

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda

**Tuesday, 10 September 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 Amina Ali, Councillor Asma Islam, Councillor Amy Lee, Councillor James King 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 and Councillor Marc Francis

[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>



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London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 10 September 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 - 22)

To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 9 and 23 July 2024.

4. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE QUERY AND ACTION LOG

5. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

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

6. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

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

7. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

The following items are due to be considered at the Cabinet meeting 11 July 2024. The committee is invited to consider the reports below:

7.1 Budget Monitoring 2024/25 Q1 (Pages 49 - 76)

8. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT

8.1 Business Rates Risks (Pages 77 - 90)

8.2 Transport Strategy (Pages 91 - 104)

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN FINAL DECISION AND SERVICE ACTION PLAN RESPONSE

10. FINAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2024-25

11. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

12. SCRUTINY LEADS UPDATES

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

13. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF UNRESTRICTED CABINET PAPERS

To consider the agenda of the 11 July 2024 meeting of Cabinet and agree pre-decision scrutiny questions/comments.

The agenda can be found by following this [link](#).

14. FORTHCOMING DECISIONS (PAGES 231 - 264)

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

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 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

Nil Items.

18. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

To consider any decisions of the Mayor in Cabinet in respect of exempt/ confidential reports on the agenda were 'called in'.

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

To consider the exempt/ confidential agenda of the 11 September 2024 meeting of Cabinet and agree pre-decision scrutiny questions/comments.

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, 15 October 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, 9 JULY 2024

COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL

Members Present in Person:

Councillor Jahed Choudhury	
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury	Scrutiny Lead for Housing and Regeneration
Councillor Suluk Ahmed	Scrutiny Lead for Community Safety
Councillor Ahmodur Khan	Scrutiny Lead for Resources
Councillor Abdul Mannan	Scrutiny Lead for Children and Education
Councillor Bellal Uddin	
Councillor Asma Islam	
Councillor Amy Lee	
Councillor Nathalie Bienfait	Scrutiny Lead for Environment and the Climate Emergency

Members In Attendance Virtually:

Councillor Amina Ali

Other Councillors Present in Person:

Mayor Luftur Raham	
Councillor Saied Ahmed	Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living
Councillor Abu Chowdhury	Cabinet Member for Safer Communities

Co-optees Present in Person:

Halima Islam

Officers Present in Person:

Stephen Halsey	Chief Executive
Julie Lorriane	Corporate Director for Resources and Deputy Chief Executive
John Ainsworth	Senior Performance Improvement Analyst
Richard Williams	Head of Operational Services
Simon Baxter	Corporate Director Communities
Dr Somen Banerjee	Director of Public Health
Simon Smith	Head of Community Safety
Menara Ahmed	Senior VAWG, Domestic Abuse & Hate Crime Manager
Afazul Hoque	(Head of Corporate Strategy & Communities)
Filuck Miah	(Senior Strategy and Policy Officer)
Thomas French	(Democratic Services Officer (Committees))

Officers In Attendance Virtually:

Pauline Maddison
Leo Major
Kelly Duggan

Director of Education
Head of Service - LAC & Through Care
Head of Youth Justice Service

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Jahed Ahmed and Cllr Amina Ali, who joined the meeting online.

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 21 May 2024 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings.

4. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE QUERY AND ACTION LOG

RESOLVED:

Members noted the action log.

5. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

Nil items.

6. REQUESTS TO HEAR PETITIONS

Nil items.

7. REVISED SCRUTINY LEAD PORTFOLIO AREAS

RESOLVED:

Members agreed the Scrutiny Lead Portfolio Areas

8. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT

8.1 Corporate Restructure

Mayor Lutfur Raham, Stephen Halsey, Chief Executive, Julie Lorraine, Corporate Director for Resources and Deputy Chief Executive presented the report on the progress on the council's 'People First' transformation journey so far.

The committee raised the following comments and questions

- The restructure places a lot of additional responsibilities on the resource's directorate, how will this be managed? Officers highlighted that legal, HR and other corporate functions are being moved, in line with other local authorities.
- Can officers give further detail on the proposed roles reporting to Chief Executive, with both a Deputy Chief Executive and an Assistant Chief Executive? Officers confirmed that the Deputy Chief Executive is a role to stand in when the Chief Executive is away and is currently being staffed by Julie Lorraine. The Assistant Chief Executive is a different role that is being developed to include communications and will be placed in December 2024, but it is still being looked into to see if its appropriate.
- Will there be any compulsory redundancies, to follow the current round of voluntary? Officers confirmed that there are no plans for compulsory redundancies as the council has committed to a 3 year financial plan that does not require any compulsory redundancies to happen. Voluntary redundancies will be open annually and this allows the council to assess the level of staffing each year.
- Where does the Mayor's Office sit within the new structure? Officers confirmed that majority of the office will be under the resources directorate, with other areas moving to other appropriate services, like the residents hub.
- Committee members requested the chair to allow for more time in committee meetings to scrutinise items. This meeting has seen many big items, including this restructure item, which has not been given enough time nor have members been allowed to ask enough questions.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the report.

9. WOMEN'S SAFETY ACTION PLAN RESPONSE PROGRESS (UPDATE)

Cllr Abu Chowdhury, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities, with Simon Smith, Head of Community Safety, Menara Ahmed Senior VAWG, Domestic Abuse & Hate Crime Manager presented an update on the Women's Safety Action Plan.

The committee raised the following comments and questions

- Members expressed concerns about inclusion of self-defence initiatives within the action plan, rather than actions to stop men undertaking violent crime.
- How will the council ensure the actions pledged by the Metropolitan Police will be scrutinised and held accountable. Officers highlighted that Community Safety Partnerships ensure ownership of actions in the action plan.
- What has been the community interest in self-defence classes? Officers stated that there has been limited take up to the classes, but this is due to who could take part in the classes. But with increased budget and greater awareness in the community, there has been greater take up.
- Members expressed their concerns about being women in public life and the potential danger they can feel in being councillors. The council needs to ensure that it creates a safe space for current members, officers and candidates. Cllr Abu Chowdhury agreed that members of the council should feel safe to undertake their roles, as well as those who work for the council. Officers highlighted the recent work of the Council's Women's Network and its work for staff. Training for members on support for the VAWG campaign is to be scheduled.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the update.

10. WORK PLAN AND SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

The chair introduced the Overview and Scrutiny workplan and improvement plan, the workplan will be agreed by committee in September 2024.

RESOLVED:

Members agreed the report.

11. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

Nil items.

12. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS

Nil Items.

13. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF UNRESTRICTED CABINET PAPERS

The Chair agreed to add items 6.1 Budget Monitoring 2023/24 Provisional Outturn and 6.4 Annual Strategic Delivery & Performance Report 23/24 from 10 July 2024 meeting of Cabinet for member discussion.

Cllr Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living, with Julie Lorriane, Corporate Director for Resources and Deputy Chief Executive, presented the report on Budget Monitoring 2023/24 Provisional Outturn

The committee raised the following comments and questions

- Within Housing and Housing Options, will there be more investment to deal with greater financial burdens? Officers commented on the areas of financial pressure that affect the council, including insurance and housing revenue overspend outside of capital works. There will be continued pressures with homelessness. Cabinet have recently looked at further investment within housing.
- Can officers provide more detail about the debts of the council and how this affects interest rates? Officers detailed how the interest rates available to the council have a huge impact on the budget, but with interest rates forecast to fall, the council is remaining cautious.
- Has the overall budget outturn affecting communities and vulnerable groups? Officers reported that effects would be the council not delivering on the spending to services that have not be promised. There is no concern that the council has not allocated enough to these groups, but committee members are closer to these communities and officers always welcome feedback on where the council is delivering.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the report

Mayor Lutfur Raham, Cllr Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living, with Julie Lorriane, Corporate Director for Resources and Deputy Chief Executive, John Ainsworth, Senior Performance Improvement Analyst, Richard Williams, Head of Operational Services, Simon Baxter, Corporate Director Communities presented the report on Annual Strategic Delivery & Performance Report 23/24.

The committee raised the following comments and questions

- The reporting on the school cycling scheme seems to be reduced, can officers provide further detail on this? Cllr Saied Ahmed detailed that building up of cycling instructors to take part in the scheme was an initial issue, but the scheme now is fully supported, so this will improve.
- Members highlighted concerns about the performance of waste and recycling. Officers agreed that further sessions of committee can be held to scrutinise waste and recycling performance.
- The level of Care Home admissions is concerning, what is causing this to perform so poorly? Adult social care in the borough is a growing issue for the council. Officers detailed the demand for adult social care, with both under and over 65 care has been an increase in the complexity of care needs. The council has a home first policy to ensure that residents remain in their own homes for as long as possible.
- When will the council see significant improvement in educational health assessments? Officers detailed how the council is above the national

average and within the line of the London average. Additional funding for caseworkers has been provided, which is helping towards an ambitious target for any authority in London. The Mayor stated that he feels the investment that council has put into this target will see stronger results soon.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the report

14. FORTHCOMING DECISIONS

RESOLVED:

Members noted the forward plan

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

Nil Items.

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 21:00

Chair, Councillor Jahed Choudhury
Overview & Scrutiny Committee

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LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS
MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD AT 18:39 ON TUESDAY, 23 JULY 2024
COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL

Members Present in Person:

Councillor Jahed Choudhury	
Councillor Bodrul Choudhury	Scrutiny Lead for Housing and Regeneration
Councillor Suluk Ahmed	Scrutiny Lead for Community Safety
Councillor Ahmodur Khan	Scrutiny Lead for Resources
Councillor Abdul Mannan	Scrutiny Lead for Children and Education
Councillor Bellal Uddin	Scrutiny Lead for Adults and Health Services
Councillor Asma Islam	
Councillor Amy Lee	
Councillor James King	
Councillor Nathalie Bienfait	Scrutiny Lead for Environment and the Climate Emergency

Members In Attendance Virtually:

Councillor Amina Ali

Other Councillors Present in Person:

Councillor Saied Ahmed	Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living
Councillor Shafi Ahmed	Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency

Co-optees Present in Person:

Jahid Ahmed
Halima Islam

Officers Present in Person:

Dave Hughes	(Interim Director Regeneration & Assets)
Ashraf Ali	(Director of Public Realm)
Richard Williams	(Head of Operational Services)
Ayesha Hakim	(Head Of Corporate Strategy And Transformation)
Onyekachi Ajisafe	(Assistant Transformation Project Manager)
Daniel Kerr	(Strategy and Policy Lead)
Thomas French	(Democratic Services Officer (Committees))

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Amina Ali as she joined the meeting online.

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 18 June 2024 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings.

4. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE QUERY AND ACTION LOG

RESOLVED:

Members noted the forward plan.

5. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

Nil items.

6. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

Nil items.

7. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT

7.1 Recycling Improvement Spotlight

Cllr Shafi Ahmed Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency, Ashraf Ali, Director of Public Realm; and Richard Williams, Head of Operational Services presented Q4 of the Reduction and Recycling Plan (RRP) 2023-2025.

The committee raised the following comments and questions:

- The council has fallen behind neighbouring councils on the recycling rate, what is being done to increase the rate of bin collections? Officers reflected that the borough has grown more dense in property in recent years, so it has become a greater challenge to increase the recycling rate. While increasing collection rate is being looked at, a big part of

the plan is ensuring the correct bins are with residents across the borough.

- In the communications campaign for this plan, what will the metrics be to ensure it has been successful? Will the campaign include accessible communications? All faith groups should be engaged with on these campaigns. Officers stated the worst performing areas will be measured to see what positive changes were brought on about due to the campaign. There will be mult-lingual communications across the campaign and there will be an engagement with faith groups.
- Can officers detail why missed collections continue to happen? As this also has an effect of contamination of waste, which does not help the borough to recycle efficiently. Officers detailed how house waste and recycling collection is collected differently to see significant improvement on the recycling and missed collections.
- Members requested that more officers to attend committee meetings when discussing critical issues, like for this item, Corporate Director Communities or senior staff who manage waste sites to get a bigger picture of the issue for scrutiny.
- What is the council doing about food waste collections? Officers detailed that the council is in the early stages of the new food waste collection, including government funding to help with the rollout.
- Residents have complained about lack of access to recycling bags, which makes it hard for trust to be built in new plans like this one.
- It was a disgrace that the frontline waste service workers put in a position to go out on strike in 2023 by the council management. What is being done to ensure that these frontline staff are brought along the policy journey of this plan? Officers detailed what engagement there has been with the unions and how all staff are fully on board with recycling plans.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the presentation.

8. TARGET OPERATING MODEL

Ayesha Hakim, Head Of Corporate Strategy And Transformation with Onyekachi Ajisafe, Assistant Transformation Project Manager presented the council's new draft Target Operating Model.

The committee raised the following comments and questions:

- Residents have highlighted that disabled advocacy organisations were not engaged with during this process, can officers go out and find who was not previously engaged with and seek feedback? Officers detailed what engagement had been carried out, including accessibility, however officers were open to any suggestions to on where else to consult, but this will be taken onboard for further work.
- How have officers worked to ensure that the council has gone out wider than the usual stakeholders for engagement on this work? What

creativity have officers shown to seek further feedback? Officers highlighted the range of methods that have been used including working with the Cornerstone Project and attending the VCS summit.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the report.

9. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

9.1 Strategic Asset Management Plan 2024-29

Cllr Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living, with Dave Hughes, Interim Director, Regeneration & Assets, presented the report on the council's Strategic Asset Management Plan 2024-29 for the committee to discuss.

The committee raised the following comments and questions:

- When the community uses council assets, like buildings, there can be bad communication between the council and the groups who use the asset. Officers detailed the plans to improve asset management through the asset management plan, but for community groups there are service level agreements on how groups should be supported.
- When will the council be able to report fully on the state of all council assets? Officers reported that the council is always reviewing assets for a range of issues, including health and safety, but does not need to report on assets to this extent.
- Groups will be delivering important community projects, but rent from council spaces could price them out, which would be a loss to the community. What is the council doing to ensure this is not the case? Officers detailed how full commercial rent is not always sought and if the community group is delivering in council aims and objectives, agreements can be sought on rent.
- The council has been accused in the past that it is not delivering on its best value objectives on selling assets, what is the council doing to meet these objectives? Cllr Saied Ahmed detailed that the council is not looking to carry out disposals of assets but will look instead at converting to council housing.
- What support does the council need to ensure our assets are retrofitted adequately? Officers detailed how the business case is informed on any potential refurbishments and retrofit, which can often be passed onto national government to help provide more sustainable solutions.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the plan.

10. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS

Councillor Bodrul Choudhury, Scrutiny Lead for Housing and Regeneration gave an update highlighting meeting with officers to review private rent in the borough and homelessness.

Councillor Abdul Mannan, Scrutiny Lead for Children and Education gave an update highlighting that Free School Meals will be the topic of this portfolio's scrutiny review topic.

Councillor Nathalie Bienfait, Scrutiny Lead for Environment and the Climate Emergency gave an update highlighting meeting with the key heads of council departments to help establish this new Scrutiny Lead Portfolio, including developing the scrutiny review topic.

11. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF UNRESTRICTED CABINET PAPERS

Members agreed to submit questions on 24 July 2024 Cabinet items:

- Item 6.1 Tower Hamlets Council Strategic Plan: Performance Targets for 2024/25 and Annual Delivery Plan
- Item 6.4 Tackling Dog-related Anti-Social Behaviour

RESOLVED:

Members agreed the pre-decision scrutiny questions.

12. FORTHCOMING DECISIONS

RESOLVED:

Members noted the forward plan.

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

Nil items.

14. 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.

15. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Nil items.

16. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

Nil items

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

18.

Nil items

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

Nil items

The meeting ended at 21:02

Chair, Councillor Jahed Choudhury
Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Action Log

Name of Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Municipal Year: 2024-25

Reference	Action	Assigned to	Scrutiny Lead	Due Date	Response
21 May 2024	<p>Parking Spotlight</p> <p>Committee members commented that this is a difficult stage in the customer journey and from experience, call centres are difficult to get through to and there are often long timescales in place for a replacement permit. As part of the new policy, Members would like the council to ensure the customer journey is simplified and there is no delays/inconveniences caused to a resident should they change a vehicle. The Committee feels that there seems to be a gap here and residents are not aware of this.</p>	Simon Baxter Corporate Director, Communities	Cllr Jahed Choudhury, OSC Chair	9 th July 2024	See Appendix 1 on response from the service on parking spotlight.
	Chief Executive to update Committee on Corporate Restructure	Stephen Halsey, Chief Executive	Cllr Jahed Choudhury, OSC Chair		Chief Exec attending in person to provide an update on 9 th July 2024
	Scrutiny Portfolio update		Cllr Jahed Choudhury, OSC Chair		Will be published for the 9th of July 2024

Scrutiny Action Log

9 Jul 2024	OSC has requested for them to be provided with details of the new council structure. so that Members can understand which Services will be under each Directorate.	Stephen Halsey, Chief Executive	Cllr Jahed Choudhury, OSC Chair	23/07/2024	See attached Power Point slide deck titled scrutiny update on new structure
23 Jul 2024	OSC requested the summaries of the feedback from the proposed Target Operating Model	Ayesha Hakim Rahman, Head of Service, Corporate Strategy and Transformation	Cllr Jahed Choudhury, OSC Chair	30/08/2024	See attached Slides
Page 24	OSC requested a breakdown of the £5million pound investment to help improve recycling performance.	Simon Baxter, Corporate Directorate of Communities	Cllr Jahed Choudhury, OSC Chair	29/07/2024	See appendix 2 for details
10 Sep 2024					
15 Oct 2024					
26 Nov 2024					

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17 Dec 2024					
14 Jan 2025					
28 Jan 2025					
4 Feb 2025					
Reserve Budget Scrutiny					
18 Feb 2025					

Scrutiny Action Log

25 Mar 2025					
29 Apr 2025					

Appendix 1: Parking Spotlight Response

Briefing title Swap Vehicle / Temporary cover Process Review
Prepared for Overview and scrutiny
Date 20/05/2024
Author Michael Darby

Key Points

As part of overview and scrutiny parking spotlight there were concerns raised on the customer journey when a resident permit holder obtains a new vehicle and is required to make changes to their permit details. Previously, there was a temporary cover option which would allow residents to cover their new vehicle temporarily. However, this could not be configured at the time to limit the number of covers per year. Therefore, it was removed due to the large scale of abuse, also there were no requirements for documents to be uploaded which was a concern from an audit perspective.

Currently, the resident permit holder is required to submit a swap vehicle application, however this must go through an authorisation process by an officer for the swap to take effect which can take up to 3 working days.

Focus of the briefing

To improve the customer journey when a resident makes an application for a swap vehicle which can take up to 3 working days the customer will have the ability to apply for a free temporary cover whilst their application is being processed.

