosques and Schools to support them with this. This includes a Male Allyship Programme, London Muslim Centre Ambassadors Project and Don't Cross the Line Campaign.
- 2.8 The action plan and recommendations from the Committee will have beneficial consequences for equalities, inclusion and diversity in the Borough.

3. BEST VALUE CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Womens' safety is a Mayoral priority and is set against the context of Tower Hamlets having some of the highest levels of VAWG offending including domestic homicides in London. Since 2011, there have been 14 Domestic Homicide Reviews commissioned totalling approximately £130,000. This does not include the wider cost implications to service providers such as Social Care, schools, criminal justice agencies and health providers involved in managing the support provided to victims. The estimated cost for a victim of domestic abuse is £34,015¹ and £58,860² for a victim of rape. Furthermore, the human cost of the physical and emotional impact of abuse far outweighs any financial cost. Hence earlier intervention, prevention and safeguarding work is key to ensuring best value for money and a more invest to save approach has been adopted.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1 The Violence against Women & Girl's (VAWG) service has a net budget of £0.494m, comprising gross expenditure totalling £1.237m for staffing and the provision of funding to third party service providers, offset by income of £0.743m in the form of grants and recharges from internal service users.
- 4.2 This report provides an update of the Women's Safety Action Plan and its recommendations. The cost of developing the action plan has been contained within these existing budgets. However, the cost of implementing these recommendations require further financial review and may incur

¹ Home Office. 2019 'The economic and social costs of domestic abuse.'

² Ibid.

additional cost above budgeted levels. Any requests for additional financial resources will be subject of separate reports.

5. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 5.1 The Womens Safety Action Plan complies with a number of the Council's key safeguarding duties. The Care Act 2014 sets out the council's duties to safeguard adults who are experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect. The Act also sets out the council's duties to ensure the provision of preventative services, promote wellbeing when carrying out any of their care and support functions (this includes protection from abuse and neglect), cooperate with relevant partners and provide information about services available in the area that can prevent abuse and support.
- 5.2 The Children Act 1989 provides the legislative framework relating to the council's duty to protect children from abuse and neglect and to promote the welfare of all children and young people in their area. The Children Act 2004 places duties on a council to ensure its functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to cooperate with other agencies to promote the well-being of children.
- 5.3 In the exercise of its functions, the Council must comply with the public sector equality duty to eliminate unlawful conduct such as discrimination, harassment and victimisation under the Equality Act 2010.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Appendices

- Women's Safety Action Plan
- Record of Decision of Cabinet

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

- None

Officer contact details for documents: Menara Ahmed

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Women's Safety Action Plan

Recommendation 1

The council and its strategic partners including the Metropolitan Police, Faith Communities and the VCS to collaborate to improve the level of women's awareness on the local offer of help available that directly support women's safety on the streets.

Comments from Service:

A new ambitious campaign to tackle sexual harassment and misogyny in the Nighttime Economy was launched in Dec 23 called Don't Cross the Line. It is a cross-border collaboration with LB Hackney and the City of London and is in response to the rise in misogynistic behaviours in the night-time economy since the pandemic. Social media content online in relation to the night-time economy targeted at young men may often encourage misogynistic views. In 2023 we trained over 1600 nightlife staff which has seen incident reports go up for what was previously considered "low level" offences and were clearly significantly underreported. This increased reporting is extremely positive, however, longer term awareness raising is needed to challenge the behaviours themselves. The campaign messaging is directed at men using male role models to challenge misogynistic behaviour, male 'entitlement' and negative views about women which have created permissive environments and enabled unsafe spaces for women. The campaign and its messaging was developed working with focus groups of men who live locally and use the night-time economy in Tower Hamlets/Hackney/City of London.

Mainstreaming Violence Against Women and Girls - The Council's new Statement of Licensing Policy 2023-2028 was agreed by full Council on 27th September 2023. The policy states that the borough expects licence holders to take a zero-tolerance approach to misogyny within their venues and mainstreams considerations in relation to women's safety and VAWG challenges.

A series of in person "Women's Safety Walks" were offered to all residents to share their concerns on public safety issues across the borough. There was low attendance and based on feedback from women a series of 'digital safety walks' across the borough were created. These were highly successful and had much better attendance and involvement from women and girls. All 20 wards were covered with group and one-one sessions offered. Each concern or issue raised was either flagged as an action for a response across the relevant service areas i.e., parks, public realm, community safety or the planning team/s.

In addition, a local research report on gender inclusive design has been written - led by planning but facilitated and in collaboration with Community Safety. This research and work engaged with over 300 women and girls across Tower Hamlets. This report was initially envisaged as a 'Women's Safety' Project. It was set up in the light of the tragic murders of Sarah Everard, Biba Henry, Nicole Smallman, Sabina Nessa and many others whose stories may not have received national coverage. Horrific acts of misogyny, which shone a light on the precarity women face both on streets and in public spaces and within a legal and judicial system that empowers men to act against women. The writing of this report contains original research and accounts from women and girls across Tower Hamlets. The report maps out the scope of the findings and makes a series of recommendations to ensure greater balance and representation in the planning and design of the borough. The report provides insights into the evidence base and the source of the series of recommendations can be traced through the original research with women and girls in the borough. This document is being used to inform the local plan and have been aggregated throughout the plan with input into each policy strand. The report includes recommendations for other services and directorates across the council and could be used by VAWG team, Youth Service and strategic planning for public health, High Streets, parks and green spaces, leisure and planning for new developments. The report sets out a 'vision' which has been devised in response the evidence base. A set of design themes that flow from the vision and outline specific recommendations.

With regard the VAWG Open Space, the local police held the first Innovation Hub, a collaborative approach to problem solving, where police explored ways to improve women's safety and rebuild trust and confidence. The police collaborated with the local authority, Transport for London, various charities, and repeat victims. The police delivered welfare, vulnerability and engagement training to businesses to generate ideas on how to mitigate the associated risks. This is co funded and co-hosted by both Hackney and Tower Hamlets. Locally, police deliver walk and talk events, and until recently a 'ride a long' experience (currently paused). Police also run regular events at Riverside Hostel which has been well received.

Given issues of safety in the night-time economy a priority has been given to VAWG work. This includes a digital media campaign and QR codes displayed on a mobile messaging van and deployed with key messaging related to drink spiking, Ask for Angela, and the Look Up Look Out (anti robbery campaign).

