

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE TRANSFORMATION ADVISORY BOARD

HELD AT 2.14 P.M. ON MONDAY, 11 DECEMBER 2023

COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL

Members Present in Person:

Mayor Lutfur Rahman	
Sir Steve Bullock DL	(Independent non-executive member)
Sir Stephen O'Brien	(Independent non-executive member)
Dr Mahera Ruby	(Independent non-executive member)
Dr Kathleen McCarthy	(Independent non-executive member)
Kate Herbert	(Independent non-executive member)
Hira Islam	(Independent non-executive member)
Stephen Halsey	(Chief Executive)
Denise Radley	(Corporate Director, Health and Social Care)
Richard Penn	(Advisor to the Mayor)

Officers Present in Person:

Afazul Hoque	(Head of Corporate Strategy & Policy)
Ayesha Hakim Rahman	(Acting Deputy Director of Strategy, Improvement and Transformation)
Kirsty Roberts	(Strategy & Policy Lead)
Matthew Mannion	(Head of Democratic Services)

Officers In Attendance Virtually:

Amy Jackson	(Head of Mayor's Office)
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1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Mayor Lutfur Rahman, as Chair of the Board, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He noted apologies for absence from:

- Martin Esom
- Alison Griffin
- Sir George Iacobescu CBE
- Robin Beattie
- Amy Jackson (attending virtually)
- Julie Lorraine

The Mayor also welcomed Sir Steve Bullock DL to his first meeting of the Board.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

In relation to Agenda Item 2 (LGA Peer Challenge) it was noted that the final report from the review would be published this coming Friday alongside the Council's action plan. The dashboard for that action plan would be presented at the next meeting of the Board.

In response to the discussion under Agenda Item 5 (Annual Residents' Survey) the Council had decided to increase the frequency of the surveys and look at focus groups and other potential activities to gauge resident views.

On Agenda Item 6 (Budget Monitoring) it was noted that the accounts from 2016/17 to 2019/20 had now been agreed and signed off. The remainder up to 2022/23 will be available for the public to view from February next year.

Finally it was noted that Richard Penn had taken on an ambassadorial role in relation to the Board and was meeting fellow Board members between meetings to discuss relevant issues.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Afazul Hoque, Head of Corporate Strategy and Communities, took the Board through the presentation set out in the Agenda Pack on the Community Engagement Strategy. He also noted that the Residents' Survey indicated that half of residents say the Council engages with them on decision making which was a good start but there was more to do.

The Mayor welcomed the paper as resident (and partner) engagement was an extremely important factor for the Council and was the golden thread linking services to the people of the borough.

During discussion, the Board noted a number of additional points, including that:

- It was important to look at all the ways the public could be engaged including through third sector and faith communities and the private sector could also offer valuable insight.
- The Board asked for more information on who had been consulted when developing the strategy.
- Engagement shouldn't just be about Council services but about the full-range of services delivered by the Council, its partners and other organisations. What do residents 'need'?
- Digital inclusion and supporting those for whom English was not a first language were important.

- Local media were also a useful method of engaging with different communities (and it was important to consider what was meant by communities as the local population was constantly changing).
- The link to the communication strategy was vital and it was important to make sure the public knew 'why' a particular consultation was taking place and what was 'possible' in each case.
- The new Young Mayor should be part of the discussions on how to engage with young people.
- The focus should be on co-production and not just consultation.

Actions:

- To present a paper to the Transformation Board with a deep dive on local housing issues.
- To bring a further paper back to the Board expanding on the discussion at the meeting and in particular looking at new, more innovative ways of engaging especially with hard to reach groups and looking at how to link in with the data held by partners.
- Board Members to send any further comments direct to Afazul Hoque.

5. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Kirsty Roberts, Strategy and Policy Lead, introduced the paper on Partnership Working. She took the Board through the enclosed presentation. In particular she drew the Boards attention to the questions asked at the start of the presentation on how the Council can develop effective mission-based partnerships and how it can strengthen its regional and national partnerships.

During discussion the Board considered a number of issues including that:

- It was important to be clear on the benefits to partners of engaging with the Council. There needed to be tangible outcomes.
- Where is the best practice that the Council can learn from? It was noted that a number of Northern towns had some useful relevant experiences on what worked and the LGA could help Tower Hamlets engage with them.
- It isn't possible to address everything through partnerships and where there were partnership meetings it was important to have consistent attendance by people who could take decisions.
- Housing was a top priority for the Council but it wasn't an issue it could tackle on its own. Partnership was vital. This also applied to other areas such as health inequality and educational attainment.
- Do the different partnership bodies know what the other groups are doing? How to ensure good alignment.
- The intention was to run a call to action to evaluate the partnership and its strategy.

Action

- Board Members to feedback any further comments to Kirsty Roberts.
- Officers to take on board the comments from the discussion to help develop the call for action.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS AND CLOSE

- In relation to the workplan, Board Members were asked to discuss this when they met with Richard Penn who would feed back to officers.
- The Mayor also highlighted that he was happy to meet with Board Members where that was useful.

The meeting ended at 3.42 p.m.

Chair, Mayor Lutfur Rahman
Transformation Advisory Board