Options or implications

To improve the customer journey, we are working with our supplier to reinstate the temporary cover to allow customers to apply for free of charge to immediately cover their new vehicle whilst their swap vehicle application is processed. Customers will be limited to maximum of 3 temporary cover permit per account per year. Each temporary cover will last a duration of 14 days.

Background and Information

What is a swap vehicle?

This function allows resident permit holders the ability change their permit details if they have obtained a new vehicle via the customer portal.

What documents are required for a swap vehicle?

For a swap vehicle to be successful the resident must supply us one of the below –

- V5C logbook of new vehicle
- Insurance certificate and policy schedule with new vehicle details.

How much does it cost?

For each swap vehicle application there is an administration charge of £20.

How long does it take?

The application processing time can take up to 3 working days (in line with our customer charter) although our current processing time on average is within 4 hours Monday to Friday during core hours, as we treat all swap vehicle applications as a priority.

Current issues raised.

Due to the process of application to be authorised by an officer this has an impact on the customers' ability to park their new vehicle. As they would need to make alternative arrangements until their application has been processed and authorised which could also have a cost implication to the customer.

Furthermore, if an application is made on the weekend the application would not be processed until next working day.

Temporary cover

Previously the customers had an option to apply for a temporary cover free of charge, however due to configuration of the permit at that time, this allowed customers to apply for a temporary cover numerous times which covered their vehicle without payment. Due to this large scale abuse the decision was made to remove this function as the supplier at the time could not configure to limit the usage to 3 per year.

Due to the recent upgrade to our system the supplier can now configure the temp cover to limit the usage to 3 per year per account with a duration of 14 days for each temporary cover. This will in turn mitigate the possible abuse of this function.

Plan to make improvements.

We are currently working with our system provider to reinstate the temporary cover with a limit of 3 per year per account and each temp cover will last a period of 14 days. This will allow customers to park their vehicles immediately whilst their application for a swap vehicle is being processed.

Customer Contact/Enquiries

For any enquiries in relation to permits the customer has the below options -

Scrutiny Action Log

- Call the Customer Contact Centre – the customer can call the CCC where the advisor will take the initial call and support the customer. If CCC advisor cannot deal with the call i.e. technical issues the call will be transferred to the permits team.
- Submit an online contact form – The customer can submit an online form whereby an officer will deal with the enquiry, if required the officer will call the customer.

We deal with all enquiries in a timely manner to ensure they are resolved.

Scrutiny Action Log

The table below provides outline of how the £5m is project to spend. If you have any query do let me know.

Workstream	Budget Allocated	Spend	Committed	Forecast
Street Cleansing & Parks Enhancement	£3,105,000	£326,823	£412,255	£3,105,000
Introduction of Time-Bands	£350,000		£120,000	£200,000
Commercial Waste Review	£145,000		£100,000	£145,000
Waste Systems Review	£250,000			£200,000
Community Engagement & RRP	£50,000		£50,000	£50,000
Communication, Partnership & Consultation and RRP	£1,100,000		£50,000.00	£1,100,000
TOTAL	£5,000,000	£326,823	£732,255	£4,800,000

Corporate Target Operating model (TOM)

Community Engagement Feedback

Corporate Strategy & Transformation



TOM Design Principles



The new strategic target operating model should be designed to address the considerations set out in the Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2026 and to help the council achieve its strategic goals.

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Value-driven and cost-effective

By designing the target operating model to be value-driven and cost-effective, the council can ensure that it is **using its resources wisely and avoiding waste**. This will help the organisation to achieve its goals and objectives.

Community-led

By designing the target operating model to be community-led, the council can ensure that it is **meeting the needs of its users**. This will help the council to build trust and credibility with its users, and to improve the quality of its services.

Collaborative

By designing the target operating model to be collaborative, the council can ensure that it is **working together to deliver services efficiently and effectively**. This will help the council to achieve its goals and objectives.

Transparent

By designing the target operating model to be transparent, the council can ensure **enhanced accountability and trust**. This will ensure residents can readily access information about the council's goals, processes and resource allocation.

Empowered to innovate

By designing the target operating model to be empowering, the council can **create a culture of innovation and creativity**. This will help all of the council's workforce stay ahead of the curve and deliver services that meet the needs of its users.

Accountable

By designing the target operating model to be accountable, the council can **build trust and credibility with stakeholders**, including residents, businesses, partners and staff. This will help the council to achieve its goals and objectives.



Feedback: Directorate Leadership Teams – Sep/Oct 2023



Community-Led:

- Exploring more effective ways to consult, considering diverse communities.
- Leveraging local media and alternative channels for engagement.
- Providing clarity and training to empower frontline staff and managers.
- Balancing the dilemma between saving money and investing in services
- Incorporating census data on health needs, especially for the 65+ age group.
- Enhancing community engagement and addressing health inequalities.
- Reviewing and improving the consultation process for better community engagement.
- Exploring meaningful methods to engage communities that don't participate through standard channels.
- A lack of coordinated approach to identifying and planning for community engagement opportunities.

- A lack of representativeness of residents involved in community engagement.
- An ineffective feedback loop for residents to know the impact of their involvement.
- Insufficient resources to deliver effective community engagement consistently
- Simplifying design principles, focusing on user-centric, accountable, and outward-facing values.
- Explicitly addressing health and social inequalities in the borough.
- Considering the impact of unemployment on health issues.

Value-Driven and Cost Effective:

- Aligning budget with the growing population and service demand.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of previous cost-saving measures and digital models.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of service advisory groups.

Empowered to innovate:

- Encouraging a shift towards online services and addressing challenges in digitalisation.
- Enhancing the effectiveness of the web presence.
- Addressing challenges in quick decision-making and hiring processes.
- Establishing a feedback loop for continuous improvement.
- Learning from outcomes, peer reviews, and user feedback.
- Integrating Power BI for internal customer service improvements.

Transparent:

- Simplifying and improving the communication of the TOM and its benefits.
- Clarifying the criteria for a strong corporate centre.

Other Considerations:

- Shifting the focus of communication to highlight positive aspects



Feedback: Transformation Advisory Board – Sep 2023



Community-Led:

- Important to embed needs of residents and communities into the model.
- Should bring in the views of young people including the Young Mayor and Youth Council.
- Consider undertaking meaningful co-production

Value-Driven and Cost Effective:

- Delivery work should continue without waiting for a final TOM to be agreed.

Transparent:

- Is there a potential role for Overview & Scrutiny in the model?

Other Considerations:

- Transformation Advisory Board should not be seen as part of core model – forum is in place as advisory capacity only.

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Feedback: Pan–London Transformation Network / GLA Dec / Jan 2023/24

Empowered to Innovate:

- Language should be accessible – is 'TOM' meaningful for staff?
- Should there be a directorate version that aligns to corporate TOM to ensure a tailored fit?

Value-Driven and Cost Effective:

- There should be a directorate-focus on the TOM, but rather an outcomes focus

Transparent:

- Should only have one accessible version

Collaborative:

- Bring stakeholders on the journey – should not be a surprise update at any point.



Feedback: VCS Summit - 11 December 2023, Multiple VCS organisations



Collaborative:

- Involvement of QMU Students Union. Stalls on university campus.
- Increase visibility of grants and support for VCS online platform.
- Work in partnership with community organisations and charity with proven records. Fazlul Choudhury, GSC.
- More awareness of grants and information which will help the VCS's time spent effectively when reviewing grants.
- Communication of new projects and policies with the VCS.
- The newsletter. QMW Students Union.
- THCAN. First Love Foundation.
- Barking and Dagenham doing some great work with the VCS sector in their borough, like community solutions.
- Social return on investment. Anike from First Love Foundation.

- THCAN. Sarah from Island Advice Centre.
- Hackney and Islington council spend money on play work in adventure playgrounds. Weavers Adventure Playground.
- Good communication of any new changes / opportunities . Initiatives to advertise, networking events and socials, working together on projects and aims. QMW Students Union.

Community-Led:

- Targeted consultation rather than a generic approach, each service is different e.g. tackling ASB requires a full day consultation and go out to the centre. Ocean Youth Connexions.
- Community Fundays. Ocean Youth Connexions.



Feedback: Community Engagement Strategy Consultation, December 2023



Community-Led:

- Involve residents in decisions that significantly impact them.
- Enable residents to get more involved in community life and empower residents to become active citizens and community leaders.
- Staff delivering engagement should be kind and respectful otherwise, it damages relationships and means that communities avoid participating again.
- Be open and honest with communities about what they can and can't influence and explain the reasons why.
- Give the community feedback on the impact of their involvement in consultations.
- Communications should be written in plain English, with translation services provided when necessary.
- Identify barriers to communities participating e.g., language, timings, venues, cultural sensitivity, and implement effective solutions so those who want to participate can do so.
- Provide a mixture of options to take part in both online and in-person.
- The Mayor and elected members should be visible by organising meetings with the community to listening and respond to their issues.
- Make decisions based on the community's best interests and not the political leadership.
- The council shouldn't just reach out to communities when it has a policy, strategy, and service that it wants the community to help shape. It should also organise ways to identify the issues concerning the community and respond.
- When community engagement events happen, they should be attended by lead members and senior officers responsible for making the decisions so they can speak with the community directly and hear the community's input firsthand.
- Rely less on traditional methods such as press releases or social media and instead use WhatsApp and go to the places where communities congregate, such as community centres, community events, and chicken shops.
- Engage with a representative mix of the population and not just the usual suspects.
- Resident's involvement to have a demonstrable impact on decision-making because when that doesn't happen, it damages trust.
- The council consults with the same groups, often asking similar questions, which leads to duplication of resources and consultation fatigue.
- Importance for the community to set the agenda, not just the council speaking to the communities.
- Bring people together to learn, discuss, and make recommendations on significant issues in the borough.
- Unable to get hold of council staff, need to improve the telephone system and bring back the One Stop Shops.
- Involve the community in Strategic Plan, Budget, service design, policies and strategies, large investments, regeneration projects, recycling, housing, environment and community safety issues.



Feedback: Bengali & Somali VCS: Society Links & Women's Inclusive Team – April 2024



Community-Led:

- Further resources and support need to be provided to 3rd sector organisations in terms of people resources, training, templates, and best practices.
- The senior leadership of the council need to showcase understanding and backing of mayor's manifesto as it is the best wish list the residents and community could ask for.
- There needs to be a mechanism of collecting feedback from all 3rd sector organisations in the borough and keeping them linked in and up to date with the council plans and delivery.
- The council needs to better understand how each organisation operates in terms of their processes, systems, technology and how they connect with its community groups. There needs to be a seamless working relationship between the two.

- As VCS groups represent a pocket of the community there needs to be a borough wide conference hosted by the council at the town hall. This should take place multiple times throughout the year. The groups can talk about their recent challenges in the community and discuss what support the council needs to provide.

Accountability:

- Log off all community feedback and action points to be published on a regular basis with updates.
- Selected community group members to be present in decision making sessions. List of members to be rotated on a quarterly basis.

Collaborative:

- Another project that should be revitalised is Participatory Budgeting called "You Decide" Tower Hamlets, 'You Decide!' | Local Government Association Steering Groups made up of residents, councillors and service providers helped to monitor and shape the services which would be delivered in their local area.
- Previously, the current Mayor in his first term had a project called Community Champions. This project selected reps from the 3rd sector organisations and the community to be a part of strategic decision-making meetings



Feedback: Sufia Alam: ELM Board member, Chair of Inter-Faith forum, PEG member & Interim Women's Commissioner – 25 April 2024



Community-Led:

- Scheduling events to avoid prayer times (Jummu'ah)
- CPD training for professionals on Islam and Muslim life & culture
- Co-production of services considering community practices (e.g., fasting times)
- Reaching out to hidden communities in the borough and raising their profile (e.g., Chinese and Indian community).
- Using WhatsApp voice notes for information dissemination
- Communication strategy for women who may not be aware of resources CPD training for professionals on Islam and Muslim life & culture
- Showcase council work through resident's hub (e.g., elderly project visits)

- Digital access issues for low-income residents
- Accessibility concerns for vulnerable and hard to reach community members
- Invites to community groups / residents to the new Town Hall important step in making feel people welcomed and connected.

Collaborative:

- Information sharing via inter-faith forum and social media.
- Growth of inter-faith forum (11 to 50 attendees)
- Collaboration with council on environmental project ("Clean and green future")
- Sharing resources and expertise (Abu Sufian - health & wellbeing report)
- Interfaith forum as a platform for information exchange. (10k+ congregation)

Other Considerations:

- Low-income residents concerns about losing benefits with higher wages. This discourages going for better opportunities as there is a potential being worse off financially.
- Women's commissioner role launched - Initial stages, need for community recruitment
- "Can be" campaign focusing on leadership, health and spirituality.



Feedback: Local Housing Association (Poplar HARCA) – 22 May 2024



Community-Led:

- Establish a resident's panel to feed into council decision-making.
- Establish Boards with membership including residents, to scrutinise services and develop solutions (based on their lived experience) on how we can improve services. This then feeds into the senior boards.
- Establish resident-led groups/boards for a 6-month period, that feeds into the Strategic Plan. Co-production of strategies and policies with residents and other key stakeholders.
- More meaningful engagement with residents, ensuring they play a part – not just a tick-box exercise.

- Budget allocation for residents' participation in boards.
- Work with partners, businesses, residents etc. to deliver the TOM priorities (e.g., establish panel for each TOM principle/ Strategic Plan priority).

Value-Driven and Cost Effective:

- Empower residents to better support themselves e.g. More external Comms on different ways people can save money.

Collaborative:

- Collaborating with Housing partners to identify wasted land and unused locations for re-purposing to provide social housing.
- Work with partners, businesses, residents etc to deliver the TOM priorities e.g. establish panel for each TOM principle/ Strategic Plan priority.

Transparent:

- Openness and transparency on realistic housing circumstances.



Feedback: TH Partnership consultation – Partnership Executive Group Recommendations, May 2024



Community-Led:

- Improve resident voice and community representation to address disparities and promote inclusive decision-making and equity, learning from what works and a community first approach.
- Focus partnership on a small number of strategic issues for transformational impact.
- Ensure close alignment of the long-term strategic vision and partnership priorities.
- Initiate engagement for the Chief Exec and Mayor to understand partner priorities and opportunities better.
- Reinvigorate the “Mayor’s” partnership congress and optimize the Mayor’s time for strategic engagement.
- Strengthen work with regional/national strategic partnerships.

Collaborative:

- Investigate platforms for collaboration and action outside of meetings.
- Relaunch the Tower Hamlets TH_IS Place campaign and create a communications working group.
- Rebrand the PEG and improve internal communications.
- Showcase partnership accomplishments through external engagement, awards, and recognition.

Value-Driven and Cost Effective:

- Initiate an annual joint work planning promoting whole system working, and coordination.
- Assess partnerships/sub-groups to distinguish true partnerships from routine relationships, transition to time focused TFGs and foster continuous improvement.
- Strengthen relationships between health partnerships to ensure more efficient delivery of services.

Empowered to innovate:

- A consistent elected member and partner co-chairing model to empower shared leadership, foster stronger engagement, and define clear lead roles of board members and overall governance of partnerships.
- Consider a dispersed model for non-statutory boards enhancing sector leadership, effectiveness and sustainability.
- Implement recommendations from the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge to improve partnership practice.

Accountability:

- Ensure adherence to statutory accountability frameworks, risk management, and spotlights on joint crosscutting priorities.



Feedback: Equalities HUB & Cornerstone - 19 June 2024



Community-Led:

- Create resident groups / boards with resident representatives for development of initiatives.
- Set-up a mechanism for resident-centred decision-making.
- Inclusive decision-making processes - including resident voice in bureaucracy
- Council should establish working groups with residents as members, to utilise their lived experience, and to address limitations due to budget constraints, and build solutions.
- Better communication (including follow-up) and action on ensuring marginalized voices are heard.
- Empower diverse community groups to advise on delivery areas, leveraging lived experiences, technical expertise, as well as to promote initiatives.
- More co-production and local partnerships especially in EQIAs

Collaborative:

- Keep language simple to encourage resident engagement - avoid technical jargon, and user-friendly activities.
- Use email campaign as a tool for feedback, where people can offer ideas and solutions on issues, and receive follow-up on their feedback.
- Inclusivity in community policing, e.g. reporting of hate crime.
- Community watchdogging – THEOs and Police partnering with the third sector, and local communities, to ensure service is responsive to community needs.

Value-Driven and Cost Effective:

- More transparency on consultancy costs.

Empowered to innovate:

- Introduce a 24/7 council and of its services, adjusting staff hours, and implementing temporary systems for non-emergency issues.
- Revamp online services platform with chat function for assistance.
- Making information on websites, leaflets etc accessible and meeting the needs of different sections of the community – e.g. blind people, none-English speakers.

Transparent:

- Lack of transparency, particularly in delayed decisions, impacting trust and confidence.



Feedback: Youth Council – 19 June 2024



Community-Led:

- More involvement with youth specifically physical activity and non-academic environments.
- Hold annual assemblies with the public to bring ideas to Members.
- Introducing members of the council to the youth.
- More clarity about how the council directly help/impact us.
- Hold events with free food.
- Allow youth services to have more youth involvement.
- More facilities for youth mental health. Conducting mental health workshops
- Read DMs sent to accounts.
- More opportunities to speak, and for groups not heard out enough.
- More suggestion boxes.

- Co-production of plans with input/ ideas from young people
- Understanding that contractors like making money especially in tower hamlets home so regularly go to the people for their opinions.
- Councils to hold regular young people's events – LED lights, food, everything free.
- Include young people in decision making processes.
- Hold free events in the evening and weekends to hear opinions and offer snacks freebies.
- More ways for the youth to communicate.
- Better ways to communicate with the youth. Better Q&A.
- Holding meetings with random people and inform them via letters sent to their address
- Focus on things children are actually interested in.
- Speaking to khadra helps to vocalise my needs and wants for the community.

- Safety in the borough, observe by doing surveys
- Our wellbeing matters - this can be observed by doing questionnaires that can be distributed by schools
- Making open surveys and asking random people to fill them out - ensure they are less than 2 minutes to complete to not discourage people to fill them out
- Survey amongst the wider community
- People from your community to talk to – diversity.
- Utilising social media to get in touch with the youth and letting them know about local events. Social media advertisements work well.
- By letting the community talk to people about their concerns instead of automated messages.
- Public forums.



Feedback: Youth Council – 19 June 2024



- Actually showing that they're doing what they say they're going to do.
- Allow the community to build a closer bond with the council so they don't feel intimidated.
- Clarity and communication – understanding of the internal operations for young people
- **Page 43** Having younger generations talk to youth may help communication because the message/aim may resonate more with the audience.

Empowered to innovate:

- Start a new website.
- An open chat/mailbox that is publicised.
- Open new social media accounts to appeal to the younger generation
- A report/chat 24/7 system on the borough website.

Collaborative:

- Youth centres are a good to engage with young people and conduct surveys to learn about their opinions.
- The youth centres are very good to allow young people to connect and have a voice in the council. The council should hold more talks with reps from each area.
- Promotion of opportunities - go into schools during school times – making schools a better friendlier place. A friendly place means a student or young people has a suitable and save place which makes them comfortable.