The Aldgate Connect Business Improvement District and the councils (City of London and LBTH) have formed partnership of the Met Police, City of London Police, City of London Corporation, LBTH and businesses to develop a collaborative business engagement campaign signposting to resources and information relevant for their employees, businesses and colleagues. The campaign name is **Safer Paths**.

Women's Safety Action Plan

It is a long-term umbrella initiative that aims to tackle violence against women & girls, trialled first within Aldgate and City of London districts through a collaborative and engaging communications campaign. The Safer Paths campaign will have a range of touchpoints and outputs that helps to:

- Support businesses offering guidance and advice from local authorities.
- Signpost support opportunities for any vulnerable individuals.
- Highlight nearby safe venues and organisations for anyone feeling unsafe in the City of London.
- Showcase **#SaferPaths** approved businesses within the City of London that can offer support & guidance.
- Raise awareness of venues who deploy night-time safety schemes – e.g., Ask for Angela, WAVE.
- Reverse the perception of 'unsafeness' through careful empowerment messaging.

The establishment of a Women's Resource Centre is one of the mayor's priority projects. The objective of the centre is to provide a safe space for learning, development and support for women as part of addressing the equity challenges for marginalised women including victims of domestic abuse and especially Bangladeshi women. Local data suggests Bangladeshi women continue to be marginalised and face economic, health, social and gender inequalities disproportionately.

The exclusive centre for women and girls will the opportunity to seek support in a centre carefully designed to meet their needs including an on-site creche facility to support childcare arrangements. The centre will be based in a gated location between Osmani School and Osmani Trust, set within a mile of the former Jagonari Women's Education and Resource Centre. In addition to the learning and development courses that will be delivered from the site, the centre will also provide a vital advice base for VAWG and other public health concerns affecting women such as women's safety in public spaces.

Action	Owner(s)	Completion date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an anti-sexual harassment campaign with Hackney Council and City of London. 	Rosie Whitelegg, VAWG Coordinator, LBTH	November 2023 Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensing Policy includes requirements for all licensed premises in LBTH to actively not tolerate misogyny in their venues. 	Tom Lewis, Licensing and Safety Team Leader, LBTH	December 2023 Completed

Women's Safety Action Plan

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women's Safety Walks occur regularly to provide an opportunity for female residents to share concerns over specific areas in LBTH 	<p>Joshuah Codjoe, Neighbourhood Safety Manager, LBTH</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women's Safety in Public Spaces Consultation recommendations published 	<p>Jennie Savage, Public Realm Project Officer, LBTH</p>	<p>October 2023 Completed</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police try to improve their relationship and build trust with women and girls 	<p>DI Yasmin Lalani - MPS</p>	<p>Ongoing Met Police New VAWG Strategy</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police target perpetrators within the night-time economy 	<p>DI Yasmin Lalani - MPS</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Aldgate Connect Business Improvement District's Safer Paths will launch Q1 2024 with a microsite, a business communication (print and digital) and internal posters of awareness of safety champions and anti-misogyny messaging. The collaborative 'Safer Paths' campaign is around safety, reassurance and business awareness of how employers can have agency in combatting VAWG. The campaign promotes gentle messaging, business advice with wayfinding, solidarity and community being central to combatting VAWG and hate crime. Phase 2 will be the roll out of awareness of Safer Paths venues (safe havens) staff training and other campaign roll out activities like fun runs etc. 	<p>Menara Ahmed, Senior VAWG and Hate Crime Manager and Zoe Barwick, BID Director, Aldgate Business Connect</p>	<p>Phase 1: Launch business booklet and toolkit for businesses in Q1 2024.</p> <p>Ongoing promotion and awareness raising through 2024</p> <p>2024 campaign KPIs will be worked but through a safety partnership working group coordinated by the Aldgate BID.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Growth & Economic Development team organised an open day, providing an opportunity for the boroughs Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to drop in and meet with business facing services in the council. VAWG team present to 	<p>Lucy Collins – Business Liaison Manager, Growth & Economic Development, LBTH</p>	<p>November 2023 Completed</p>

Women's Safety Action Plan

<p>engage with smaller businesses across the borough and promote awareness of the VAWG agenda</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Growth & Economic Development to deliver an event targeting LBTH corporate organisations to join up community/charity/third sector offers to corporates. VAWG to be present to engage with Corporates. Details to be agreed 	<p>Lucy Collins, Business Liaison Manager, Growth & Economic Development, LBTH</p>	<p>March 2024</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Night Time Economy Activity - Through WAVE training, work to expand Ask 4 Angela campaign locally with Safer Sounds • Promote Street Safe in local community • Internal persons within the pub and clubs. Number of Welfare and Vulnerability Engagement (WAVE) training delivered to all NTE venues and number of Ask4Angela training delivered to all NTE venues • Monthly walk and talk • Relentlessly pursue and actively manage prolific perpetrators using multi agency whole system approach • Linked series of sexual assaults are given to 1 detective to take ownership of that series • Seek to support Probation's use of GPS tagging for high risk offenders • MetGirlz – offering support and mentorship for young girls on periphery of crime in collaboration with educational facility. • Collaborative work with Youth Offending teams, to focus on women and girls through criminal justice system. • Women/Children community focused groups focusing on informal conversations around lived experiences of crime and support needed. 	<p>Yasmin Lalani, MPS CI Dave Hodges MPS, Fiona Shaik Umar MPS</p>	<p>Ongoing 2024</p>