Transparent:

- More transparency and communication on with the strategies the corporate centre is delivering.
- Trust and faith in the council – communication.

Other Considerations:

- Have different pathways in terms of education – not just GCSEs – we need active lessons as some cannot write.
- Schools need to meet the needs of young people, too much traunting as schools are not suitable for students.
- Better library access and more libraries – get 3D printers in libraries.



Feedback: All Members (1st Session) – 8 July 2024



Community-Led:

- Better comms on what decisions are being made, and accessibility for when/how residents can get involved
- Empowering residents to play a leading role in decision-making e.g. Young Tower Hamlets is a good example to follow, decisions relating to young people are made by Young Tower Hamlets.
- Young people want an assembly where they can tell Members and the council their ideas
- Services should be shaped in collaboration and with residents in mind
- Engagement should be community-led, with impact e.g. Safer Neighbourhood Teams is a good example, students and residents are involved and lead the meetings/ discussions with action points to ensure impact.
- Avoid digital exclusion – ensure we are also engaging with those without access to the internet

- Better engage with harder to reach communities
- A good example is recycling education – work with local mosques /churches etc during sermons /coffee mornings /local community events to have 10mins talk on how /what to recycle.

Value-Driven and Cost Effective:

- Ensuring all we do in the council is best-value. Good scrutiny processes in place to ensure this.
- More communication and educating members, staff and residents on how the budget /budgeting works.
- Better joint-working between departments to avoid duplication, increase efficiency and less time-wasting.

Accountable:

- People need to trust that frontline services will answer calls – Lack of accountability for this important area.



Feedback: All Members (2nd Session) – 15 July 2024



Community-Led:

- Supporting residents to make an informed choice
- Avoid digital exclusion
- Communications in local community language.
- Improve accessibility by going into the communities e.g. utilising Mosques, grass route organisations, mums' clubs, women's groups, libraries, children centres, schools, hosting community forums, pop-up stalls in the community, as well as letters and door-to-door engagement when important

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Accountable:

- Understanding the needs of residents and stakeholders first. Then managing those expectations.
- Doing what we say we will do, will build trust and credibility.

- Communicating how we've addressed feedback.
- Be honest when we've done something wrong, and say what we're doing to address it.
- More collaboration. It's hard to build trust when people work in silos.
- Tap into the wealth of lived experience from residents.

Value-Driven and Cost Effective:

- More up-to-date and best use of technology can make us more efficient.
- Less bureaucracy and more focus on delivery.
- Council services using internal expertise first, before resourcing externally.
- Embracing new ideas.
- Less silo-working. Having a central PMO office to assess council-wide projects and offer value .i.e. supporting services centrally, addressing any dependencies, and reducing silos.

Transparent:

- Being sincere and genuine will have a positive impact on our image.
- Involving residents through schools.
- Pro-actively utilising councillors to collect information and feedback from communities.
- Report performance in lay-man terms to residents.
- Open Q&A with residents to explain our decisions, will make it more transparent.
- Making ourselves more accessible, this builds transparency. E.g. officers, councillors, working phone lines etc.



Feedback: All Staff POD Session - 17 July 2024



Community-Led:

- Have a central community contact list for staff to access.
- Ensuring that engagement, consultation and co-production sampling is representative of demography and wards in the borough. Ensuring consistency across the organisation.
- Working together, sharing, and utilising existing engagement done in the council to avoid duplication and over-engagement of residents.
- Make it easier for people to participate and engage with the council.
- Locality planning and leadership e.g. participatory budgeting, ward Chief Executives.
- Bespoke services tailored to individuals and communities.
- A forum for residents and staff to attend, where residents can report issues.
- Participatory planning could be part of the puzzle w/ competing service users.

- Co-production is fundamental but also skilled work and resource intensive. Perhaps we could have a small team of people dedicated to co-production work in each directorate to make it really meaningful.
- Empowering staff is to give training opportunities to all- not just those who are mixing with the 'in crowd'. Adopt a fair approach particularly when some training has a cost e.g. Agile/PRINCE 2. All staff should be given the chance to develop. Eradicate favouritism.
- Participatory democracy/ Citizens Assembly.
- Only going as fast as trust between Council and partners/residents can go.. if we go too fast, we lose people and it is seen as tokenism.
- Set up different working groups to concentrate solely in a single topic and come up with workable changes and improvements so to empower both staff and users. Working smarter not harder.
- [The London Office of Technology and Innovation](#) do some great stuff.

- Change how we go about conducting engagement- we tend to treat our starting point as 'discussions at the table' and maybe change needs to happen at step zero.
- Open-source data is available with other LBs but we do not offer this which enables residents to investigate.

Value-Driven and Cost Effective:

- De-centralisation of services with directorates is a good idea to better understand the business.
- Dealing with external investigators' meetings and request is time-consuming for staff.
- Aligning corporate objectives and priorities to budgets and spend in directorates.
- Documenting all resources, financing and processes.
- A simple first step to avoid waste is to identify where it is occurring - sometimes we guess this incorrectly.



Feedback: All Staff POD Session - 17 July 2024



- Budget managers need to better understand their budgets.
- Documenting all resources, processes, finances might adhere to avoiding wasteful spending and will also identify gaps in excessive spending.
- Less About Tools; More Time and Commitment: dedicating sufficient time and commitment rather than just relying on tools.
- **Empowered to innovate:**
 - Reducing bureaucracy e.g. various DLTs and boards before CMT to Cabinet. Including having better technology to help with these systems.
 - Too much bureaucracy before approving and procuring new technology.
 - Increased access for staff to systems.
 - Establish a taskforce to discuss new tools and technology we can use in the council.
- Vertical Decision Making: Implement cross-sectional panels and teams, giving people the option to be ongoing participants in innovation projects.
- Clear pathways.
- Create an open staff forum, or suggestion box every quarter (e.g. ideas generator) for discussing / raising new ideas and recommendations for innovation.
- More communications to staff every quarter to advertise the ideas generator, and continue to incentivise staff.
- Structured Forum to Put Forward and Discuss Ideas - provide space for staff to share and discuss their ideas.
- Leadership Commitment to Innovation - leaders are committed to valuing and promoting innovation.
- Feedback on Ideas and Feasibility - establish mechanisms for providing constructive feedback on ideas and their feasibility.
- Restrictions on using new systems, even though there is a budget for it.
- Horizontal Collaboration: Encourage working across teams and knowledge domains to leverage diverse expertise
- Having dedicated budget for team days and external training.
- A knowledge management database - central repository (maybe extension of The bridge?) of gold standard reports, useful templates and other frequently used docs to avoid having to start from scratch every time.
- Create better links with other local authorities and learn from them.
- Decentralised decision making
 - Into directorates and service areas.
 - Links to innovating and the points around devolved power and collaboration.
 - Maybe decentralised even into communities?
 - Redbridge did work like this.
 - Participatory planning and budgeting.
 - Co-design and coproduction.



Feedback: Tenants Resident Association – 24 July 2024



Community-Led:

- Council officers need to Consult, Listen, Adapt and Act on solutions suggested by the community. Residents are the eyes and ears so consult and act on the feedback provided. Our TRA has provided a lot of time from compiling repairs, trying to get our housing officer to do walkabouts and tracking progress of the repair list. This can be frustrating when things are not followed through despite our efforts. Example, our estate has scaffoldings on so many blocks and some were up for more than a year with no work visible. We prepared a list and provided this to our housing officer and his manager, hoping that some action can be taken within the council to remove these or to track why it is needed. No action was taken.

Value-Driven and Cost Effective:

- Deliver on-time and-in-full especially for repairs, waste management and major works. The delays in Major Works and Repairs are causing massive issues for the council, leaseholders and tenants - these delays lead to higher costs, degeneration of housing assets leading to the need to decant and rehouse tenants which is costly. Failure and postponement of minor repairs has led to further decay and replacement which means higher costs.

Collaborative:

- Consult and co-create with residents. Be flexible and open to ideas suggested by residents and community groups. The residents live on their estate and know what works and what doesn't work.

Empowered to innovate:

- Get the basics right first - clean environment (waste management and collect on time in full) fix the broken repair and major works programs. Communicate the council's organisation structure - who's who? Residents who wish to engage often find it hard to know who is responsible for what in the council. Pls publish the various directorates, the organisation chart and contacts from different departments as a start so we can communicate accordingly.


Transparent:

- Ask for feedback and please act on them after this is given.

Accountability:

- Get the basics right.



<p>Cabinet</p> <p>11 September 2024</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Julie Lorraine, Corporate Director of Resources</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Budget Monitoring 2024/25 Quarter 1</p>	

Proposed Decision Path (indicate) – Delete Section Before Publication:

	Step [Delete as applicable]	Date
DLT Level (Tier One)	CD Resources	29/07/2024
CMT Level (Tier Two)	CMT	20/08/2024
Member Level (Tier Three)	MAB	21/08/2024
Member Level (Tier Three)	CPAP	28/08/2024
Decision (Tier Four)	Cabinet	11/09/2024

Proposed Decision Path (indicate) – Delete Section Before Publication:

Lead Member	Cllr Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living
Originating Officer(s)	Abdulrazak Kassim – Director of Finance, Procurement and Audit Ahsan Khan – Strategic Head of Finance (Chief Accountant)
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	No
Forward Plan Notice Published	N/A
Reason for Key Decision	N/A
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	All Strategic Plan 2022-26 priorities

Executive Summary

As reflected across the country, and particularly in London, nationally recognised demand driven pressures in Homelessness (£7.6m), Adult Social Care (£3.5m) and Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (£2.2m) are currently significantly impacting Tower Hamlets quarter 1 forecast outturn position of a £13.3m net overspend for the financial year ending March 2025. These pressures are all national issues that the council has been sighted on and as a result has made adequate risk provision within our MTFs should we need to call on it. By definition, the nature of such demand led pressures impacts hardest on areas such as Tower Hamlets with a high population density. Given the national context of the specific issues, and the considerable amplification of the impact across London, further context is detailed in Appendix 1.

Forecasts are an important tool for predicting an expected year end position. By their nature they tend to be more accurate across the passage of time, which is why we always base the setting of the new budget on the quarter 3 forecast position. Typically, across all LA's, Tower Hamlets included, we see a reliable historical trend pattern that illustrates this point in table below. There is a clear trend that illustrates that over the past few years Tower Hamlets has been increasingly able to take the necessary corporate and cross-directorate management actions to deliver a downward movement in directorate overspend positions by the end of the financial year – particularly in the most recent previous year where a favourable movement of £7.0m was achieved from the quarter 1 forecast to the final outturn position.

2021/22 (£m)			2022/23 (£m)			2023/24 (£m)		
Q1 Forecast Over Spend	Final Outturn (Under) Spend	Favourable movement	Q1 Forecast Over Spend	Final Outturn (Under) Spend	Favourable movement	Q1 Forecast Over Spend	Final Outturn (Under) Spend	Favourable movement
0.1	(0.2)	(0.3)	2.8	(0.6)	(3.4)	6.7	(0.3)	(7.0)

The forecast allows us time to focus on the specific drivers of financial challenge at the earliest point in a planned and measured way. This quarter 1 forecast outturn position prepared is based on departmental predictions relatively early in the 2024/25 financial year. As such it provides all Corporate Directors the opportunity to identify, agree and implement mitigating actions in-year, to improve the forecast out-turn position. All such in year mitigating actions will be reported as part of the quarter 2 budget monitor.

The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) quarter 1 forecast outturn is an overspend of £2.6m at year-end, largely due to pressures in the High Needs Block.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) quarter 1 forecast revenue outturn position is an in-year overspend of £3.9m. As the HRA is a ringfenced account, this overspend will need to be funded from HRA general reserves at year-end.

Of the £37.4m in-year savings target, £13.4m (36%) of savings are reported as already achieved. £14.2m (38%) of savings are on track to be realised by the end of the financial year. £9.3m (25%) of savings may have some risk involved, but there is

generally high confidence that they will be realised by the end of the year. £0.5m (1%) of savings are reported as delayed.

The General Fund quarter 1 capital forecast outturn for the year is £92.0m, which represents 70% of the revised 2024/25 capital budget of £131.9m, resulting in a forecast variance of £39.9m at year-end, largely related to forecast slippages on key projects, including, but not limited to, St. George's Leisure Centre (£17.8m), The Institute of Academic Excellence (£8.5m), Lochnager Bridge (3.7m), Culturally Sensitive Misuse Recovery Centre (£1.5m) and Cherry Trees (£1.0m). A dedicated resource has been allocated to accelerate delivery of the Mayors priority capital projects, including the Institute of Academic Excellence and Culturally Sensitive Misuse Recovery Centre projects, improvements are expected to be reported in quarter 2.

The Housing Revenue Account quarter 1 capital forecast outturn for the year is £114.7m, which represents 96% of the revised 2024/25 capital budget of £119.7m, resulting in a forecast variance of £5.0m at year-end, largely related to slippages on the council's New Build programme (£5.7m). Due to the previous year's outturn position of (£60.7m) across the HRA, a deep dive review of these forecasts will be carried out, which will be informed by a due diligence exercise currently being undertaken by a specialist third party.

Whilst the forecast position presented is a potentially challenging one, for context it represents 3% of our net budget well within our agreed resilience indicator threshold of 8%. We remain well placed to meet the challenge should it materialise and remain confident the council can take the agile mitigating actions needed to minimise the risk of the forecast levels of overspend being realised at year end.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note the council's quarter 1 forecast outturn position as at 30th June 2024, against the approved General Fund budget (£13.3m overspend), Housing Revenue Account budget (£3.9m overspend), and Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget (£2.6m overspend). This is a relatively early forecast in the 2024/25 financial year, affording us an opportunity to implement mitigating actions for forecast overspends which will be reported as part of the quarter 2 budget monitor.
2. Note the council's quarter 1 forecast outturn position as at 30th June 2024, against General Fund and Housing Revenue Account capital programme revised budgets for 2024/25.
3. Approve £6.1m of capital growth and £1.6m capital reductions, as detailed in paragraph 7.18 below and Appendix 7, as previously reported to Capital Strategy Board.

4. Note the progress made against the 2024/25 savings targets, based at 30th June 2024.
5. Note that there are no equalities implications directly resulting from this report, as set out in Section 10.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The regular, timely and accurate reporting of Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring information through the year is a key financial control. It makes visible variations to budget to inform decision making and enable the council to take timely mitigating actions.
- 1.2 It is important that issues driving variations to budget are understood, challenged and addressed so that the council remains both within the approved budget envelope and on track to delivering the plans Members budgeted for.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The council could choose to monitor its budgetary performance against an alternative time frame, but it is considered that the reporting schedule provides the appropriate balance to allow strategic oversight of the budget by Members and to manage the council's exposure to financial risk. More frequent monitoring is undertaken by officers and considered by individual service directors and the council's CMT including approval of management action.

DETAILS OF THE REPORT

3 Revenue Summary

- 3.1 The total council General Fund (GF) approved revenue net expenditure budget for 2024/25 is £462.6m. The General Fund Quarter 1 forecast outturn is £475.9m after the net drawdown of earmarked reserves of £16.7m requested by directorates. This results in an overall forecast £13.3m General Fund overspend variance. A summary position of the 2024/25 GF financial position is shown in Table 1 below, with breakdown by services and individual variances in Appendix 2 and 3.

Table 1 – Quarter 1 GF Forecast Outturn as Overspend/(Underspend) (£m)

Directorate	2024/25 Net expenditure budget (£m)	Forecast outturn (£m)	Net variance over / (under) spend (£m)
Housing and Regeneration	37.7	44.8	7.1
Health and Adult Social Care	174.3	178.4	4.1
Communities	58.0	61.2	3.2
Resources	46.0	46.7	0.7
Chief Executive's	15.3	15.8	0.5
Children's Services	94.1	92.3	(1.8)
Sub-total Directorates	425.4	439.2	13.8
Corporate	37.2	36.7	(0.5)
Total General Fund	462.6	475.9	13.3

- 3.2 By comparison, an overall £6.7m General Fund forecast overspend variance was reported this time last year as part of the 2023/24 quarter 1 budget monitor. The council's eventual final outturn position for 2023/24 was an overall £0.3m underspend. Hence, as demonstrated over the last financial year, there is a strong expectation that corporate and cross-directorate management actions will deliver a downward movement in directorate overspend positions by the end of the financial year. This will significantly mitigate the risk of any overall forecast net overspends of £13.3m reported at Quarter 1 of this year will need to be balanced from the council's purposefully held risk reserve by year-end.
- 3.3 A fundamental element of the robustness of the council's annual budget and MTFs is the level of contingency budget, earmarked reserves and the GF balance. Based on Quarter 1 forecasts at 30th June 2024, total General Fund balance and earmarked reserves are projected to remain within tolerable limits at a total of £148.4m by the end of the year. The position includes budgeted net drawdown from earmarked reserve of £14.7m, reported as part of the 2024/25 budget approved by full council, and the planned net drawdown of earmarked reserves of £16.7m from services which had been set aside for specific purposes from previous years. Drawing on unplanned general and earmarked reserves will significantly restrict the council's ability to increase financial resilience through the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The Quarter 1 General Fund and earmarked reserves forecast position is summarised in table 2 below and further detailed in Appendix 4. These balances will be reviewed in light of updated CIPFA guidance (minimum 5% of net budget – this is a generic rule of thumb, the actual amount in any organisation is a matter of informed professional judgement by the section 151 officer, which is an annual risk based assessment).

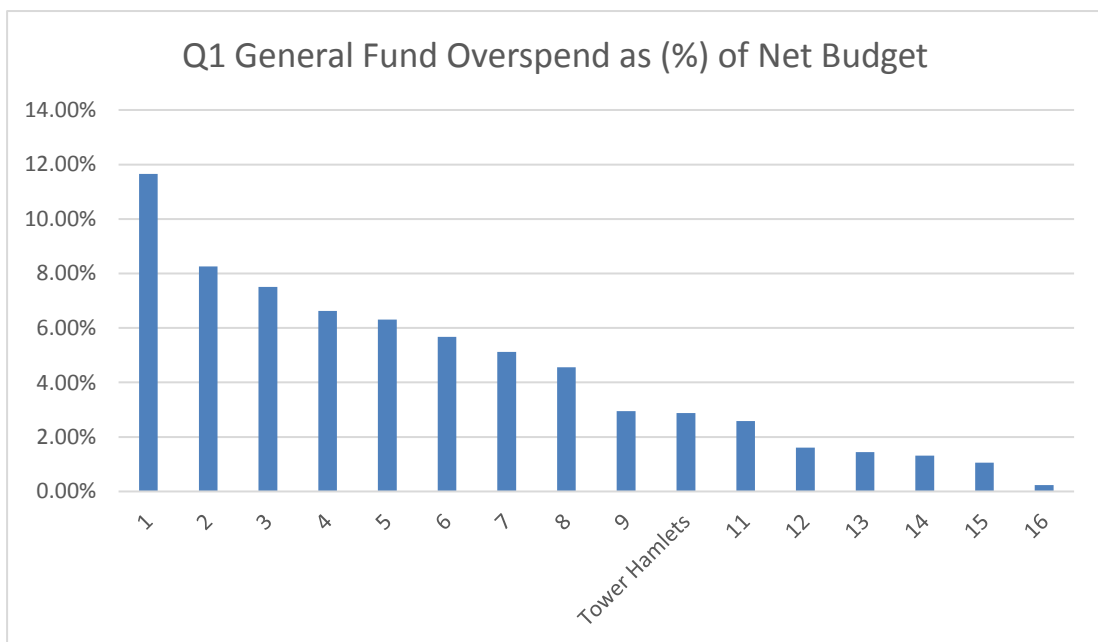
Table 2 – General Fund and Earmarked Reserves (£m)

Reserve	2024/25 Opening reserves (£m)	Forecast in-year increase / (decrease) (£m)	2024/25 Forecast closing reserves (£m)
General Fund balance	21.2	0.0	21.2
Earmarked Reserves without restrictions	70.9	(26.6)	44.3
Sub-total	92.1	(26.6)	65.5
Earmarked Reserves with restrictions	101.0	(18.1)	82.9
Total General Fund and Earmarked Reserves	193.1	(44.7)	148.4

3.4 At the time of writing, of the other 32 local authorities across London, 16 had responded to the quarter 1 Budget Monitoring Survey produced by London Councils. By way of comparison (with the exception of the City of London - an outlier in the only authority reporting an underspend position) all respondents across London have or are expected to report a forecast overspend position for quarter 1, with a large portion being significant overspends.

3.5 By definition, the nationally recognised demand driven pressures faced by the council in Homelessness (£7.6m), Adult Social Care (£3.5m) and Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (£2.2m), impacts hardest on areas such as Tower Hamlets with a high population density. Chart 1 below illustrates how the council remains in a comparatively strong position compared to some of our nearest neighbours when comparing quarter 1 forecast General Fund overspend as a percentage of net budgets.

Chart 1 – General Fund Overspend as (%) of Net Budgets



4 General Fund

- 4.1 The detailed directorate monitoring, setting out the provisional outturn against revised budgets and the reasons for the variances are set out in the following paragraphs and within Appendix 2 and 3.

Housing and Regeneration – £7.1m forecast overspend

- 4.2 The Housing and Regeneration directorate forecast is an overspend of £7.1m after net transfer from earmarked reserves of £4.2m.

Economic Development – £0.2m forecast overspend

- 4.3 Unbudgeted recharge for works undertaken by the Strategy, Policy & Improvement team. Options for mitigating this pressure are being considered.

Housing & Regeneration – £0.1m forecast underspend

- 4.4 Vacant posts within the Housing Regeneration & New Build team.

Housing Options – £8.1m forecast overspend

- 4.5 The Homelessness service is forecasting to overspend against budget by £7.6m after applying growth of £8m, use of Government grants totalling £9.5m and proposed reserve drawdowns of £1.1m.

- 4.6 Homelessness numbers remain high and have continued to rise in Q1 of 2024/25. There are currently 3,075 tenants in Temporary Accommodation (of which 704 are in Bed & Breakfast accommodation). This compares with 2,677 at Q1 in 2023/24, an increase of 398 tenants (14% increase). The main reasons for people presenting homeless are family evictions, domestic abuse and private tenancies that have been terminated. The cost-of-living crisis has increased family exclusions and reduced accessibility of private tenancies.

- 4.7 New bookings continue to rise, with 416 in Q1 of this year compared with 341 in Q1 of 2023/24. A lack of suitable accommodation resulted in 376 of these new placements being into Bed & Breakfast accommodation.

- 4.8 This is placing pressure on accommodation budgets. A lack of move on options and suitable T.A. is resulting in high use of expensive nightly booked accommodation. Rents remain above 2011 LHA rates, resulting in a Housing Benefit Subsidy loss on each placement, with this loss being greater where expensive nightly booked accommodation is sourced.

- 4.9 Recruitment is underway to 34 new posts and 43 temporary posts have been made permanent with the aim of preventing homelessness. The placements policy has been updated allowing placements further from borough to reduce reliance on B&B accommodation within Tower Hamlets. Incentive schemes have been introduced to retain existing landlords, attract new ones and prevent friend and family evictions. Promotional campaigns have been undertaken to increase the numbers of private landlords.

- 4.10 A further pressure of £0.4m relating to the lettings service where the recharge to the HRA has reduced, based on the actual number of lettings.

Planning & Building Control – £1.6m forecast underspend

- 4.11 Key variances include vacant posts across planning & building control with a number of posts being difficult to recruit too, particularly within building control where the recruitment of registered building inspector posts as part of the Council's response to the Building Safety and Fire Safety Acts.
- 4.12 Additional CIL income is being forecast for the year which will be applied in line with legislation within Development Management, reducing the burden on the General Fund. There is risk around the timing of the receipt of CIL as it is reliant on developers reaching milestones. The income will be closely monitored over the year.
- 4.13 These underspends are being partially offset by an ongoing shortfall in planning fees. Development has slowed down for a number of reasons, including the state of the economy which impacts all of Planning & Building Control income streams as the service covers the whole development pipeline and amendments to building regulations requiring two staircases for residential buildings above 18m which has caused a number of schemes to stall, again reducing the number of applications and start on sites. Local Land Charge service will transfer to Central Government in Q4 of 2024/25, having a small impact on income in year.

Property and Major Programmes – £0.2m forecast overspend

- 4.14 Vacant property costs including security, insurance, utilities, rates and general maintenance are being incurred, creating a budget pressure of £0.5m relating to four schools (Cherry Trees, Guardian Angels, Shapla and Bromley Hall) and Mile End playgroup. These properties are empty and declared surplus to requirements without any financial provision being made as part of the decision-making process when declaring them as surplus. These sites are being reviewed as part of the property asset management plan, which is currently being drafted and assumes these sites will no longer be vacant properties by quarter 4.
- 4.15 This pressure is being partially mitigated by vacancies and higher than budgeted recharges to the HRA based on actual work undertaken.
- 4.16 The electricity charge for the Town Hall is £2.1m lower than budgeted. This is being offset by a slipped saving relating to letting floor space in the Town Hall and a higher than budgeted business rates charge on this building. This charge has been appealed.

Resources – £0.3m forecast overspend

- 4.17 Employee related costs are higher than budgeted resulting from agency costs and supernumerary posts.

Health and Adult Social Care (HASC) – £4.1m forecast overspend

- 4.18 The Health and Adult Social Care directorate forecast is an overspend of £4.1m after net transfer from earmarked reserves of £3.5m.

Adults Social Care – £3.5m forecast overspend

- 4.19 Adult Social Care represents 70% of total HASC budget. The service is currently predicting an overspend of £3.5m of pressures showing against Home Care and Supported Living Services. The pressure is currently expected to be against Learning Disability & Mental Health Services.
- 4.20 There has been a significant reduction in Home Care commitments recorded on Mosaic system, with 78 care packages closing at the end of last financial year, producing a reduction of £6.6m in demand. However, the current forecast is based on the expectation that the demand will continue to increase during the year especially during winter months.
- 4.21 In aid of closer scrutiny of changes in demand and prices which are the main cost drivers throughout the financial year, the department is undertaking a detailed scrutiny of overspending budgets namely Home Care and Supported Living, with a view to manage inflationary pressures and gain a better understanding of demand behaviour.
- 4.22 This exercise will also represent an opportunity to manage demand and increases in prices closely and take timely remedial action to bring expenditure in line with allocated funds for the services.

Integrated Commissioning – £0.6m forecast overspend

- 4.23 The Service is overspending by £0.6m due to pressures within Transport Service budgets. The service is working closely with the Communities department to identify actions to mitigate this pressure, which will be reported in quarter 2 budget monitoring.
- 4.24 Tower Hamlets Together (THT) partnership spend is also recorded against the IC accounts. However, there is no expenditure to report in this period, any future expenditure incurred will be met from S256 reserve, which will not impact on the Council's budgets.

Public Health – nil variance

- 4.25 Public Health grant for 2024/25 is £39.2m. Currently, GUM and Sexual Health is forecast to overspend by £0.3m, which will be funded from the public Health reserve should the forecast trajectory continue.

Communities – £3.2m forecast overspend

- 4.26 The Communities directorate forecast is an overspend of £3.2m after net transfer from earmarked reserves of £1.8m. In order to inform mitigation actions for overspends being reported by the directorate, a zero-based budget approach will be adopted as part of budget setting.

Community Safety – £1.7m forecast underspend

- 4.27 Recruitment processes for both THEO's and Police Officers is ongoing. However, due to some progress challenges and pauses with the recruitment of THEO's and challenges in recruitment and retention of police officers in London in the current climate is resulting in the Underspend against budget.

Culture – £0.8m forecast overspend

- 4.28 The Leisure Service were insourced on 1st May 2024, and this represents the first reported budget monitor since the Council has run the service. The business rate charges on the leisure centres are £0.5m higher than budgeted. There is also a business rate charge on a void property on the St George's leisure centre site, which was not budgeted for.
- 4.29 It is projected that £0.2m of income will be foregone whilst essential refurbishment takes place at York Hall Spa and the facility is closed.
- 4.30 Unachievable income target of £0.1m relating to a profit share with GLL.
- 4.31 There are risks associated with this forecast, particularly around income projections. Work is still ongoing around the collection of direct debits for memberships and the posting of income into the ledger. The service has only been in-house for eight weeks and therefore there is limited data available against which to base future forecasts. As a result, leisure income will be closely monitored, and forecasts refined throughout the year.
- 4.32 A £0.3m adverse variance is forecast against the leisure insourcing programme budget. Additional agency and consultancy costs are being incurred to ensure the Council has the specialist skills required to programme manage and aide the insourcing programme. These costs will be funded from a drawdown against the leisure insourcing reserve.

Public Realm – £4.1m forecast overspend

- 4.33 Public Realm Management has a number of vacant posts that are resulting in a £0.5m Underspend.
- 4.34 Within Highways & Traffic Management budget pressures relating to the capitalisation of salaries and sunk costs associated with the partial completion of the TFL capital programme are being offset by underspends on insurance (reduced numbers of claims), electricity costs for street lighting (reduced unit price) and posts being held vacant across the service. It is also planned to use historic s278 balances that are held on the balance sheet to offset general fund budgets, resulting in a £0.3m Underspend.

- 4.35 Waste Operations is forecasting a £4.5m overspend, primarily the result of higher than budgeted employee related costs (unbudgeted posts that were made permanent and overtime costs covering weekend shifts and sickness) and insurance and repairs and maintenance costs for the fleet of vehicles. This is partially offset by £0.2m underspend for the sale of recyclable materials. The service is currently reviewing the staffing structures with a view to mitigating this overall overspend.
- 4.36 A shortfall of £0.3m against the income target for commercial waste. Customers were lost during the pandemic and the service has yet to build the customer base back up to these levels.
- 4.37 There are mitigating actions being undertaken to manage this ongoing cost pressure. These include targeting illegal waste through increased enforcement activity; improve the commercial waste offer to increase market; reducing contamination through identification of hotspots followed by targeted communication (education/advice/enforcement); targeting rogue landlords through policy change/interventions; route optimisation and increased staff training to reduce vehicle damage / insurance claims.
- 4.38 Slippage of a saving reducing costs through electrification of the fleet resulting in an overspend of £0.3m. Procurement of these vehicles is underway. The Mayor of London has frozen freedom pass fares resulting in a £0.4m underspend against budget.
- 4.39 Parking services are forecasting additional income of £1.5m from additional enforcement activity, the impact of the diesel surcharge on casual parking income and increased demand for visitor vouchers. Unbudgeted costs relating to parking stress survey work and parking enforcement plan reduce the underspend to £1.3m. This underspend will be transferred to the Parking Control reserve, resulting in a nil variance.
- 4.40 Vacant posts and additional Housing of Multiple Occupancy income within the mandatory licensing service is resulting in a forecast £0.1m underspend.
- 4.41 The Street Trading account is forecast to be £0.5m overspent due to a higher than budgeted recharge for waste collection and street cleansing.

Resources – £0.7m forecast overspend

- 4.42 The Resources directorate forecast is an overspend of £0.7m after net transfer from earmarked reserves of £0.3m.

Customer Services – £0.4m forecast underspend

- 4.43 This is due to a combination of part-year vacancies in the Residents' Hub, staff not in the pension scheme in both the Residents' Hub and Customer Contact Centre, savings on Telephony and a senior post being kept vacant. Idea Stores Learning – £0.1 million underspend. This is due to part-year vacancies in the Skills for Life budget.

Finance Procurement and Audit (FPA) – £0.6m forecast overspend

- 4.44 There is a forecast overspend in staffing for the Procurement Team of £0.5m due to the current high number of procurements occurring, including social care homecare contracts and a high level of agency staff usage. This area is currently going through transformational work to ensure the requirements and obligations of the new Procurement Act 2023 which comes into effect in October 2024 are implemented and embedded.

- 4.45 Finance and Audit are currently forecasting a breakeven position. There is £0.1m staffing pressure in the other areas of FPA, mainly due to agency cover for Payroll.

Workforce OD and Business Support – £0.5m forecast overspend

- 4.46 Business Support Service £0.6m overspend. This is because of a delay in implementation of savings which are new to this financial year reduced by £0.1m drawdown from the Transformation reserve for four temporary business support officers in the Recruitment and Retention team.

Chief Executive's Office – £0.5m forecast overspend

- 4.47 The Chief Executive's Office directorate forecast is an overspend of £0.5m after net transfer from earmarked reserves of £2.2m.

Legal and Monitoring Officer Services – £0.5m forecast overspend

- 4.48 Legal Services continues to report significant pressure to the budget of circa £0.5m this is in the main due to the workload and the associated agency costs. A review of the service is underway and will form the basis of a future growth bid. Democratic Services projecting a very small underspend due to the current Members Allowance pay scale of £0.06m.

Strategy, Improvement and Transformation – nil variance

- 4.49 The mayor's new community grant programme is funded through the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) monies. An underspend of £0.5m is anticipated for this service area after costs related to the grant programme of £3.0m are funded from reserve. The underspend will be put in reserve to support costs which cannot be paid through NCIL.

Children's Services – £1.8m forecast underspend

- 4.50 The Children's Services directorate is forecasting an underspend of £1.8m after net transfer from earmarked reserves of £2.5m. This forecast includes underspends including £2.3m within the supporting families division and £1.8m within Education Resources division. In order to inform mitigation actions for overspends being reported by the directorate (particularly SEND overspends), a zero-based budget approach will be adopted as part of budget setting.

Commissioning – £0.1m forecast overspend

- 4.51 £0.2m overspend on staffing, resulting from employees being at the top of the scale and the use of agency staff for strategic and policy projects. £0.1m underspend due to additional catering income. Contract pressures are a risk due to rising inflation. Caution is warranted as specific contracts are due for renewal next year and potential growth bids hinge on the contract bidding process.

Education – £2.2m forecast overspend

- 4.52 There is a £1.6m forecast overspend on SEN Transport (£1.4m external and £0.2m internal). This is a result of continued increases in the costs of SEN transport, driven by both the rising volumes of children accessing transport and the substantial increase in fuel costs, along with London ULEZ surcharges for private hire vehicles. There is also a £1.1m SEND overspend, driven by rising pressures and the need for additional staff in Education Psychology and SEN casework. There are also £0.3m forecast overspends related to lower income projections in Gorsefield and Safeguarding services as well as pupil admissions. These pressures are being offset by a £0.8m underspend in Community Languages service which is currently paused.
- 4.53 Mitigations to help reduce travel pressures include encouraging use of personal travel budgets, renegotiation of taxi prices where possible and promotion of independent travel training. Additionally, the in-house passenger transport service has targets around optimisation of bus seats and adhering to the Green Agenda which should alleviate pressure on external transport if they are able to receive more pupils within their quota.

Supporting Families – £2.3m forecast underspend

- 4.54 The significant underspend of £2.4m is forecast in the new youth provision due to ongoing recruitment. There is also a forecast £0.1m overspend on No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) expenditure, driven by statutory requirements and a growing number of assessed families. Placements remain volatile, demand pressures are currently managed well. Various mitigations have been implemented, including strategic allocation of social care grant funding and careful management of social care grant reserves as well as ensuring the number of children looked after and residential placements remain minimal.

Education Resources – £1.8m forecast underspend

- 4.55 The forecast underspend within the division is after the drawdown of £1.8m of free schools meals earmarked reserves.

Corporate – £0.5m forecast underspend

- 4.56 The Corporate directorate forecast is an underspend of £0.5m. Forecast overspends in the directorate relate to a pay provision of 3% which was provided for pay inflation. Based on the latest pay offer there will be a pressure of £1.2m. The offer has not been accepted by the Unions. The cost of the Best Value Inspectors is estimated to be £0.4m and following a significant national increase in external audit fees due to the issues in the sector there is an overspend of £0.2m forecast.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) – £2.6m forecast overspend

- 4.57 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) quarter 1 forecast outturn is an overspend of £2.6m at year-end. The in-year forecast movement in DSG balances is shown in table 3 below.

Table 3 – Forecast year-end DSG balances (£m)

	Schools block (£m)	Central block (£m)	Early years block (£m)	High needs block (£m)	Total (£m)
Opening deficit balance	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.8	15.8
In-year DSG (surplus) / deficit	(2.0)	0.1	(1.7)	6.2	2.6
Forecast closing deficit balance	(2.0)	0.1	(1.7)	22.0	18.4

- 4.58 Pressures are primarily within the High Needs Budget. This is due to increased demand for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), rising costs of specialist placements, and insufficient funding to meet the complex needs of pupils.
- 4.59 As a result of the overall savings in the Schools and Early years blocks, it is proposed that subject to School forum approval these are used to reduce the High Needs overspend as in previous years. This overspend is a burden to all schools and pupils in the borough, so reducing it benefits the whole education community.
- 4.60 Services are undertaking a comprehensive review of Service Level Agreements to optimise and streamline banding rates. Additionally, Children Services are in the initial phases of implementing the Department for Education's (DfE) Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme, which aims to enhance financial efficiency and improve outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The DBV programme will potentially provide significant benefits, including more effective resource allocation, better financial planning, and improved support for high-needs pupils.

5 Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

5.1 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) quarter 1 revenue forecast outturn position is an in-year variance of £3.9m. As the HRA is a ringfenced account, this overspend will be transferred to HRA general reserves at year-end. There are a number of under and overspends making up this position which are summarised below. Further, the HRA general reserves are also budgeted to be used to fund the HRA capital programme, the quarter 1 forecast is that £9.1m will be required for the year.