Women's Safety Action Plan

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership work with local Somali women and girls sports session to promote safety in sport/outdoor activities Presentations in collaboration with youth engagement team to youth centres around VAWG/hate crime 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Mayor has launched a Women's Commission which will focus on bringing women's lived experience with a focus on safety and this will bring forward recommendations for consideration by the Council and partners. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Afazul Hoque, Head of Corporate Strategy and Communities</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">December 2024</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Council of Mosques to tackle hate crime and violence against women and girls, provide activities for women and girls in mosques, and encourage more representation of women in mosque management. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Afazul Hoque, Head of Corporate Strategy and Communities, Jaber Khan, Senior Strategy and Policy Officer</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">March 2025</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue development and implementation of VAWG programme of work to raise awareness and promote VAWG offer/women safety with Tower Hamlets Inter-faith Forum (THIFF) and Council of Mosques. This includes reaching out to all THIFF and Council of Mosques representatives with VAWG offer. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Menara Ahmed, Senior VAWG and HC Manager, Arif Ahmed, Mosque Engagement Coordinator, Council of Mosques, Sufia Alam, Head of Programmes Maryam Centre</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">December 2024</p>
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>The Council to review its current funding arrangements and strongly consider increasing the capacity to support women's groups that provide domestic abuse (DA) services to the community. This is to tie into a service-wide review of what is on offer to women of all communities.</p>		
<p>Comments from Service:</p> <p>The Director of Public Health has committed to £475,000 per annum from the Public Health grant for re-commissioning of the domestic abuse casework service. Contract has gone to tender in 2023.</p>		

Women's Safety Action Plan

The Current Refuge Provision comprises of 34 bed spaces, a generic refuge and BAMER specific refuge. This is currently being reviewed and re-commissioned.

The 'Safer Paths' Campaign promotes gentle messaging around the topic with wayfinding, solidarity and community being central to combatting VAWG and hate crime.

Action	Owner(s)	Completion date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioning of domestic abuse casework service with £475,000 funding committed per annum for next three years. This includes ensuring Sylheti and Somali speaking specialist caseworkers and co-locations at key hubs. 	Menara Ahmed, Senior VAWG and Hate Crime Manager, LBTH	March 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To commission and maintain the Mayors Community Grants Programme which has a Community Safety theme of 8 projects with a total funding of £223,399 per year from 1 November 2023 to 31 March 2027. Project activities include self-defence classes for girls and women, support to BAME women affected by domestic abuse and early intervention activities to keep vulnerable young people safe. 	Afazul Hoque, Head of Corporate Strategy and Communities, Robert Mee, VCS Grants Lead	March 2027
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayor's Priority Project: Establishment of a Women's Resource Centre with a focus on targeting community groups in particular Bangladeshi women. The Corporate Strategy and Communities team are leading the establishment of a new women's resource centre in the borough. This centre will serve as a learning, development, capacity building and wellbeing resource for marginalised women. 	Afazul Hoque, Head of Corporate Strategy and Communities Syeda Hassan, Voluntary and Community Sector Development Officer	December 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Aldgate Connect Business Improvement District and the collaborative 'Safer Paths' campaign around safety, 	Zoe Barwick, BID Director, Aldgate Business Connect,	December 2023 and ongoing

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<p>reassurance and business awareness of how employers can have agency in combatting VAWG. The campaign promotes gentle messaging around the topic with wayfinding, solidarity and community being central to combatting VAWG and hate crime.</p>	<p>Menara Ahmed, Senior VAWG and Hate Crime Manager</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support community campaigns such as safe havens, fun runs and safer walking routes developed through this wider partnership Safer Paths work. 	<p>Zoe Barwick, BID Director, Aldgate Business Connect</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Recommendation 3 The Council to ensure that it factors in improving self-defence access for women and girls when considering leisure, public health and physical wellbeing activities.</p>		
<p>Comments from Service:</p> <p>In keeping with our Women's Safety theme, we are partnering with our Sports & Physical Activity Team and have commissioned them to deliver 2 self-defence classes each week for 18 months. This gives women access to physical and mental health & wellbeing classes, leisure and it has a positive impact on public health. We have also included the VAWG Team training courses, which the council offers for free, to ensure that we are educating and empowering our local female business owners and employees with knowledge on VAWG issues which may affect them. We are targeting all the businesses within the town centre and its central activity zone which is included for the purpose of the programme. This has approximately 400 businesses.</p> <p>The SPA team has successfully run various events and physical activities during international women day and week engaging over 1200 women and girls in the borough.</p> <p>The Sports Team are currently seeking funding to develop a sports programme for women and girls to celebrate International Women's Day.</p> <p>The in-housing of the leisure services is under development and further information will be available soon regarding any opportunities around women safety. The leisure insourcing team also held a women and girls engagement session around sport and physical activity participation with over 80 participants at the Town Hall which identified some safety concerns (e.g. inappropriate lighting around the centres). The new leisure service will work with the appropriate teams (e.g. planning, VAWG) to address those concerns and will conduct more consultation with women and girls to review progress.</p>		

Women's Safety Action Plan

Action	Owner(s)	Completion date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whitechapel Town Centre commission self-defence classes for local businesses. 	Bridget Galloway, Whitechapel Town Centre Manager, LBTH	March 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VAWG Days of Action for local businesses to encourage take up of VAWG training and awareness sessions. 	Bridget Galloway, Whitechapel Town Centre Manager, LBTH	March 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports Team to create calendar of sporting activities for women and girls 	Tim Clee, Programme Manager, Sports/Physical Activity, LBTH	April 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two self-defence classes to be delivered each week for 18 months 	Pauline Stewart, Physical Activity Officer, Culture, LBTH	December 2024
<p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>The council's Children and Education Service in particular Young Tower Hamlets to design support increasing capacity at schools on raising awareness of domestic abuse (DA) and support available.</p> <p>Comments from Service: Schools are continually offered support with training and changing policies around VAWG and misogyny in schools.</p> <p>The Healthy Lives Team have ensured that LBTH schools have more Bronze, Silver and Gold Healthy Schools Awards than any other London borough. 96% of LBTH schools have a bronze award, which includes teaching non-statutory topics relating to Relationships Education, Sex Education and Health Education. Schools have a Relationships and Sex Education policy, which details what and how their school is teaching the various topics. The team offer training, support and materials to all schools (teachers and pupils) on these areas which includes healthy and respectful relationships, online abuse such as revenge porn, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, family relationships and being safe. This is in furtherance to 2019 Department for Education statutory guidance. Primary and secondary schools are included.</p>		
Action	Owner(s)	Completion date