Income - £2.4m Overspend

5.2 Under recovery of income relating to dwelling rents and service charges of £1.3m due to a high number of voids, both general voids and properties held vacant following policy decisions for decant purposes, for example resulting from major works at Maltings & Brewster. Delays in new build units being let.

5.3 Under recovery of leasehold service charge income totalling £1.8m where the budgeted insurance charge to leaseholders was over inflated. This will be corrected ahead of Q2 budget monitor.

5.4 Additional unbudgeted income of £0.3m from non-dwelling rents (shops, garages) with a lower number of voids than were budgeted.

5.5 The number of leasehold enfranchisements is significantly higher than budgeted resulting in additional income of £0.4m.

Expenditure - £7.3m Overspend

5.6 Repairs and Maintenance is forecasting an overspend of £2.5m due to the continued increase in materials and labour costs; unbudgeted costs for emergency works, damp and mould remedial work and electrical testing. The stock is ageing resulting in increased costs for mechanical breakdowns including boilers, lifts and pumps, both through repairs and ancillary associated costs (scaffolding, security and specialist equipment).

5.7 Building Safety costs are forecast to overspend due to the wide-ranging requirements of the safety works to be undertaken to ensure the stock is compliant from a building and fire safety perspective. This includes surveys and assessment works at a cost of £1.4m in year. A further £1m overspend relating to cyclical and preventative work, including asbestos works, servicing visits, programme fire detection and waking watch. It is proposed to fund £2.4m of these additional works from the earmarked building safety risk reserve, resulting in a net overspend of £0.3m.

5.8 An overspend of £2.5m for Communal energy costs. The energy budget was inflated in 2022/23 and 2023/24 to reflect market conditions through temporary growth. It was expected that costs would be lower in the current year and the budget reflected this reduction. However, the latest information indicates that although costs are forecast to fall, it will not be to the level built into the budget.

5.9 A £0.2m adverse variance relating to Tenant Management Organisation allowances. The budget was based on an estimated figure, whereas the actual negotiated levels are higher. Salary costs relating to building safety leads is

forecasting an underspend of £0.3m. The posts are difficult to recruit too with all local authorities competing for a limited resource.

- 5.10 A £0.8m adverse variance on repairs and maintenance costs relating to non-dwelling properties. This includes additional security costs and business rate charges on void properties.
- 5.11 Capitalisation shortfall of £0.9m due to slippage within the HRA cyclical capital programme and a change in calculation from a flat fee of 13% to a timesheet approach, in line with other Council services following the insourcing of THH. An adverse variance of £0.4m against insurance premiums for dwellings with costs rising at a higher percentage than was budgeted.

Technical Adjustments - £5.8m Underspend

- 5.12 An underspend of £1.5m against the depreciation charge for HRA dwellings and non-dwelling properties.
- 5.13 An overspend of £3.7m for the Item 8 debit and an underspend of £8m for the item credit resulting from increased interest rates on both debt and investments (net favourable variance £4.3m). These figures are based on budgeted borrowing and reserve balances.
- 5.14 The HRA quarter 1 forecast net transfers from reserves for the year are summarised in Table 4 below.

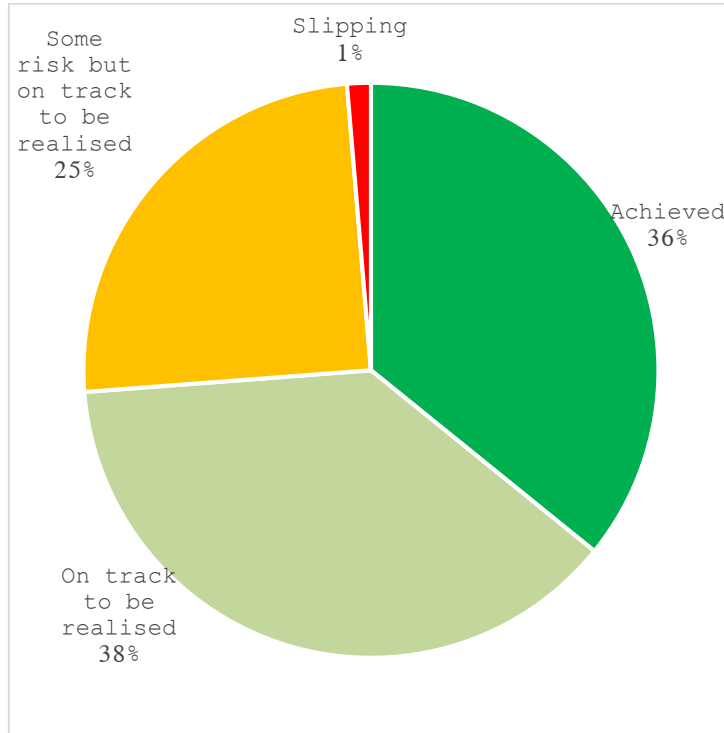
Table 4 – Forecast Housing Revenue Account and Earmarked Reserves (£m)

Reserve	2024/25 Opening reserves (£m)	Revenue in-year increase / (decrease) (£m)	Capital financing (£m)	2024/25 Forecast closing reserves (£m)
Housing Revenue Account balance	24.3	(3.9)	(9.1)	11.3
Earmarked Reserves without restrictions	2.4	(2.4)	0.0	0.0
Total Housing Revenue Account and Earmarked Reserves	26.7	(6.3)	(9.1)	11.3

6 Savings

- 6.1 In the 2024-27 MTFs, Tower Hamlets Council plans to realise £37.4m in the 2024/25 financial year. The below chart 2 displays the latest distribution of 2024/25 savings target;

Chart 2 – forecast savings tracker (%)



- 6.2 Of the £37.4m in-year savings target, £13.4m (36%) of savings are reported as already achieved.
- 6.3 The task remains realising the remaining savings with monetary value of £24.0m. £14.2m (38%) of savings are on track to be realised by the end of the financial year. £9.3m (25%) of savings may have some risk involved, but there is generally high confidence that they will be realised by the end of the year. £0.5m (1%) of savings are reported as delayed.
- 6.4 A complete listing of remaining savings to be delivered organised by RAG rating can be found in Appendix 5.

7 Capital Programme

General Fund (GF) Capital Programme

- 7.1 The General Fund quarter 1 capital forecast outturn for the year is £92.0m, which represents 70% of the revised 2024/25 capital budget of £131.9m, resulting in a forecast variance of £39.9m at year-end, summarised in table 5 below and detailed in Appendix 6.

Table 5 – Quarter 1 GF Capital Forecast Outturn (£m)

Programme / Directorate	Revised Budget (£m)	Actual (£m)	Q1 Forecast (£m)	Forecast Variance (£m)	(Slippage) / Acceleration (£m)	(Under) / Overspend (£m)
Approved Programme						
Children's Services	35.2	3.8	25.5	(9.6)	(10.2)	0.6
Communities	45.9	1.2	22.4	(23.5)	(23.9)	0.4
Housing & Regeneration	20.6	(1.6)	19.3	(1.4)	(1.4)	0.1
Health and Adult Social Care	3.2	0.4	0.7	(2.5)	(2.5)	0.0
Resources	2.2	0.0	2.0	(0.2)	(0.2)	0.1
Approved Programme Total	107.0	3.7	69.9	(37.2)	(38.2)	1.1
Approved Rolling Programme						
Children's Services	3.0	0.3	4.1	1.1	1.1	0.0
Communities	9.2	0.6	9.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Housing & Regeneration	3.7	0.5	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Resources	3.0	0.0	1.1	(1.9)	(1.9)	0.0
Approved Rolling Programme Total	18.9	1.3	18.1	(0.8)	(0.8)	0.0
Invest to Save Programme						
Communities	4.0	1.3	2.2	(1.8)	(1.8)	0.0
Housing & Regeneration	1.1	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Invest to Save Programme Total	5.1	1.3	3.3	(1.8)	(1.8)	0.0
LIF Programme						
Communities	0.8	0.3	0.7	(0.1)	(0.1)	0.0
LIF Programme Total	0.8	0.3	0.7	(0.1)	(0.1)	0.0
GF Grand Total	131.9	6.6	92.0	(39.9)	(40.9)	1.1

- 7.2 The forecast variance of £39.9m is composed of £40.9m net slippages and £1.1m net overspends. Of the £40.9m net slippages, five key projects account

for £32.3m of the overall forecast net slippage. Key reasons for these net slippages are detailed as follows.

Key Capital General Fund Net Slippages

- St. George's Leisure Centre (Communities) - £17.8m slippage
- 7.3 The project has a 2024/25 revised budget of £19.1m, the project is forecast to spend £1.3m (7% of the revised budget) slipping £17.8m into future years. The hard strip to St George's has not been completed yet. The scheme been through a number of design changes. The planning submission is due in mid-August 2024 with main contractor procurement commencing in late 2024. It is expected that the slippage of £17.8m will be spent in 2025/26 financial year.
- The Institute of Academic Excellence (Children's Services) – £8.5m slippage
- 7.4 The project has a revised budget of £9.0m and is forecast to spend £0.5m (6% of the revised budget) this year, resulting in a slippage of £8.5m. Following the earlier feasibility, the project is now proceeding as a remodelling/refurbishment scheme. When the budget was originally set it assumed a full demolition and rebuild and that works would commence this year. However, the latest position assumes that a refurbishment only scheme will be required, and that works are now anticipated to commence later in the overall timescales for the project and to a lower expected cost compared to the original £15.0m previously agreed lifetime budget based on refurbishment and a significant element of newbuild. A dedicated resource has also been allocated to accelerate to delivery of the project and costs of the scheme will be monitored throughout the year and once confirmed, funds will be appropriately released.
- Lochnager Bridge (Communities) - £3.7m slippage
- 7.5 This project is causing the significant variance within the New Infrastructure programme. The revised budget for the year is £3.7m, however £0.2m spend is forecasted (5% of the revised budget) slipping £3.5m into future years as the Council cannot enter main contract works until certain key risks are resolved such as securing the land and completing the Bridge Development agreement with London Borough of Newham who is delivering the project.
- Cherry Trees and Culturally Sensitive Misuse Recovery Centre (HASC) - £2.5m slippage
- 7.6 The £2.5m variance within HASC is due to two projects approved in principle yet to go through the capital governance process. Day Provision at Cherry Trees has a budget of £1.0m and Culturally Sensitive Misuse Recovery Centre has a revised budget of £1.5m. The projects will commence once they have been formally approved at capital governance hence the forecast spend against the project budgets have been prudently set to nil for now and will be reviewed throughout the remainder of the year.

Key Capital General Fund net overspends

7.7 Of the £1.1m forecast overspend, three key projects accounts for £0.8m of the overall forecast net overspend. Key reasons for these forecast overspends are detailed as follows.

Beatrice Tate Expansion (Children's Services) - £0.4m overspend

7.8 This project has a revised budget of £4.1m and is forecasting to spend £6.1m resulting in a net acceleration of £1.6m and a overspend of £0.4m. An overspend is forecast on the scheme due to the amount of risk that is sat with the Council, with the contractor requesting an additional c£240k to hold their prices. There is a risk the scheme could increase but there is no certainty currently.

The Transformation of CCTV systems (Communities) - £0.3m overspend

7.9 This project has been beset with cost problems, with all contract awardees coming in with values significantly higher than original estimates and additional costs due to changes in location for the hub from the original plan being for the hub to be located at the New Town Hall.

Hermitage Temporary SEND unit (Children's Services) - £0.1m overspend

7.10 The project has a revised budget of £2.3m and is forecasting to spend £2.7m resulting in a net acceleration of £0.3m and an overspend of £0.1m. This is due to identifying a number of unexpected objects below ground as well as asbestos resulting in further costs and so an additional budget request will be required.

7.11 Other notable net slippages and overspends relating to the general fund capital programme are detailed below based on programme and directorate and within Appendix 6.

Approved Programme

Children's Services

7.12 Harpley School Key Stage 1 & 2 has a revised budget of £1.1m and currently has no forecasted spend slipping £1.1m into future years. There is no major works expected this financial year due to planning applications being rejected for the expansion programme. They are currently undergoing a procurement process for feasibility so a masterplan can be obtained from external providers to determine how best to utilise the buildings and provide better provision.

Communities

7.13 The other significant programme within the Communities Directorate is the Parks Programme, with a total revised budget allocation of £3.0m for the year. The forecast outturn for the year is £1.5m, resulting in a net variance of £1.5m slipping into next year. There are several smaller schemes forming this programme, including the Quality Parks projects which is forecast to slip £0.7m from a revised budget of £1.1m due to Allen Gardens still being subject to planning and options appraisals by external third parties.

Housing and Regeneration

- 7.14 The Carbon Offsetting Programme has a revised budget of £2.7m and is forecasting to spend £2m (75% of the revised budget). There are two projects that make up most of the slippage, they are the Bio-Solar Installation Project. The funding for Bio-Solar Installation Project will be reallocated to other projects as Housing are unable to deliver the scheme. Some of the programme slippage is expected to be re-allocated to a school funding project and a new tranche of projects for the net zero partnership to be delivered from 2024-27.

Approved Rolling Programme

Children's Services

- 7.15 The Conditions and Improvement for Schools' project with in-year budget allocation of £3.0m is forecast to spend £4.1m resulting in accelerated spend of £1.1m from future years. The programme reacts across the maintained school estate on conditions need requirement. Two project which had unsuccessful procurements in 2023/24 were re-profiled for delivery in 2024/25. These essential heating pipework replacement projects have experienced price increases due to the cost of materials.

Resources

- 7.16 The IT Rolling Programme has a revised budget of £2.7m and is forecasting to spend £1.1m (40% of the revised budget) resulting in a forecast net slippage of £1.6m. The forecast includes upgrade of Telecare Equipment (£0.6m), which is currently progressing through the councils internal governance process.

Invest to Save

- 7.17 The Street Lighting Replacement project is forecasting spend of £1.9m (45% of the £3.7m revised budget), resulting in a forecast slippage of £1.8m. It is anticipated that 2,000 lighting columns will be delivered this financial year.

General Fund capital growth and reductions

- 7.18 Capital projects listed below within table 6 and 7 are proposed growth and reductions respectively to the councils existing approved capital programme. Further details on spend profile and funding is contained in Appendix 7.

Table 6 – Growth to capital programme (£m)

Project Additions	Total Growth (£m)
Wood wharf expansion	2.199
Whitechapel Road Tensile Structure	1.838
Leisure Centre Investment Works	0.762
Youth Provision (Phase 2)	0.488
School Super Zone	0.250
Idea Stores IT Hardware	0.212
Sewardstone Road (Adult Social Care)	0.114
Public Realm Improvement (New Town Hall)	0.096
Historic Water Fountains	0.090
Poplar Baths Gaming Pitch	0.065
Petticoat Lane Heritage Trail	0.028
Total Additions	6.143

Table 7 – Reductions to capital programme (£m)

Project Additions	Total Reductions (£m)
Public Safety Improvement Programme (LIF 3)	(0.800)
Victoria Park Mini Golf	(0.455)
Maroon Street Pocket Park	(0.350)
Total	(1.605)

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme

7.19 The Housing Revenue Account quarter 1 capital forecast outturn for the year is £114.7m, which represents 96% of the revised 2024/25 capital budget of £119.7m, resulting in a forecast variance of £5.0m at year-end. This position is summarised in the table 8 below.

Table 8 – Quarter 1 HRA Capital Forecast Outturn (£m)

Programme / Directorate	Revised Budget (£m)	Actual (£m)	Q1 Forecast (£m)	Forecast Variance (£m)	(Slippage) / Acceleration (£m)	(Under) / Overspend (£m)
Approved Programme						
New Council Homes	93.3	8.2	88.2	(5.1)	(5.7)	0.6
HRA - Projects	3.4	0.2	3.6	0.1	0.1	0.0
Approved Programme Total	96.7	8.3	91.7	(5.0)	(5.5)	0.6
Approved Rolling Programme						
HRA - Rolling Programme	23.0	(1.6)	23.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Approved Rolling Programme Total	23.0	(1.6)	23.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
HRA Grand Total	119.7	6.7	114.7	(5.0)	(5.5)	0.6

Approved Programme - New Council Homes - £5.1m variance

7.20 The Council's revised New Council Homes capital programme budget for 2024/25 amounted to £93.3m with the latest HRA business plan and the capital New Build programme aligned to reflect the latest plans and time frames for the programme.

7.21 Housing with Extra Care has a revised budget of £5.0m but currently has no forecasted spend as no schemes have been approved yet. Candy Street is forecasted to slip £2.5m from a revised budget of £7.0m due to changes in procurement strategies.

7.22 Other reasons for slippages across the programme include on site difficulties with contractors e.g. experiencing labour and material supply issues, inflationary cost pressures, cash flow and actual contractual performance. Further, a number of schemes are going through re-design, some already with planning consent at the request of the Administration to try get an increase in larger sized homes.

Approved Programme – Projects - £0.1m variance

7.23 The introduction of new off street parking arrangements, which has a revised budget of £1.5m and is forecasting to spend £1.6m, resulting in a net acceleration of £0.1m. The projected spend is higher to complete the full roll out by March 2025.

HRA – Rolling Programme – nil variance

7.24 An uplift of budget to £27m is expected as a full re-programme of all the projects is currently underway and a vast number of surveys for roofs, windows, doors and concrete work is being carried out.

7.25 The process to procure two new contracts is also in progress as the Better Neighbourhood Framework expires in November 2024. This should cover all requirements for capital delivery. However, the tender process cannot start until cabinet approval is received.

7.26 As a back-up arrangement, there is a form of a third-party framework in place but there are limitations with this as it is geared up for general major works and may not fully cover fire safety requirements.

8 Treasury Management

8.1 The nominal value of Council’s investment at the end of June 2024 was £211.9m (a decrease of £27.7m from June 2023 and an increase of £7.7m from Q4 2023-24). The market value of investments at the end of the quarter was £209.5m, as detailed in table 9 below.

Table 9 – Value of Council Investments (£m)

Investment Category	June 2024 Nominal Value (£m)	June 2024 Fair Value (£m)
Internally Managed Investments		
Banks	1.000	1.000
DMADF	37.613	37.613
Money Market Funds	97.350	97.350
Externally Managed Pooled Funds		
Cash Plus & Short Bond Funds	20.000	19.978
Strategic Pooled Funds	56.000	53.581
Total	211.963	209.522

8.2 External borrowing was £68.709m and no new external borrowing took place during the year.

8.3 The Council's investment balance at the year-end remains higher than the Arlingclose pool of 20 London and Metropolitan Boroughs average balance of £86.4m, and pool of 119 local authority average of £76.1m.

Income Position

8.4 The yield of the internal portfolio at the end of the quarter was 5.22%. The portfolio was mostly invested in money market funds and with the DMADF, so the return reflected the high interest rates across shorter durations. The income returns of the entire portfolio, including the Council's external investments during the quarter was 5.09% while total return including changes in the value of externally managed pooled funds was 6.41% (capital gain on cash plus pooled funds was 2.43% and strategic funds 4.28%).