Women's Safety Action Plan

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-VAWG pledge and support promoted to schools to educate staff, parents and governors about VAWG. 	<p>Amy-Kate Garwood, VAWG Training and Awareness Officer, LBTH</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Healthy Lives team will support schools with their PSHE provision and delivery, and this will be measured by 80% of schools having a Bronze Healthy Schools award from the Mayor of London 	<p>Kate Smith, Head of Healthy Lives, LBTH</p>	<p>July 2025</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Tower Hamlets (YTH) will work with the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) training and awareness officer to train staff as VAWG & HC champions in the service. • Youth Service staff will meet monthly/quarterly to plan and deliver VAWG & HC sessions in youth safe spaces. • The VAWG/HC Champions course will include introducing those attending to all VAWG and HC strands to help attendees understand the range of options available in the borough and to identify appropriate referral pathways. • Train all Youth Council representatives to become VAWG/HC champions and YTH will also plan and deliver peer on peer education workshops in Youth Safe Spaces. • YTH will identify a staff member to become the lead VAWG/HC champion/specialist for the service who can offer support and guidance at a more local level and coordinate the meetings for the VAWG/HC champions and work with Youth Council reps to deliver the peer education programme in youth safe spaces as a pilot. 	<p>Hasan Faruq – Young Tower Hamlets Participation and Operations Manager, LBTH</p>	<p>December 2025</p>

Women's Safety Action Plan

<p>LBTH Education Safeguarding Service will continue to promote the VAWG strands through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its safeguarding training packages delivered to school stakeholders including All Staff groups, Governing Bodies, and Designated Safeguarding Leads, and the termly Designated Safeguarding Leads Forums. • VAWG Training and Awareness Officer invited to present at the termly school DSL Forum to ensure DSLs are kept up to date with the VAWG agenda and offer. Encouraging schools to take the offer of VAWG training and the VAWG Pledge. • Operation Encompass – 92% of the total eligible schools have signed up to Operation Encompass. THESS is actively working with the remaining schools to sign up. Please note Independent Schools are not included in the scheme. • The provision of an annually updated model Child Protection Policy which is sent out to all schools. This is to ensure school's Child Protection Policy includes VAWG strands, are compliant and in line with the latest guidance. • The bi-annual Section 175/11 Safeguarding Audit Cycle for schools, which includes relevant themed areas such as Child-on-Child abuse, Human rights and Equality, PSHE/RSE, LGBTQ+, and Online Safety. The audits are evaluated by the Quality Assurance and Training Officer and any gaps identified in the school's arrangements are followed up. 	<p>Sharifa Choudhury, Education Team Manager, Lisa Fraser, Head of Education, LBTH</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>The Council and Residential Social Landlord (RSL) partners should actively strengthen their partnership workings to focus on tackling women safety issues on RSL estates which will build on ongoing RSL work begun with the Ask the Ombudsman event.</p>		
<p>Comments from Service:</p>		

Women's Safety Action Plan

It is recommended that all Registered Social Landlords (now Registered Providers of Social Housing/RPSH) improve their response to victims of domestic abuse through Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation – this is the national benchmark of good practice for RSLs.

Good practice recommendations have been presented to Housing teams and registered providers of social housing via TH Housing Management Forum, TH Common Housing Register Forum and TH Housing Forum. This aimed to encourage improvement of their response to victims of domestic abuse by going through Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation. This was also followed up via a letter.

Action	Owner(s)	Completion date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of good practice recommendations to TH Housing Management Forum, TH Common Housing Register Forum and TH Housing Forum. Delivery via meeting presentations and letters circulation. • Support RPSH's with good practice recommendations where requested. 	Rafiqul Hoque, Head of Housing Options, LBTH, Menara Ahmed, Senior VAWG and Hate Crime Manager, LBTH	Completed October 2023 Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LBTH Housing working towards achieving Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation with support from VAWG Team. 	Conor Lewis, Assistant Transformation Manager, Housing	End of Q3 2024/25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the Ombudsman information session held for Tower Hamlets Homes and Housing Association tenants and leaseholders. The Housing Ombudsman for England provided information on the role of the Housing Ombudsman Service and the process residents should follow to get complaints about their social housing landlord dealt with effectively. 	Karen Swift, Divisional Director, Housing, LBTH	Completed October 2023

Recommendation 6

Women's Safety Action Plan

The Police/THEOs to actively target and focus their recruitment and retention strategy to reflect recruiting representative women from the community in Tower Hamlets. This to be done in cooperation with faith communities and the Council.

Comments from Service:

An inclusive recruitment campaign was designed by the community safety working alongside HR, Trade Unions, the Women's Staff Network, Account3, Female THEOs, the VAWG Team and other female members of staff within the organisation. This design work was to identify and understand any barriers to women joining the THEO service. Some of the work that followed included "Women only Open Evenings" and bespoke presentations from women who are currently conducting the THEO role. On the first phase of recruitment several women were shortlisted and attended the recruitment and inclusive selection day/s. In the first tranche of recruitment, 4 women were successfully recruited into the THEO service. Other tranches of recruitment are to follow. Phase 4 of the THEO recruitment is currently live on the job advert, with Phase 3 closed shortlisting and assessment are to follow in June.

Action	Owner(s)	Completion date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> THEO inclusive campaign and recruitment targeted under-represented minorities, including women so that women felt represented on the streets of LBTH. 	Joanne Woodgates, Enforcement Team Leader, LBTH	October 2024 Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment with faith communities this will formulate part of the recruitment campaign. Interconnection and working with faith groups within Tower Hamlets. 	Keith Stanger – Head of Safer Neighbourhood Operations	October 2024

Recommendation 7

All Tower Hamlets Councillors (Male and Female) to support and champion women's safety issues through the established channels such as 'male allies' programme, women safety focussed walkabouts and building this within the roles when engaging the public within the constituencies and member surgeries.

Comments from Service: All councillors have been offered the VAWG Champions and male allyship training programme. This can be delivered in person or virtually.

Women's Safety Action Plan

Action	Owner(s)	Completion date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VAWG Champions, male allyship training offered to Tower Hamlets Councillors. 	Rose Whitelegg, VAWG Coordinator, LBTH	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VAWG Champions training offered through the 'Safer Paths' Campaign as part of the rollout (phase 2) 	Zoe Barwick, BID Director, Aldgate Business Connect	Ongoing

<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>09 July 2024</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Afazul Hoque, Head of Strategy & Communities</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Draft Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-25</p>	

Originating Officer(s)	<p>Afazul Hoque, Head of Corporate Strategy & Communities</p> <p>Daniel Kerr, Strategy & Policy Lead</p>
Wards affected	All Wards

Executive Summary

This report sets out the draft Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-25 for:

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

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

- Resources & Finance;
- Community Safety;
- Environment & Community Safety

The draft work programme has been informed by the Members workshop session held on Wednesday 19th July 2024 which involved co-opted members across all scrutiny committees.

Strategy and Policy officers also held initial discussions with the DLTs and gathered intelligence from a range of sources including council performance reports, annual complaints data and horizon scanning on key national, regional and local issues that scrutiny may want to engage.

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the draft Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-25
2. Provide any further thoughts or comments on the draft Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-25

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The work programme of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC), its three sub-committees, and three Scrutiny Leads sets out focus areas that scrutiny members have identified as important to scrutinise over this municipal year.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The scrutiny work programme is delivered on an ad hoc basis. This is not recommended as it is unfocused and is not an efficient use of members and officers time and will not have an impact on improving outcomes for residents.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 For 2024/25, the scrutiny function is undertaken by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and three scrutiny sub-committees (Health & Adults, Housing & Regeneration, and Children's & Education). There is also a dedicated Scrutiny Lead for Resources & Finance, Community Safety, and Environment and Climate Change.

Developing the work programme

- 3.2 Members of the OSC, and Co-opted Members across the scrutiny committees, held a workshop on 19 June 2024 to discuss the work programme for 2024-25. This was a joint workshop across all Scrutiny committees to develop a coordinated approach to delivering Scrutiny in 2024/25.
- 3.1 In preparation for the workshop, all Directorate Leadership Teams (DLT) were engaged and asked to highlight areas where Scrutiny will add value to their work, identify key challenges, areas of policy development and key decisions. This included a consideration of the timing of items and how to engage partners or independent experts. There was a specific focus on items where scrutiny could help shape policy development and allow input into strategies

and key decisions whilst in their drafting stages. This will provide scrutiny with an opportunity to add value and ensure the robustness and transparency of key policies and decisions. Scrutiny Members and supporting officers will prioritise early and regular engagement with DLTs to ensure the strategic focus of the work programme is maintained throughout the year.

- 3.2 Scrutiny Leads have also met (or will shortly meet) with Corporate Directors, Divisional Directors, and Cabinet Members to discuss their portfolios, consider how they can best work with each other, and understand where the efforts of scrutiny can be put to best use. Scrutiny Leads will continue to meet with Corporate Directors and Cabinet Members every quarter to help embed scrutiny as a tool for continuous improvement. It will also provide a space outside of formal committee meetings to discuss key issues and prioritise, scope, and agree the format of scrutiny activities throughout the year.
- 3.3 The first meeting of each Sub-Committee is framed as a Members induction and provides members across all Committees with an opportunity to feed into the development of the work programme. This includes a brief overview of the portfolio from services, with officers given the opportunity to sign post members to areas where they can support their work through scrutiny. This is followed by a members discussion to put forward topics they would like to see considered and included in the work programme.

OSC Work Programme Workshop

- 3.4 To identify areas of focus for the committee, the workshop considered:
 - Scrutiny values;
 - Prioritisation methods and tools;
 - Council priorities, performance information and horizon scan information;
 - How to engage residents and partners more effectively;
 - Priorities and outcomes the committees wish to achieve.
- 3.5 Members also discussed the Scrutiny Improvement Plan and considered the actions needed to enhance the scrutiny function.
- 3.6 Members voted on their priorities for each Committee and produced a list of the top five areas for each Committee to cover. In developing the work programme, OSC were clear that they wanted to look at fewer issues in more depth and be clear about what outcomes they want to achieve and how they can add value to allow them to make more effective recommendations.

Next Steps

- 3.7 Following discussion at this meeting, Strategy and Policy officers will take the draft work programme 2024-25 to:
 - Scrutiny leads for further discussions and consider any resident feedback on scrutiny topics;

- Discuss the WP at Sub-committees' and seek any further comments and feedback;
- Discuss with Corporate Directors / Divisional Directors and seek further comments and feedback;
- Discuss with DLTs and seek any further feedback and incorporating and reflecting any key timelines; and
- Prepare the O&S Work Programme 2024-25 for OSC to agree at the September's meeting.

<p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>09 July 2024</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Afazul Hoque, Head of Strategy & Communities</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Tower Hamlets Scrutiny Improvement Plan</p>	

Executive Summary

This report refreshes the Council’s Scrutiny Improvement Plan. The plan builds on the Committee’s existing improvement programme. It captures additional actions discussed at the Scrutiny Performance Review workshop, the Cabinet report discussed with the Chief Executive at the June OSC meeting, and the discussions from the scrutiny work programme workshop held in June. It also includes actions discussed with officers and Members from Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea.

Recommendations:

Overview & Scrutiny is recommended to:

1. Review the actions set out to strengthen the Council’s Scrutiny function and suggest further actions the Council can take to ensure Scrutiny in Tower Hamlets is effective, robust, and adds value to strategic priorities and residents' lived experiences.
2. Agree to implement the Scrutiny Improvement Plan

1 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 2.1. This is a comprehensive plan to enhance the scrutiny function within the Council. Delivery of the plan is a critical step towards ensuring transparency and accountability in council policy development and decision-making, as well as ensuring meaningful engagement with our community.
- 2.2. Many of the challenges facing scrutiny in Tower Hamlets are also posed to other Local Authorities across the country. Many Councils struggle with meaningful public engagement, robust financial scrutiny, and developing Members understanding of risk and other fundamental issues. Over the last 12 months the Council has focused on strengthening the Overview and

Scrutiny Function and addressing these sector-wide issues, whilst working to realign resources to better support it. Delivery of this Plan will further strengthen scrutiny and help establish this function as an exemplar.

2.3. Progress of the Scrutiny Improvement Plan will be reviewed on a 6-monthly basis. Members will have an opportunity to hold delivery of the plan to account and identify any further areas where additional action is required.

2.4. The success of this plan requires the buy-in of the Executive, Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team, and Scrutiny Members. Therefore, they have each been engaged in developing this plan to ensure they consider how they improve their contributions to scrutiny and enable it to be as effective as possible. Actions in the plan have been collated from the following:

- 1) Scrutiny Member Performance Review April 2024 – facilitated by Centre for Governance & Scrutiny (CFGGS).
- 2) Enhancing Scrutiny Cabinet Report – discussed with the Chief Executive at the June 2024 OSC meeting.
- 3) Visits to Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Scrutiny – discussions with Scrutiny Members and officers.
- 4) Scrutiny Work Programme Workshop -19 June.