Benchmarking

8.5 According to the June quarter benchmarking information received from Council's treasury advisor, Arlingclose Ltd, average income return of 5.09% slightly underperformed against both a group of 20 London and Metropolitan Boroughs (5.18% average income return) but outperformed that of 119 national local authorities (5.06% average income return).

Liquidity

8.6 65% of Council's invested cash at the end of the quarter is available within 7 days ensuring adequate cash is available to meet daily expenditure payments. This compared to the average London and Metropolitan Boroughs of 70% and 119 Local Authorities in the Arlingclose pool of 52%.

8.7 74% of funds were available within 100 days of maturity compared with a London and Metropolitan Borough average of 85% and local authority average of 71%.

8.8 Overnight liquidity at the end of June was £98.3m which is 100% of the internal portfolio. The average days to maturity of the internal portfolio at the end of the quarter was 33 days (44 days March 2024) which reflects the underlying weighted average maturities of the money market funds.

Security

8.9 The investment average credit rating of AA- represents a secured portfolio compared to the average rating for Arlingclose pool of 20 London and Metropolitan Boroughs of A+ and A+ average for pool of 119 local authorities.

8.10 At the end of June 2024, the Council had £1m invested with Santander and £97.35m in MMF's. The Council therefore had minimal exposure to a single financial institution. Whilst the Council's investment portfolio's bail-in risk is 100%, this is all available overnight through MMFs.

Inflation

- 8.11 Inflation continued to decline from the 7.9% rate seen in June 2023. During the quarter, consumer price inflation (CPI) had fallen from 3.2% in March 2024 to 2.0% in June 2024, reaching the Bank of England's 2% target at the end of the period.
- 8.12 Inflation rates are expected to move lower over the next 12 months. In the near term, interest rates are expected to dampen activity along with inflation through the supply chain. There are upside risks from geo-political issues and stronger domestic activity. With continued policymaker fear around the persistence of underlying inflationary pressure, particularly services inflation, Bank Rate is forecast to reduce slowly initially, summarised in table 10 below.

Table 10 – Interest rates forecasts (%)

	Current (%)	Sep-24 (%)	Dec-24 (%)	Mar-25 (%)
Official Bank Rate Central Case	5.25	5.00	4.75	4.25
3-month MMF rate Central Case	5.40	5.15	4.80	4.30
5yr gilt yield Central Case	3.95	3.90	3.70	3.50
10yr gilt yield Central Case	4.09	4.05	4.00	3.80
20yr gilt yield Central Case	4.55	4.45	4.40	4.20
50yr gilt yield Central Case	4.16	4.05	4.00	3.80

Borrowing

- 8.13 The Council has Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loans totalling £51.2m and fixed rate bank loans totalling £17.5m. No external borrowing took place during the quarter as the capital program is temporarily funded using cash reserves, thereby saving on external borrowing costs in the short-term.

9 Collection Fund

- 9.1 This section shows the amount of money the council has collected from tax payers of the borough, and the split between the amount that is retained and the amounts paid over to central government and the GLA.

NNDR Business Rates

- 9.2 The council is expected to collect £450m in 2024-25 for total Business Rates income (30% retained by the Council and 37% passported to the GLA and 33% central government), excluding business rates supplement. Collection levels continue to be impacted by the economic impacts from the cost-of-living pressures, although collection rates are starting to return to pre-pandemic levels.
- 9.3 There is a provisional (subject to audit) accumulated Business Rates Collection Fund deficit to the end of 2023-24, of which the estimated Council share is

£19.4m. The Council is utilising its Collection Fund Smoothing Reserve to align the government grant funding of business rates reliefs with the timing of deficit payments.

- 9.4 The accumulated deficit to the end of 2023-24 continues to include a significant loss allowance (bad debt provision) for potential non-payment of debts, of which the Council share is £4.6m, to allow for the on-going potential impacts of cost-of-living pressures.
- 9.5 To the end of quarter 1, the council collected £143.9m of £459.8m billed (31.31% in-year collection rate) compared to 30.29% for 2023-24, which is an improvement on last year. This includes collection of the Business Rate Supplement (BRS) for the London Crossrail development.

Council Tax

- 9.6 The council is expected to collect £192.2m by the end of 2024-25 (both GLA 28% and Council 72% shares). Collection levels continue to be impacted by the economic impacts of the cost-of-living pressures.
- 9.7 There is a provisional (subject to audit) accumulated Council Tax Collection Fund deficit to the end of 2023-24, of which the estimated Council share is £5.5m. There is a loss allowance (bad debt provision) of £18.2m to allow for the potential impacts of cost-of-living pressures.
- 9.8 The cost of the Local council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) scheme continues to rise, up slightly from £32.4m in 2023-24 to £34.3m in 2024-25. The level of claimants has reduced slightly from the increased pandemic level. The 2024-25 forecast at Quarter 1 is £34.3m.
- 9.9 To the end of quarter 1 the council collected £45.5m of the £188m Council Tax bills raised (26.54% in-year collection rate) compared to 25.86% for the same period in 2023-24, which is an improvement on last year but slightly lower than pre-pandemic collection levels. Future years' collection rates could continue to be negatively affected by wider economic impacts being experienced by residents (including inflationary and market pressures on energy and food costs).

10 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no equality implications directly resulting from this report.

11 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

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

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

11.2 There are no other statutory implications contained in this report.

12 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

12.1 The attached report is primarily financial in nature and the financial implications of the issues raised have been included in the report and its associated appendices.

13 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

13.1 The council is required by section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs. The council's chief finance officer has established financial procedures to ensure the council's proper financial administration. These include procedures for budgetary control. It is consistent with these arrangements for Cabinet to receive information about the revenue and capital budgets as set out in this report

13.2 The monitoring of financial information is also a significant contributor to meeting the council's Best Value legal duty and therefore this report complies with that legal duty.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices


- Appendix 1: Nationally Recognised Demand Driven Pressures
- Appendix 2: 2024/25 Quarter 1 General Fund Revenue by Service Area
- Appendix 3: 2024/25 Quarter 1 General Fund Variances
- Appendix 4: 2024/25 General Fund and Earmarked Reserves
- Appendix 5: 2024/25 Savings Tracker
- Appendix 6: 2024/25 Q1 General Fund Forecast Outturn Capital Programme Monitor
- Appendix 7: 2024-25 Q1 Capital Growth and Reductions 2024-2027

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

- None

Officer contact details for documents: N/A

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<p style="text-align: center;">Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10th September 2024</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Julie Lorraine, Corporate Director of Resources</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Business Rate Risks</p>	

Originating Officer(s)	Filuck Miah,
Wards affected	All wards

Summary

This presentation provides an overview of the Business Rates Risk (BRR) and includes how its charged, collected and distributed, appeals, ratings lists, historical rate reduction levels, risks and mitigations

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

1. Review the presentation on the topic in order to inform discussion for the OSC meeting.

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Business Rates Risks



Business Rates



Business rates is charged on non-domestic properties. It is collected by Tower Hamlets.

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30% of all business rates collected are retained by the Council (37% GLA, 33% Government).

The more business rates the Council collects the more money it has and visa versa.



Business Rates Income



The Council's budget for business rates related income is £173m.

We are in a business rates pool with 7 other Councils. The pool provides Tower Hamlets with £2m of savings that would otherwise be paid to central government.

Other Members of the Pool are:

Barnet, Brent, City of London, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Waltham Forest



Business Rates Appeals



Business rates are based on the value of a property as calculated by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA).

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Businesses can appeal against their valuation, and they may do this years after the valuation.

If successful the business rates will be reduced and prior year payments refunded.



Ratings List



A new valuation list was introduced on 1st April 2023, with 2 year revaluations planned.

The last revaluation was in 2017 so a period of 6 years between valuations.

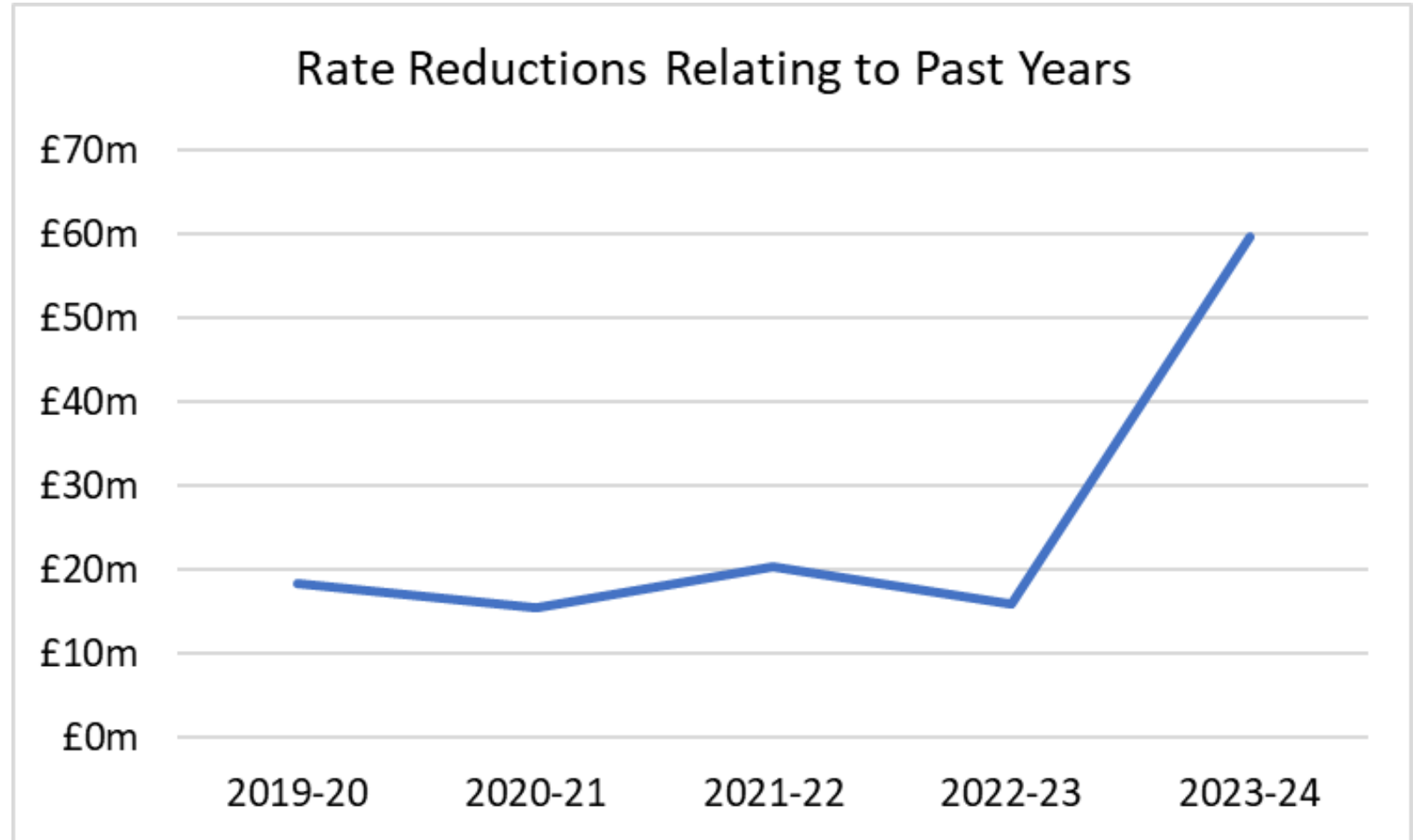
New appeals relating to 2017 are now closed, although existing appeals are still being processed.



Historic Levels

Rate reductions in 2023/24 were over 3 times higher than previous years.

30% of this additional £40m is £12m.

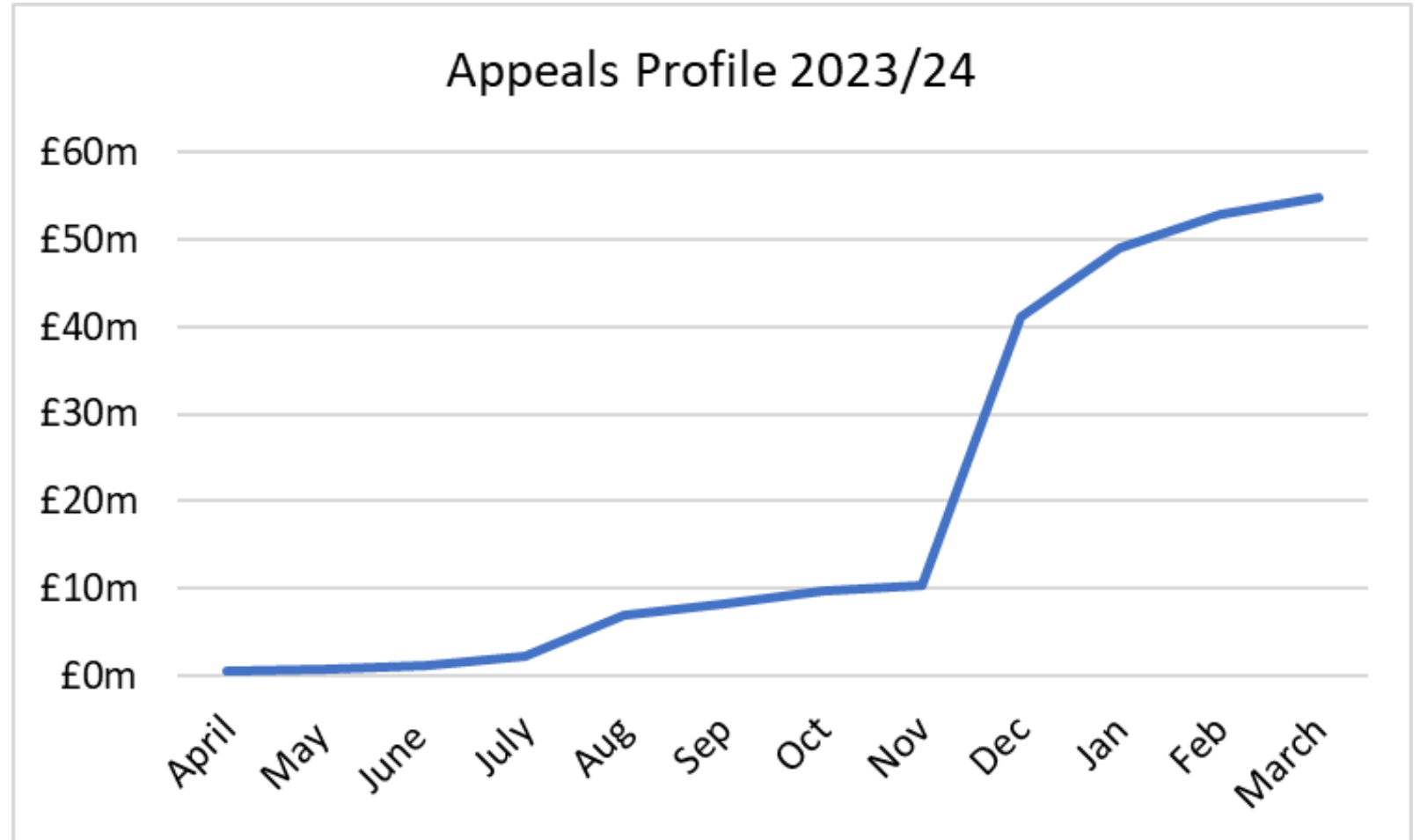


2023/24 Appeals Profile



Appeals decided from December onwards caused the increase.

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Top Appeals



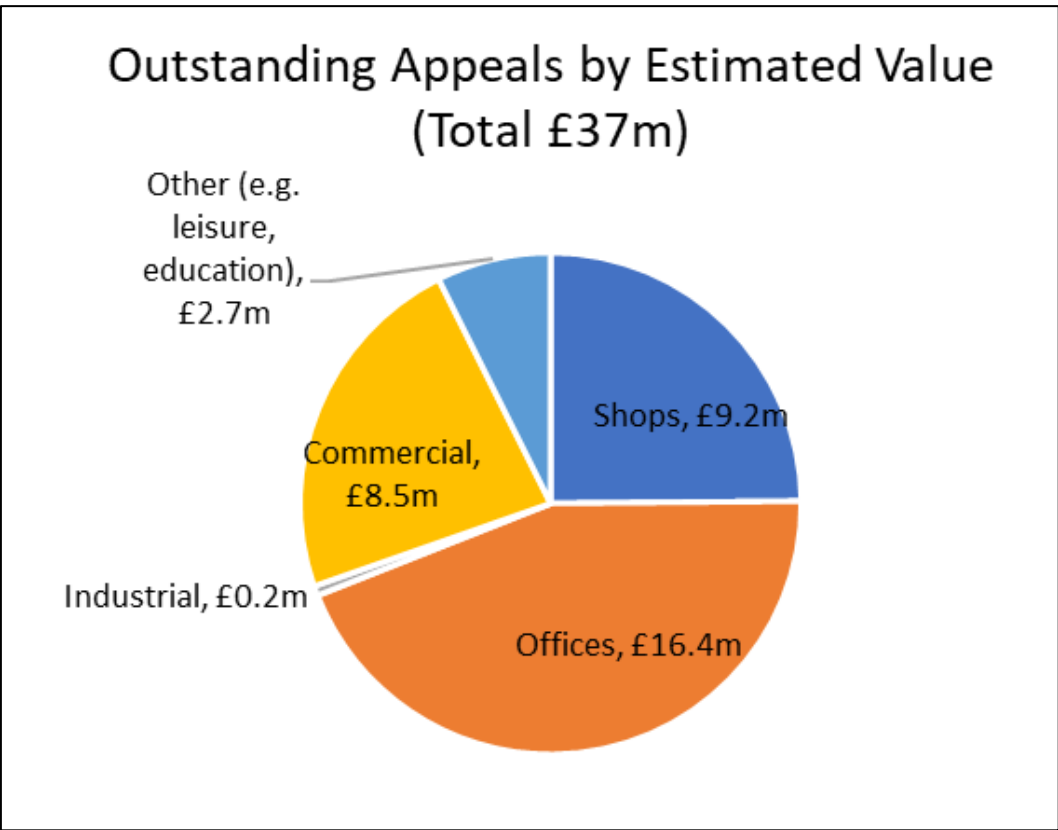
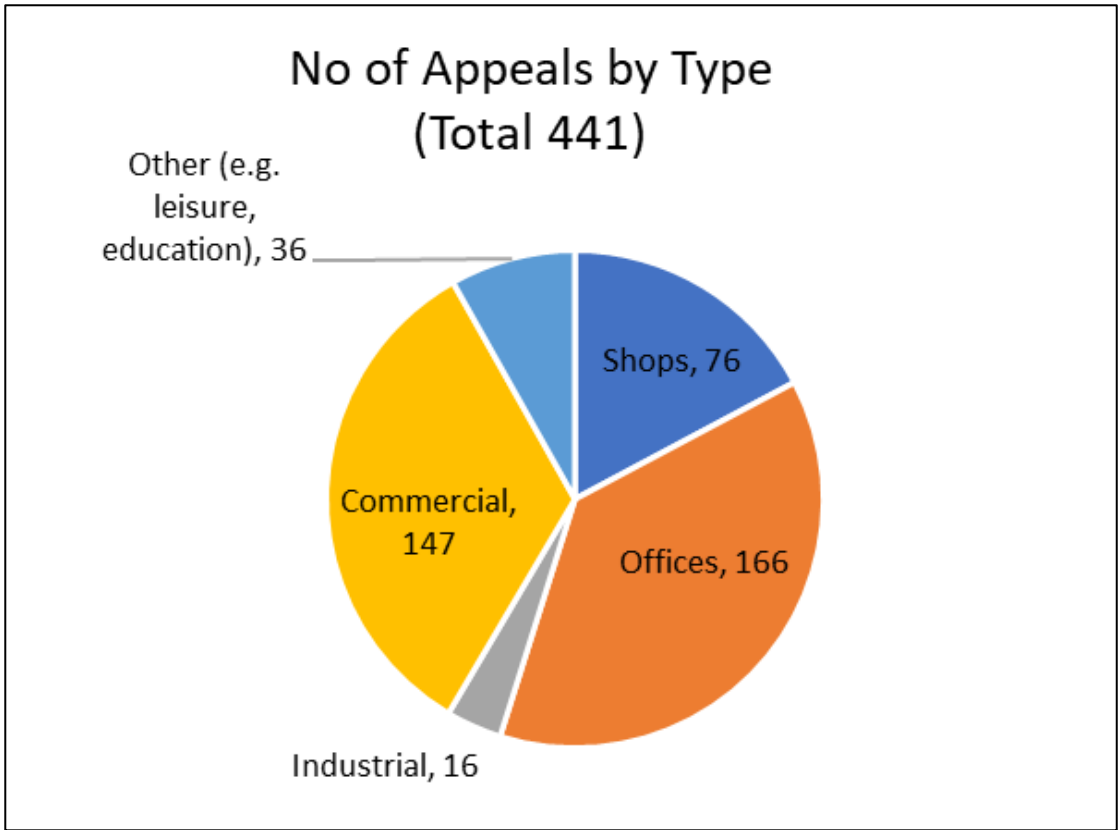
Top 5 successful appeals in 2023/24 totalled £22.4m. This includes repayment of prior years' rates.

Name of Payee	Address	Amount (£)
HSBC Bank Plc	HSBC, 8 Canada Square, London, E14 5AA	£5,147,933
JP Morgan Markets Ltd	25 Bank Street, London, E14 5LE	£4,792,733
Citibank NA	(Various floors at) 33 Canada Square, London, E14 5AX	£4,598,615
Scarpetta Limited	Unit 10 Grd Floor, 20 Canada Square, London, E14 5NN	£4,389,891
KPMG LLP	10-13th 30Nth Colonnade & 15 ExPtBstL3, Canada Square, London, E14 5AA	£3,439,976

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Outstanding Appeals



Risks

Although the outstanding appeals have been included going forward there are a number of risks:

- The actual reductions in rates could be higher than estimated.
- Value of appeals not yet submitted (Analyse Local now used).
- Properties could be removed from the ratings list completely.
- Conversions of offices to residential.
- Continual declines in office values.
- Collection Fund Smoothing reserve is depleted (c£20m impact).

For example, the old Barclays Building in Cabot Square will potentially be removed from the ratings for 1 year for refurbishment (£7m in rates).



Planned Actions

- External expertise have been commissioned (Analyse Local)
- Understand the ongoing impact of the appeals on the base.
- Increase intelligence around potential appeals.
 - Know the biggest rate payers
 - Projections for the sector
 - Relevant appeals that could inform future ones
- Improved forecasting
- More frequent estimates and appeals reporting



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<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>10th September 2024</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Ashraf Ali – Director for Public Realm</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Tower Hamlets Transport Strategy refresh</p>	

Originating Officer(s)	Mat Kiely – interim Group Manager Transportation – Public Realm
Wards affected	All wards

Summary

This report provides an update on the work undertaken to date to refresh the 2019 Tower Hamlets Transport Strategy.

Since the Strategy was published in 2019, there have been a number of local, national and political changes impacting upon the strategic direction of transportation and funding opportunities as well as travel patterns, the physical travel network and policy direction.

The Council have adopted a ‘light touch’ approach to refreshing the Transport Strategy, with a focus placed on ensuring that the strategy is aligned with current guidance as well as local and London-wide vision and direction.

The refresh is an opportunity to identify how the strategy will integrate with key policy areas including the Strategic Plan, the Local Plan and growth agenda, Road Safety , Walking & Cycling, Street Scene Guide and the Parking Enforcement Plan, ensuring that future schemes and work programmes are informed.

The refreshed strategy is an opportunity to ensure that funding opportunities are identified and progressed and that the Council’s ability to gain additional funds is strengthened by identifying support for growth and strategic priorities, while setting out an evidence-led approach to identify the measures and schemes needed to enhance the Tower Hamlets transport network for all users.

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

1. Review the presentation and provide comment or input that will help to inform and develop the emerging Transport Strategy refresh.

OSC Spotlight

Transport Strategy refresh

September 2024



Policy context



2019-2041 Tower Hamlets Transport Strategy sets out long term vision for dealing with numerous transport and related public health challenges which face the borough, including:

- Rapidly growing population.
- Poor air quality
- High childhood obesity alongside low active travel participation levels.
- Congestion
- High road casualty rates, particularly amongst children and older residents.

Strategic context

The Tower Hamlets Transport Strategy aligns with the 2018-2041 Mayor of London's Transport Strategy, along with the following local policies and strategies:

- Tower Hamlets Strategic Plan 2022-2026
- Tower Hamlets Air Quality Action Plan 2022-2027
- Tower Hamlets Local Plan (currently being updated) .

Since publication of the Tower Hamlets Transport Strategy in 2019, there have been a number of changes both locally and more widely impacting upon travel patterns, the travel network and policy direction which will need to be acknowledged and addressed in the transport strategy review.



Background (1) – Covid 19 pandemic



- **Financial impact** of lockdowns and other restrictions on public transport ridership levels – directly affecting TfL with knock-on effects on funding for London boroughs. TfL finances improved though funding gap between TfL income and capital investment required and borough funding allocations still impacted.
- **Recovery from pandemic** – ridership steadily building since 2021-22. Off-peak passenger volumes now exceed pre-pandemic figures although overall figures across London remain at 89% of pre-pandemic levels.
- **Weekday commuting** – shift towards work from home impacting on weekday commuting levels.



Background (2) – other factors



- **Policy - national:** July 2024 general election – change in government. DfT developing policy objectives and priorities for funding.
- **Policy – regional:** Re-election of Sadiq Khan as London mayor in May 2024. Commitment to ULEZ and delivery of objectives in 2018-2041 London Transport Strategy.
- **Policy – local:** Change in political control following May 2022 local council and mayoral elections. New targets on EV charge point delivery, tree planting and increasing on-street parking provision. Street Design Guide 2024. Parking Enforcement Plan (PEP) out for consultation.
- **Liveable Streets – Bethnal Green LTN:** Future of this scheme subject to forthcoming judicial review in November 2024.
- **Micro-mobility:** London e-scooter rental trial in place since 2021. Growth of unregulated dockless cycle hire sector.
- **Electric vehicle charge points:** Funding opportunities: central government (e.g. LEVI fund) and private operator funding streams.
- **Infrastructure:** Elizabeth Line opened in May 2022, boosting capacity and reducing journey times on public transport network. Silvertown Tunnel due to open in 2025 – reducing congestion, improving air quality and delivering new cross-river bus routes (e.g. SL4 Canary Wharf – Grove Park superloop route).



Transport Strategy – progress to date

(1)



- **Outcome 1: Tower Hamlets is one of best places to walk and cycle in London:** Delivery of new segregated cycling infrastructure at Burdett Rd and Mansell Street (TfL). Cycleway 3 upgraded at Cable Street/Sutton Street with improved pedestrian and cycling crossings, pedestrian crossing improvement schemes in Bow and Wapping. Over 200 secure cycle parking spaces delivered. 27% of residents cycle, up from 17% in 2019 (source: annual residents' survey).
- **Outcome 2: Car use reduced in favour of active, efficient and sustainable transport:** 33 school streets delivered. Parking enforcement plan consultation underway. No. cars per 100 households reduced from 35 in 2019 to 31 in 2024 (source: Healthy Streets Scorecard, 2024). **Outcome 3: Transport services meet the needs of residents, visitors, businesses and supports growth and the economy:** New transport infrastructure delivered – Elizabeth Line, Whitechapel station redevelopment, DLR rolling stock, CIL and S106 secured. Growth of Santander Cycle Hire Scheme and dockless schemes, BLEN and ZEN schemes delivering emissions savings from workplaces in borough. Silvertown Tunnel opening in 2025.

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Transport Strategy – progress to date

(2)



- **Outcome 4: People feel safe and confident when travelling in the borough:** 15% overall casualty reduction between 2017 and 2023 (20% reduction of child casualties). 33 School Streets and 21 School Crossing Patrols in operation. Increased 20mph speed limit coverage on TfL road network.
- **Outcome 5: Air quality is improved and our surroundings are quieter and more appealing:** ULEZ scheme expanded in 2021 to cover entire borough. 21 x EV chargers installed across 4 council sites, and 9 electric vehicles in council fleet (including 2 dustcarts). 23 on street fast chargers and 327 slow chargers installed by June 2023. Programme to deliver additional 35 rapid chargers, 200 fast chargers and 2000 slow chargers underway.
- **Outcome 6: Travel in Tower Hamlets is accessible and affordable for all:** Whitechapel step-free access delivered, Elizabeth Line fully accessible. TfL fare freeze currently in operation. Accessible crossings and dropped kerb improvements delivered. Ongoing delivery of All Ability Cycling Club.



Key changes

- Emphasis on delivering EV charging programme and Mayoral vision for increased parking, tree planting, SUDs and accessible network
- Ensuring that all users are considered and that accessibility improvements are delivered for key groups
- Aligning strategy with funding opportunities
- Developing an evidence-led approach to implementing schemes
- Annual update reports



Aligning with priorities



- How does the strategy align with TH strategic plan?
 - Create 1,000 parking spaces over four years
 - Increase the number of charging points for electric vehicles in the borough
 - Work with the Mayor of London to tackle air pollution in Tower Hamlets through the AQAP and Transport Strategy
 - Work with Transport for London to improve public transport
 - Avoid penalising those in our community who drive, who in many cases are not responsible for the bulk of air pollution
 - Support schemes to reach cycling and bike proficiency and safety
 - Monitor the effectiveness and safety of cycle lanes such as those on Bow Road
 - Re open our roads, and consult on abolishing the Liveable Streets scheme
 - Only introduce traffic reduction measures through consultation with and by the consent of people in the borough
 - Identify and prioritise capital schemes through an evidence-led approach
- How does the strategy seek to make transport through and around TH more accessible, easier, cheaper and less carbon-intensive?



Transport Strategy refresh and publication of supporting documents



- **Scope:** Light touch 5 year refresh of Transport Strategy, including review of objectives and addressing policy, infrastructure and technological changes, together with publication of supporting documents for road danger reduction, walking and cycling, and the forthcoming 3 year Local Implementation Plan (LIP) submitted to TfL setting out further detail on delivery.

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Updated Transport Strategy

Strategic Plan

Street Scene Guide

Freight Study (LP team)

Parking Enforcement Plan

EV fleet upgrades and EV charging

Road danger reduction plan

2025-2028 Local Implementation Plan

Local Plan (growth)

AQAP

Transport Infrastructure IDP

EV charging programme

ZEN programme and dedicated officer

Walking & Cycling plan



Benchmarking



- Southwark published their transport strategy (strategy itself not a review) last year: [Appendix 1 Streets for People Strategy 2023-2030.pdf \(southwark.gov.uk\)](#)
- Westminster will be publishing their Transport Strategy in November this year.
- The City Of London Transport Strategy review has now been signed off this summer: see [City of London Transport Strategy to ensure reduction in motor traffic and safer cycling infrastructure](#)
- Camden reviewed their Transport Strategy 3 years into the strategy back in 2022 focusing heavily on progress to date and also setting priorities for next 3 years - [Transport strategies and plans - Camden Council](#).
- Other London Boroughs have progressed annual update reports on their Transport Strategy. This is something for LBTH to consider.




Funding and timescales



- Budget in place for Transport Strategy refresh, Walking & Cycling Plan and Road Safety plan (**July**)
- Resource in place for Strategy refresh (**Aug**)
- Resource procurement progress for W&C and RS plans (**Sept**)
- Internal officer engagement workshops – Transport & Highways, Planning, Public Health: **September-October 2024**
- Local political engagement – **October-November 2024**
- Online public consultation – **November-December 2024**
- Publication of updated transport strategy and supporting documents: **February-March 2025**



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<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>10th September 2024</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Julie Lorraine, Corporate Director of Resources</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Final Decision and Service Action Plan Response</p>	

<p>Originating Officer(s)</p>	<p>Usman Zia, Head of Information and Governance</p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>All wards</p>

Summary

This presentation provides an overview of Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Final Decision and Service Action Plan Response including a draft of the reasonable adjustment policy

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

1. Review the presentation on the topic in order to inform discussion for the OSC meeting.

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The Ombudsman's final decision

Summary: Mr X complains that the Council did not properly deal with a Blue Badge or taxi-card application properly. The Council is at fault because it delayed dealing with Mr X's Blue Badge and taxi-card applications and did not make consistent reasonable adjustments. Mr X suffered avoidable distress and incurred time and trouble. The Council should apologise to Mr X, pay Mr X £200 for distress and £100 for time and trouble, provide guidance to staff, provide an action plan and refer to the Cabinet Member responsible.

The complaint

1. The complainant, whom I shall refer to as Mr X, complains that the Council has not dealt properly with his taxi-card and Blue Badge applications because:
 - It delayed dealing with his taxi-card application from September 2022 and his Blue Badge renewal from January 2023;
 - It did not follow the right process for dealing with his taxi-card application and Blue Badge renewal due to:
 - a) failing to make reasonable adjustments during the application processes;
 - b) requiring him to provide PIP evidence multiple times;
 - c) failing to take and consider medical evidence about his applications;
 - d) Not considering whether he needed to have an assessment and requiring him to undergo an unnecessary one;
 - e) Telling him he could not have a taxi-card because his address had changed;
 - f) Informing him he could apply for his Blue Badge renewal 6 months in advance, then requiring his carer to remind it about his Blue Badge renewal as it could not be renewed until 1 week before it expired;
 - g) failing to meet its standards of service (14 days for taxi-cards, 12 weeks for Blue Badges);
 - It did not have a system viewable by all staff, to record reasonable adjustments so Mr X did not have to repeatedly advocate for and repeat his reasonable adjustments or be contacted in a way which is not accessible for him.
 - It did not handle his complaints properly due to:
 - a) Failing to respond to his verbal complaints of January and April 2023.

-
- b) Failing to make reasonable adjustments to enable him to complain;
 - c) Refusing to take his complaint over the telephone;
 - d) Failing to take his full complaint details;
 - e) Failing to investigate his complaints.
2. Mr X says his applications for a Blue Badge and taxi card were delayed, he should not have had to undergo an assessment and he incurred time and trouble providing documents multiple times.

The Ombudsman's role and powers

3. We investigate complaints about 'maladministration' and 'service failure'. In this statement, I have used the word fault to refer to these. We must also consider whether any fault has had an adverse impact on the person making the complaint. I refer to this as 'injustice'. If there has been fault which has caused an injustice, we may suggest a remedy. (Local Government Act 1974, sections 26(1) and 26A(1), as amended)
4. Our role is not to ask whether an organisation could have done things better, or whether we agree or disagree with what it did. Instead, we look at whether there was fault in how it made its decisions. If we decide there was no fault in how it did so, we cannot ask whether it should have made a particular decision or say it should have reached a different outcome.
5. When considering complaints, we make findings based on the balance of probabilities. This means that we look at the available relevant evidence and decide what was more likely to have happened.
6. When considering complaints we make findings based on the balance of probabilities. This means that we look at the available relevant evidence and decide what was more likely to have happened.
7. An organisation should not adopt a blanket or uniform approach or policy that prevents it from considering the circumstances of a particular case. We may find fault in the actions of organisations that 'fetter their discretion' in this way.
8. We investigate complaints about councils and certain other bodies. Where an individual, organisation or private company is providing services on behalf of a council, we can investigate complaints about the actions of these providers. (Local Government Act 1974, section 25(7), as amended)
9. If we are satisfied with an organisation's actions or proposed actions, we can complete our investigation and issue a decision statement. (Local Government Act 1974, section 30(1B) and 34H(i), as amended)

How I considered this complaint

10. I spoke to Mr X about his complaint and considered documents he provided. I made enquiries of the Council and considered its response and the supporting documents it provided.
11. Mr X and the Council had an opportunity to comment on my draft decision. I considered any comments received before making a final decision.

What I found

Law, guidance and policies

The Equality Act

12. The Equality Act 2010 provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. It offers protection, in employment, education, the provision of goods and services, housing, transport and the carrying out of public functions.

The Equality Act makes it unlawful for organisations carrying out public functions to discriminate on any of the nine protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010. They must also have regard to the general duties aimed at eliminating discrimination under the Public Sector Equality Duty. The 'protected characteristics' referred to in the Act include disability.

13. The reasonable adjustment duty is set out in the Equality Act 2010 and applies to any body which carries out a public function. It aims to make sure that a disabled person can use a service as close as it is reasonably possible to get to the standard usually offered to non-disabled people.

Service providers are under a positive and proactive duty to take steps to remove or prevent obstacles to accessing their service. If the adjustments are reasonable, they must make them.

The duty is 'anticipatory'. This means service providers cannot wait until a disabled person wants to use their services, but must think in advance about what disabled people with a range of impairments might reasonably need.

Taxi-card Scheme

14. The London Taxi-card scheme provides subsidised door to door journeys in licensed taxis and private hire vehicles for London residents who have serious mobility or visual impairments. It is funded by the London boroughs and Transport for London and managed by London Councils on their behalf.
15. An applicant is automatically eligible for a Taxi-card if they:
 - Receive the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance.
 - Receive 8 points or more for the Moving Around Activity component of the Independence Payment.

The Blue Badge Scheme

16. The Department for Transport's (DfT) Blue Badge Scheme helps people with severe physical mobility problems, or other conditions affecting their mobility, to access goods and services. It does this by allowing them, or their carer, to park near their destination. The scheme gives parking concessions to Blue Badge holders. Councils are responsible for the day-to-day administration and enforcement of the scheme. This includes assessing applicants' eligibility for the Badge.
17. Since August 2019 the guidance has included the introduction of assessment criteria for people with severe mobility problems caused by non-visible ('hidden') disabilities.
18. The DfT guidance sets out what assessors may wish to consider when assessing a person's mobility. The guidance is non-statutory. This means councils do not have to follow it, but most councils do. We expect councils to explain if they decide not to follow such guidance.