2.5. As detailed in the cabinet report, the Council believes that it should strive for exemplar status for its Scrutiny function. The Improvement plan will look to support this in the following ways:

1. **Strengthening Community Engagement.** We are committed to making it easier for residents to participate in Council decisions. We will:

- Enhance our online scrutiny platform and ensure residents know how to get involved.
- Hold workshops and community meetings to hear residents' views on key issues and include their thoughts in our work programming.
- Create more opportunities for residents to provide evidence at our meetings and share their experiences.

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3. **Gathering Diverse Evidence to make informed decisions,** we will:

- Engage a wide range of witnesses and experts to provide comprehensive insights.
- Consider co-opting independent experts into our scrutiny committees for diverse perspectives.

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4. **Improving our Scrutiny Function, supporting it to be member-led, independent and continually aiming to improve.** We will:

- Conduct a thorough review of our scrutiny function and implement improvements based on Member feedback and best practices.

- Ensure that all recommendations are followed up and their impacts are reported back to Scrutiny so we understand the impact scrutiny has.
5. **Enhancing Governance and Accountability.** Build a culture of openness and collaboration, where all officers and Members take accountability for their role in the success of the scrutiny function. To achieve this, we will:
 - Strengthen the role of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer, ensuring they effectively advocate for transparency.
 - Foster stronger relationships between the Council's Executive and Scrutiny bodies for better collaboration and results.
 - Ensure Cabinet Member representation for all items.
 6. **Promoting Diversity and Inclusion.** We are dedicated to enhancing diversity within our scrutiny leadership. We will:
 - Increase the number of female leaders within our scrutiny roles, reflecting our community's diversity.
 7. **Investing in Training and Development** to ensure members can effectively perform their role. We will:
 - Provide comprehensive training on crucial issues such as risk management and financial scrutiny.
 - Offer tailored training opportunities based on regular skills audits.
 8. **Adopting Best Practices.** We aim to be a leading example of good governance. We will:
 - Engage with regional and national best practices and learn from other local authorities.
 - Ensure all our meetings are effectively planned and legally supported.
 9. **Develop a Coordinated Work Programme.** Our scrutiny work will be aligned with our strategic goals and community priorities. We will:
 - Develop a work programme that addresses key issues, strategic priorities and reflects residents concerns.
 - Use a clear selection process to prioritise the most important topics for scrutiny.

Commitment from Chief Executive Officer

- 2.6. The Chief Executive has committed to supporting Members to drive through the changes needed to strengthen the scrutiny function in the Council. The Chief Executive has discussed areas of improvement with Overview & Scrutiny Members, Cabinet, and the Statutory Scrutiny Officer.
- 2.7. The Chief Executive attended the Scrutiny Work programme and suggested a number of actions that he would support Scrutiny to deliver to enhance scrutiny, including:

- Aspire to be excellent through visits and learn from the best. To date a visit has taken place to Kensington and Chelsea with our Chair of Scrutiny meeting their equivalent and a sub-committee chair. Plans are being developed to meet with Members from other boroughs for after the general election period.
- Members now have Personal Training Budgets. These were launched at the end of May and Scrutiny Members in particular are encouraged to make use of these.
- The Statutory Scrutiny Officer role needed to be enhanced and as an initial change to improve the visibility of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer role the CE proposes to temporarily designate this to a Corporate Director (whilst the new Scrutiny structure is embedded and then review).
- Enhance the Member mentoring programme – linked to the new Individual Member Budgets – identify suitable external mentors to support senior Members (including Scrutiny Leads) where this is highlighted in the Member's PDP as a priority. Scrutiny Members have been identified as priorities for this project.
- Review and improve how OSC engage with the Executive – any improvements will then be set out in the new Protocol .
- Subject to standard HR restructure procedures and consultation, create a new Scrutiny team with manager and a dedicated team under them of probably 3 members. Research is being undertaken to understand best structures from other authorities and the CfGS and a meeting with HR on 2 July will help to set the formal timeline.
- Review and encourage the use of external experts/advisors and similar to support Scrutiny Sub-Committees and task groups. This will depend on the priority subject areas identified by Scrutiny in their work programme. (The work programme will be signed off in September)
- Establishing a protocol of working with the Executive on pre-scrutiny and call-ins. A draft will be presented to the Committee for review in September. (It will be for the Committee to agree a final version)
- Section 151 to co-ordinate external training for all Scrutiny Members throughout the year so that when budgets need to be scrutinised in year or as part of the main budget process they are in a better position to do so.
- Legal support to be provided at each scrutiny meeting from September.
- An additional meeting for the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee. Additional meetings for other sub-committees or changes to the overall structure of sub-committees could be explored if the Committee wish subject to any need to review available resourcing.
- The CE will ensure that there is a budget that is of a sufficient size to meet the requirements set out above and will positively look at other proposals from the Committee.

- Where possible, the activities advocated by the CE will start from September (some are for the Committee to agree so timeline will depend on their decisions).

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Overview & Scrutiny Committee Improvement Plan

2024/25

(A) Aims and Objectives: All Members, officers and residents in Tower Hamlets to understand the role of scrutiny and what it aims to achieve					
Objective	Priority	Action	Owners	Delivery	Progress/Comments
O&S has a clearly defined and valued role in the Council's improvement and governance arrangements. This includes prioritising resources to ensure that the scrutiny function concentrates on delivering work of genuine value and relevance to the work of the wider authority.	Improve engagement with the Executive. Establish ongoing engagement between Scrutiny Leads, Cabinet Members, and senior officers to ensure scrutiny members are engaged on key issues, add value to key strategic priorities, and are involved from the very beginning of policy initiation.	Scrutiny Leads to meet with senior officers and Cabinet Members every quarter.	Strategy & Communities	June 2024-April 2025	Meetings have been arranged with Corporate Directors, Cabinet Leads and Scrutiny Leads for 2024/25. Scrutiny Members may also meet with additional Directors throughout the year depending on issues which arise.
		Provide scrutiny with additional resources which will allow for dedicated scrutiny support to deliver a comprehensive work programme, hold additional sub-committee meetings, and add additional co-opted members	Chief Executive	April 2025	This will be considered and delivered as part of the corporate restructure.

	Increase the profile of O&S and promote details of the scrutiny work programme and all other scrutiny activities internally and externally.	Develop a Communications plan for 2024-25 to promote and publicise the work of the scrutiny function across the corporate comms channels.	Strategy & Communities, Communications	September 2024	A draft programme has been developed by Strategy & Communities. Communications will now be engaged to develop the plan further and support delivery.
	All Members, Officers, and other key stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities relating to scrutiny.	Develop and promote a scrutiny toolkit.	Strategy & Communities	September 2024	A scrutiny toolkit is published to provide essential information and guidance to all key stakeholders. Following amendments to the structure this will need to be amended. Further work is needed to promote this in order to increase Officer and Member uptake. This will be captured in the Communications Plan.
		Deliver a training session for the Mayor and Cabinet on	Strategy & Communities	November 2024	The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny engaged MAB in April 2024 to discuss the function of Scrutiny and the

		<p>'supporting effective Scrutiny'.</p>			<p>expectations of the Executive and the Corporate Management Team (CMT). Consideration will be given to further work needed with the Executive and CMT (separately).</p>
		<p>Develop a Scrutiny Protocol that meets local needs and is understood by all parties. This will address issues such as how Cabinet will engage with scrutiny recommendations at Cabinet and establish a process that supports a formal response to all issues referred to Cabinet by overview and scrutiny including recommendations, questions or calls for action.</p>	<p>Strategy & Communities</p>	<p>September 2024</p>	<p>A draft protocol has been drafted. Officers will now engage CMT and Cabinet to ensure it is understood and meets the needs of all parties. This will strengthen arrangements that promote effective working between scrutiny and the executive.</p>
		<p>A mandatory training session, for all senior managers will be introduced on how to support effective scrutiny.</p>	<p>Strategy & Communities, Democratic Services, HR</p>	<p>April 2025</p>	

O&S Members receive the training and development opportunities to deliver their roles effectively	Establish an annual training package for Scrutiny Members to help develop the key skills required to perform their roles.	Undertake an annual audit of Members skills to inform their development needs and training required	Strategy & Communities	June 2024	A skills audit has been circulated to all Scrutiny Members.
		Provide an annual induction/refresher for all Scrutiny Members to ensure they understand scrutiny's purpose and role.	Strategy & Communities	June 2024	A scrutiny induction/refresher workshop was delivered to Members on 13 June.
		Draft a scrutiny Member learning & development programme, and commission external training (where required) including a mentoring programme.	Strategy & Communities	September 2024	New Individual Member Training Budgets are available to Members for tailored training to help with their scrutiny roles. Conversations with potential external partners that might assist with a new mentoring programme have started.
		Introduce a specific training element for scrutiny members focusing on the management of corporate and service risks and the MTFS to address sector weaknesses identified by recent studies. Additionally, Section	Strategy & Communities, Internal Audit Anti-Fraud & Risk, Finance	October 2024	

		151 to co-ordinate external training for all Scrutiny Members throughout the year so that when budgets need to be scrutinised in year or as part of the main budget process they are in a better position to do so.			
Tower Hamlets reflects best practice in the delivery of its scrutiny function Page 73	Engage with regional and national best practices, including exploring learning opportunities with other local authorities	Promote and engage in meetings of the London Scrutiny Network (Members & Officers)	Strategy & Communities	April 2025	
		Promote and engage in Centre for Governance and Scrutiny events/conferences (Members & Officers)	Strategy & Communities	April 2025	
		Officers will review scrutiny procedures in relation to the recently published good practice guides from the Centre for Public Scrutiny and Statutory Scrutiny Guidance and report to OSC on completion.	Strategy & Communities	May 2024	LBTH delivery against statutory guidance was considered in a report discussed by the Committee in May 2024
		Scrutiny support officers will visit neighbouring	Strategy & Communities, Democratic Services	April 2025	Two meetings have taken place with officers and Members from Kensington &

		boroughs to explore shared learning opportunities and learn from best practices, understand different approaches to supporting scrutiny, and address issues such as party-political conflicts and member development.			Chelsea. Further meetings are being arranged with Lewisham, Hackney, and Greenwich.
(B) Meeting Administration: All scrutiny meetings to be run in a professional and highly efficient way to enable effective scrutiny to take place					
O&S meetings and activities are well-planned, chaired effectively and make the best use of the resources available to it Page 6 of 74	Ensure Executive and Senior Officer representation at all meetings.	Liaise with the Mayor's Office and CMT to establish when the Mayor, Cabinet Members, and Directors are expected for items	Strategy & Communities	August 2024	OSC meetings have been moved to Tuesday evenings to avoid a clash with the Mayor's surgery. The Mayor's Office and CMT will be engaged in the draft forward plan following the work programme workshop in June.
		Statutory Scrutiny Officer to meet with each Corporate Director to discuss concerns, expectations, and scrutiny arrangements for 2024-25.	Statutory Scrutiny Officer, Strategy & Communities	June 2024	All CMT Leads have been engaged as part of the work programme setting process and provided with an opportunity to feed in their views of how scrutiny can be more effective. Ongoing dialogue will continue with Corporate Directors throughout the year, including frequent

					attendance at DLTs and 1-1 meetings with Corporate Directors.
	All scrutiny meetings to be supported with legal representation	Monitoring Officer to consider legal representation at each meeting.	Monitoring Officer, Chief Executive	September 2024	
	Members receive information on time. This means action log requests are provided by the following meeting and all committee reports are to be shared with Members a week in advance of the meeting to allow Members sufficient time to review the papers and establish key lines of enquiry for the item.	Commission reports and engage the Executive and Senior Officers in sufficient time, setting out the committee's scope and expectations. Agendas for Sub-Committees to be circulated to DLTs 6 weeks in advance of each meeting.	Strategy & Communities	Apr 2025	
		Committee Chairs to hold a pre-agenda meeting with report authors three weeks before each Committee meeting. This will be an opportunity to discuss progress and ensure it meets the requirements of OSC.	Strategy & Communities, Committee Chairs	April 2025	
		Democratic Services to ensure that the	Democratic Services	April 2025	

		papers are published within the required publishing timelines. Informing the Committee Chairs if there are any deviations or changes to the agenda items			
		The Chief Executive will re-enforce the need to provide responses to Scrutiny information requests and committee papers in a timely manner, monitoring and enforcing specific turnaround times where issues are identified	Chief Executive	June 2025	
	Scrutiny Members to take responsibility and ownership of their scrutiny role, ensuring they are prepared for meetings and have read committee papers.	Scrutiny chairs to distribute agenda topics amongst committee members to help sharpen the focus/ examination of the topic and take collective ownership of the issue	Scrutiny Committee Chairs	Apr 2025	
		O&S Members to review Cabinet Papers and submit pre-decision questions by the deadline	Scrutiny Members	April 2025	

	volume of agenda items for more robust and effective scrutiny.	to support Members to prioritise scrutiny agenda items			in the scrutiny toolkit. Members were provided with this tool at the work programme workshop to inform their selection process.
		Provide additional 'offline' briefing sessions for members to develop their knowledge of upcoming agenda items and inform their questioning This may be a written briefing paper or a discussion with officers.	Directorate Executive officers and Strategy and Policy officers (supporting scrutiny)	April 2025	
Promote opportunities for residents to engage in scrutiny meetings.	Refresh the Communications Plan to engage residents. This should include a session to capture residents' priorities and suggestions for the work programme and holding meetings in community settings.	Hold some scrutiny meetings at community venues to encourage better local engagement and promote scrutiny's role in the community.	Strategy & Communities	April 2025	
		Hold a workshop with residents to collect their views on what issues scrutiny should focus on	Strategy & Communities	June 2024	A workshop was held with 21 residents in May to understand the issues they would like included in the work programme for 2024/25. Their feedback was shared with Members as part of the work programme workshop

		Explore the development of a scrutiny outreach programme where members of scrutiny will be supported to go into the community including schools and colleges to explain the important role of scrutiny and the work that it does.	Strategy & Communities, Democratic Services, Scrutiny Members	April 2025	
	Expand the scope and areas of focus of agenda items to include lived experience, external organisations, and local groups	Invite residents to provide evidence at Committee meetings	Strategy & Communities	April 2025	
		Links to the agenda planning and the Council's comms and engagement function will be put in place to pre-plan early the opportunities for resident engagement and the best way to organise it.	Strategy & Communities, Communications	June 2024	
	Promote the Council's online scrutiny webpage and mailbox including how residents can get involved	Include details on all promotional material and work with corporate comms and partners to help share details	Strategy & Communities	April 2025	

(D) Evidence gathering: Ensure a wide range of witnesses are engaged, and evidence researched, to allow Scrutiny to make informed and effective recommendations

Council explores where 'independent expertise' exists in the borough, taking account of existing networks and contacts, and how this could be used to assist independent scrutiny of services.	The discussion, findings and recommendations are informed by a broad range of independent views	Scrutiny chairs to consider where external expertise could be co-opted onto the committee, as they develop the work programme for 2024/25, particularly around budget scrutiny.	Scrutiny Leads supported by Strategy and Policy officers	April 2025	
		Create more opportunities for residents to give evidence at meetings and assist with collation of evidence	Strategy & Communities	April 2025	
		Invite independent experts to provide evidence and an 'alternative view' at meetings	Strategy & Communities	April 2025	
		Scrutiny Leads to gather evidence outside of meetings through meetings with officers and opportunities to engage with residents and partnership boards	Scrutiny Leads	April 2025	
(E) Scrutiny improves outcomes and drives improvement in public services					

<p>Scrutiny reviews its work on an annual basis and continually aims to improve.</p>	<p>Scrutiny is Member led, independent, and is provided with the opportunity to assess its performance and implement actions to strengthen its effectiveness.</p>	<p>Undertake a scrutiny function review to understand performance and where improvements are required.</p>	<p>Strategy & Communities</p>	<p>June 2024</p>	<p>A workshop was held with all Members to discuss strengths and challenges. The session was facilitated by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and allowed Members to highlight the actions they feel are needed to improve the scrutiny function. In addition, the Chief Executive has suggested several actions that could help strengthen scrutiny and discussed them with the Committee in June.</p>
<p>Improve governance arrangements to monitor recommendations</p>	<p>Scrutiny ensures its recommendations are actioned and reported back to the committee to understand their impact</p>	<p>Strategy and Policy officers to work with services to ensure delivery of action plans is on track and all officers are aware of when 'follow up' items have been scheduled into the work programme</p>	<p>Strategy & Communities</p>	<p>April 2025</p>	
	<p>Ensure delivery of the Scrutiny Improvement Plan to ensure Scrutiny in Tower Hamlets is effective, robust, and adds value to strategic priorities and residents' lived experiences.</p>	<p>Formally review the delivery of the improvement plan on a six-month basis.</p>	<p>Strategy & Communities, Scrutiny Members</p>	<p>April 2025</p>	

(F) Accountability & Culture: Nurture a culture of scrutiny and work closely with the Council’s Cabinet Leads and Corporate Directors to encourage their buy-in and have open and honest conversations about performance, key issues and identify where scrutiny can add value

Strengthen the role of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer and ensure it is more visible and receives further support to enable it to effectively advocate for the role of scrutiny.	Ensure the role of Statutory Scrutiny Officer is fully integrated into the work and decision-making of the authority.	Allocate the role of Statutory Scrutiny Officer to a Corporate Director.	Chief Executive	September 2024	This will be considered as part of the corporate restructure
		Statutory Scrutiny Officer to develop an engagement programme with Corporate Directors and Directors to promote the work of the Scrutiny function and develop arrangements to identify key issues where Scrutiny input would be beneficial to the authority.	Statutory Scrutiny Officer		The Statutory Scrutiny Officer has met with all corporate directors to discuss the role of scrutiny and will meet with them throughout the year to discuss issues, challenges, where scrutiny needs their support, and how scrutiny can continue to add value.
	Strengthen the relationship between the Executive and Scrutiny	Statutory Scrutiny Office to attend CMT every month to discuss issues, forthcoming agenda items, and challenges	CMT and Statutory Scrutiny Officer	May 2025	
Improve the diversity and representation of scrutiny	Increase the number of females leading on scrutiny activity	Empower female members of the Committee to lead on scrutiny roles/projects	OSC Committee members	May 2024	A new Scrutiny Lead role was created for Environment and Climate change and Members voted for Cllr Natalie Bienfait to assume this position

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