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19. The guidance says councils must make sure they only issue Badges to residents who satisfy one or more of the criteria set out in legislation.
 20. There are two types of eligibility criteria:
 1. where a person is eligible without further assessment, they will receive a Blue Badge;
 2. where a person is eligible subject to further assessment, they have to fulfil one of two criteria to qualify for a Badge. They must:
 - drive a vehicle regularly, have a severe disability in both arms and be unable to operate, or have considerable difficulty operating, all or some types of parking meter; OR
 - have a permanent and substantial physical or hidden disability that causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking.
 21. Applicants who can walk more than 80 metres and do not display very considerable difficulty walking for any other reason, including very considerable psychological distress, or serious risk to themselves or others, would not be eligible. If an applicant is unhappy with the outcome of an assessment, they may ask the council to review the decision.

The Blue Badge Guidance

22. All members of staff who deal regularly with applicants and Badge holders should be included in the local authority's Disability and Equality Awareness training programme. (Para 1.10)
23. People who may be issued with a Badge without further assessment are those who are more than three years old and fall within one or more of the following descriptions:
 - receives the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and has obtained 8 points or more under the "moving around" activity
 - receives the mobility component of PIP and has obtained 10 points specifically for descriptor E under the "planning and following journeys" activity, on the grounds that they are unable to undertake any journey because it would cause them overwhelming psychological distress
24. If an applicant does not meet the required score for either mobility activity, then they fail to meet either of the above 'eligible without further assessment' PIP criteria and may be considered instead under the 'subject to further assessment' criteria. (Para 4.4)
25. If the applicant submits a document as proof of evidence that does not specify the descriptor through which they are in receipt of PIP, the local authority should not issue a Blue Badge. (Para 4.13)
26. An applicant in receipt of a score of 10 points under Activity 11, descriptor E of the "planning and following a journey" activity of the mobility component of Personal Independent Payment will have a decision letter from the Department of Work and Pensions. Under the planning and following a journey section, the letter will describe the barriers claimants may face that are associated with mental, cognitive, or sensory ability when making a journey. For the applicant to be eligible for a Blue Badge without further assessment, they must receive the following descriptor: "Cannot undertake any journey because it would cause overwhelming psychological distress to the claimant" (10 points). No other descriptor will qualify. (Para 4.14)

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27. If the applicant submits a document as proof of evidence that does not specify the descriptor through which they are in receipt of PIP, the local authority should not issue a Blue Badge. (Para 4.18)
 28. If it is not self-evident to a local authority on the basis of the information available to them, from the applicant and health or social care practitioners, whether the applicant falls within these descriptors, then a referral should be made to an expert assessor for certification. (Para 4.27)
 29. Following the 2019 revisions to the scheme eligibility criteria, the expert assessor role (previously carried out by independent mobility assessors) will continue to allow for such impartial mobility assessments as typically undertaken by OTs and physiotherapists. The DfT envisages that local authorities will continue to draw upon them as they currently do; to help them determine (relative to the published scheme criteria) the eligibility of applicants whose difficulty whilst walking relates primarily to physical factors they experience during the course of a journey. (Para 4.34)
 30. In respect of physical disabilities and/or non-visible ('hidden') conditions, only where a local authority cannot satisfy itself that an applicant meets, or does not meet, the eligibility criteria, based on the evidence provided by the applicant would it be expected to appoint an 'expert assessor'. Most applicants would reasonably be expected to demonstrate a health/social care history that is consistent with having an enduring and substantial disability that causes them very considerable difficulty when walking between a vehicle and their destination, therefore it is anticipated that appointing an expert assessor would be by exception. (Para 4.36)
 31. Local authorities should not expect applicants to 'self-identify' the basis upon which they may qualify for a Blue Badge under the 'subject to further assessment' criteria.

The DfT's view is that, for 'subject to further assessment' applications, local authorities will continue to cross-check local authority health and social care records wherever possible and subject to the relevant consents being received from a Blue Badge applicant, to seek evidence of eligibility/non-eligibility in relation to the 'subject to further assessment' criteria. (Para 4.87)

32. In many cases, where an applicant's eligibility for a Blue Badge is being considered because of a non-visible ('hidden') condition, it is anticipated that a local authority should not require an in-person assessment with the applicant. However, there may be exceptional cases where certification by an 'expert assessor' is considered necessary or appropriate - either in addition to, or in place of, the collation of insights from health/social care professionals such as specialist nurses or social workers. (Para 4.102)
33. More commonly, it is expected that officers will require evidence from health/social care professionals involved in the care of an individual to confirm the disability described in the application form. (Para 4.103)
34. Local authorities may be able to improve the efficiency of Blue Badge eligibility decision making by routinely checking existing council records to see whether there is sufficient existing evidence on an applicant to determine whether an applicant is 'self-evidently' eligible and to award, or to refuse, a Badge.

This can reduce the number of applicants with physical and/or non-visible ('hidden') enduring and substantial disabilities for whom certification from an expert assessor might be required. For such applicants, cross-checking typically

involves investigating whether they have already undergone a related assessment of their disability or mobility with a different council department. (Para 4.114)

35. Some Blue Badge applicants may be aggrieved not by the eligibility decision of the authority but rather the way in which the process has been conducted. They may, for example, be upset by the manner or conduct of local authority staff or view aspects of the process as unfair. assessment of their disability or mobility with a different council department. (Para 6.18)
36. In such cases these applicants should be made aware of the local authority's standard complaints procedure, in the same way that any other user of the local authority's services would be informed of their right to complain. Applicants should also be reminded that complaints can be brought to the attention of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (Para 6.19)

What happened?

37. This is a brief chronology of key events. It does not contain everything I reviewed during my investigation.
38. Mr X was assisted to submit a taxi card application in October 2022. Mr X changed address, he notified the Council and this was updated on 13 January 2023.
39. Mr X was assisted to submit a Blue Badge renewal application in January 2023.
40. The Council required Mr X to undergo an assessment for his Blue Badge and taxi-card applications. The assessment was carried out by video call in March 2023.
41. Mr X was advised of the outcome of the assessment several days later. His Blue Badge renewal was agreed and his taxi-card application was successful.
42. The Council experienced a problem with the photograph for Mr X's taxi-card.
43. Mr X received his taxi-card in May 2023 and his renewed Blue Badge in July 2023.

Analysis

The Blue Badge renewal process

44. The Council says:
- it advises renewal applications should be submitted at least three months prior to the date of expiry.
 - Where applications meet the automatic criteria a Badge is ordered in time for when the current Badge expires.
 - Where applications do not meet the automatic criteria they are required to go through an assessment with an independent expert assessor to ensure they continue to meet the Department for Transport's (DfT's) eligibility requirements for a Blue Badge. Due to the volume of applications the waiting time for an assessment is approximately two months. Once the assessment is complete the application will be processed with an outcome.

The taxi-card process

45. The Council says:

- applications for a taxi card are submitted via London Councils (by the applicant). The application will be reviewed and uploaded to the database by London Councils.
- If the applicant meets the automatic criteria London Councils will process the application and issue the pass.
- If the applicant does not meet the automatic criteria, London Councils will pass over to the Council to review. If there is no requirement for an assessment the Council will process the application and issue the pass.
- If there is a requirement for an assessment they will be added to the waiting list with our independent expert assessors. Once the assessment is complete the application will be processed with an outcome.
- It operates a banding system for Taxi Cards, and there was a requirement for an assessment to identify the appropriate banding for the applicant.

Mr X's applications

46. Taxi-card application records show Mr X was assisted to submit his application with supporting information including his existing Blue Badge, a photograph, a letter about his eligibility for Personal Independence Payment (PIP), medical evidence in a letter from a Consultant Neuropsychiatrist and a report from his employer.
47. Old system records from London Councils show Mr X's taxi-card application evidence was reviewed by London Councils in December 2022 and placed by the Council onto a waiting list. On 13 January London Councils spoke to the Council who advised there could be another two weeks wait. New system records show the evidence with Mr X's application was approved by the Council on 19 January 2023. Mr X's application was noted as not automatically qualifying.
48. The PIP letter provided with Mr X's taxi-card application shows he was eligible for the enhanced rates for daily living needs and mobility needs from October 2019. The letter indicated that it was six pages long but only the first page was submitted. No information was provided regarding the descriptors, scores or reasons behind Mr X's PIP award.
49. Blue Badge application records show Mr X provided a photograph but did not provide any other supporting documents with his renewal application. Mr X was not assessed as automatically qualifying for a Blue Badge by the Council.
50. Mr X says he was assisted to provide evidence of his PIP entitlement to the mobility team in the Council several times and that the mobility team refused to take or look at medical evidence, social service assessments and housing records, in relation to his Blue Badge application.
51. The Council says, "*At no point did the Service decline to consider any details of his condition or medical and social care reports. No medical supporting evidence was provided with Mr X's application.*"
52. Contemporaneous notes made by Mr X's carers in early February 2023 support Mr X's description of events. The Council told me that it does not have access to the relevant systems or resources to contact other departments in the Council about information already held about an applicant. On the balance of probabilities, the Council did not consider evidence offered by Mr X or that already held by other departments and Mr X was told he must undergo an assessment.

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53. The notes prepared by Mr X's carers also show he sent his PIP evidence to the Council on multiple occasions. On the balance of probabilities, Mr X did have to provide evidence about his PIP entitlement to the Council several times.
54. The Council provided a copy of Mr X's PIP entitlement evidence. This shows he received a score of 12 points for the 'Planning and following a journey' descriptor but does not indicate the reason why. Mr X received no points for the 'Moving around' descriptor.
55. Mr X did not automatically qualify for a Blue Badge based on his application because the evidence he provided did not show he met the criteria outlined above in paragraph 22.
56. Mr X did not automatically qualify for a taxi-card based on his application because the evidence he provided did not show he met the criteria outlined above in paragraph 13.
57. When it considered his Blue Badge and taxi-card applications, the Council should have reviewed and considered the other information provided by Mr X in his taxi-card application and that already held by other departments. The Council fettered its discretion by not considering this information. This is fault by the Council. Mr X did not suffer any injustice because he had to complete a mobility assessment in order for his taxi-card banding to be determined.

The assessment

58. Mr X's mobility assessment:
- was carried out by a physiotherapist.
 - was recorded on an assessment tool for physical disabilities.
 - records physical and neurological conditions affecting mobility.
 - recommends a reassessment in 3 years.
59. As noted in paragraph 40 above, Mr X was advised of the outcome of the assessment several days later. His Blue Badge renewal was agreed and his taxi-card application was successful. The recommendation to reassess is a professional opinion. I have not investigated this further because Mr X did not suffer any ongoing significant injustice as a result of the assessment.

Delays

60. Mr X's Blue Badge application was approved and his replacement Blue Badge was issued before his previous one expired. Mr X therefore did not suffer any significant ongoing injustice as a result and I have not investigated this further.
61. The Council has already accepted that there were some delays to Mr X's taxi-card application being processed as a result of technical issues with London Councils implementing a new taxi-card system.
62. The Council says that Mr X did not submit a photograph with his taxi-card application. Supporting information from London Councils shows that Mr X was assisted to submit a photograph with his application.
63. Emails show the Council believed that Mr X's address was wrong and had managed to update it in April 2023. This is inconsistent with records that show London Councils updated Mr X's address earlier in January 2023.
64. The Council did not tell Mr X that he could not have a taxi-card because his address had changed. It told him it was having technical difficulties ordering the taxi-card to his new address.

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65. On the balance of probabilities, there were either problems with the system itself, or how the Council considered information that was on the old and new systems. London Councils operates the taxi-card system on behalf of the Council. As per paragraph 8 above, in either case the Council remains responsible for this.
66. As Mr X did not meet the automatic qualifying criteria in his taxi-card application, London Councils passed it to the Council to review. The Council has provided no evidence to show how it reviewed his application and why it considered there was a requirement for an assessment.
67. Contemporaneous notes prepared by Mr X's carers show the Council said he must undergo an assessment because of Council policy. The Council has not provided a copy of any policy and has told me in its enquiry response that it follows the DfT Blue Badge guidance.
68. The Council says it does not have the facilities or resources to cross check health and social care records for each application that it receives.
69. On the balance of probabilities, the Council did not review his blue badge application and supporting evidence or make a reasoned decision why he required an assessment, in accordance with the Blue Badge guidance outlined above in paragraphs 31-35. It passed Mr X's blue badge application on for a mobility assessment simply because it did not meet the automatic eligibility requirements on the basis only of information submitted at the time of application. This is fault by the Council. Mr X did not suffer any injustice because his blue badge was approved and issued before his existing one expired.
70. The Council required Mr X to complete a mobility assessment in order to determine his banding for a taxi-card. This is not fault by the Council. However, there were delays to processing his taxi-card application in the periods 13 December 2022 to 1 March 2023, (before the mobility assessment was requested), and 20 March to 15 May 2023, (when the taxi-card was issued). The Council did not meet its standards of service of 14 days for issuing taxi-cards. This is fault by the Council. Mr X's taxi-card was delayed for four months and he suffered a loss of service and avoidable distress.

Reasonable adjustments

71. The Council says:
- All reasonable adjustments were made in both the application for a Taxi Card and Blue Badge.
 - Mr X stated that he was unable to deal with e-mails or long telephone calls and wanted a Zoom call to discuss his case. The Council could not facilitate this because we do not have the facility to make a Zoom calls.
 - The systems the Council uses to record reasonable adjustments are viewable by all Mobility Support officers and all reasonable adjustments were made.
72. The Council has accepted that it provides Disability Awareness training but says, "*records are unclear as to whether the Mobility Support team have completed the course.*" On the balance of probabilities, the Council's team have not completed this training.
73. Emails from Mr X's support worker on his behalf clearly identify Mr X requested telephone calls in response to queries about his applications, as reasonable adjustments. On a number of occasions the Council responded by email. Emails show the Council made contact by email after attempting to make contact by telephone on only one occasion..

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74. The Council has not provided any information or evidence about its system for recording reasonable adjustments. The Council has not provided any evidence to show how Mr X's reasonable adjustments were considered, whether any alternatives could be offered, or how they were recorded.
75. Contemporaneous notes made by Mr X's carer show that on one occasion, involving a separate matter, a Council staff member assisted Mr X by facilitating a document change in person and helping him complete the process online as a reasonable adjustment.
76. The Council's decision letter telling Mr X his Blue Badge application had been successful appears to be a standard form letter. It does not take account of Mr X's requests for reasonable adjustments and includes links to online services.
77. On the balance of probabilities, the Council did not consistently:
- consider alternative reasonable adjustments for Mr X;
 - maintain a viewable record of reasonable adjustments it would make for Mr X, viewable by all staff in the department; and
 - make the reasonable adjustments Mr X requested.

This is fault by the Council. Mr X suffered avoidable distress and incurred time and trouble having to repeat his request for reasonable adjustments.

Complaint handling

78. Contemporaneous notes made by Mr X's carer in early February 2023 show he called to make a complaint and recorded a complaint reference number. The Council says Mr X contacted it in January but did not want to proceed with a formal complaint.
79. Contemporaneous notes made by Mr X in April 2023 show he called one of the mobility team staff and explained he had still not had a response to his earlier complaint and requested that it be escalated to stage 2 of the Council's complaints procedure.
80. There is no evidence the Council formally responded to Mr X's complaint. The Council accepts the only recorded stage 1 complaint was acknowledged in July and responded to in August 2023.
81. The matter of reasonable adjustments is already covered in paragraphs 72 to 78.
82. The Council says, "*[Mr X] did not want these issues to be processed as a formal complaint. Furthermore, the Council has an Appeals Process for Blue Badge complaints and therefore the Corporate Complaints Procedure is not initiated in these instances. However, regular contact was made with Mr X via telephone, voicemails left and e-mails throughout the application process for both the Blue Badge and Taxi Card.*"
83. Mr X's complaint was about the processes not the outcome. The Council should have responded to his January complaint through its corporate complaints process.
84. On the balance of probabilities, Mr X did make a formal complaint to the Council in January but it was not actioned as such. The Council did not properly record, investigate or respond to Mr X's complaint. This is fault by the Council. Mr X had to complain to the Ombudsman.

Agreed action

85. To remedy the outstanding injustice caused by the fault I have identified, the Council has agreed to take the following action within 4 weeks of this decision:
- Apologise to Mr X for the fault I have found;
 - Pay Mr X £200 in respect of avoidable distress;
 - Pay Mr X £100 in respect of time and trouble;
86. To remedy the outstanding injustice caused by the fault I have identified, the Council has agreed to take the following action within 3 months of this decision:
- Provide guidance to staff regarding dealing with complaints about Blue Badge application processes properly through the corporate complaints process;
 - Share a copy of this decision with staff in the relevant departments to consider the lessons that can be learned from this case;
 - Provide an action plan showing how the Council will corporately record, assess, make decisions and deliver reasonable adjustments requested by its service users; and
 - Refer this decision, the action plan and the lessons learned outcomes to the relevant Cabinet Member and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
87. The Council should provide us with evidence it has complied with the above actions.

Final decision

88. I have found fault by the Council, which caused injustice to Mr X. I have now completed my investigation.

Investigator's decision on behalf of the Ombudsman

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Reasonable Adjustments Policy – For our customers (NOT FOR STAFF – HR SHOULD CREATE SEP POLICY)

UZ Draft V0.1 – July 24

1: Introduction

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) is committed to providing services to our customers that provide equitable access to all. This includes enabling and empowering those with disabilities to use our services. Under the Equality Act 2010, the local authority has a legal duty to ensure **reasonable adjustments** can be made for those with disabilities to access council services in the same way (as far as reasonably possible) as those without disabilities.

2: What are reasonable adjustments?

As a public authority, LBTH has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to the way we provide our services to our disabled customers (those who would meet the Equality Act 2010 definition of eligible disability) to ensure they are not placed at a disadvantage in comparison to those without disabilities.

Some examples of a reasonable adjustment can be:

- Allowing communications such as a complaint to be given orally rather than in writing
- Providing additional time or extending a time limit (if it does not breach a statutory or legal limit)
- Providing documents in an alternative format
- Allowing an individual to be suitably supported by a representative or advocate
- Providing additional auxiliary aids and services such as a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter where one is required for someone with a hearing impairment
- Providing an ergonomic chair for someone who requires it due to an impairment for a meeting at a council property

There is also an *anticipatory* reasonable adjustment duty in the Equality Act 2010 that requires providers of services and public functions

continually to identify any possible disability-related disadvantage, and to take reasonable steps to avoid or remove it. These can include ensuring council information such as on our website is available in accessible formats and that our public facing areas are reasonably wheelchair accessible.

3: Who can request reasonable adjustments?

While the legal duty imposed on LBTH is to provide reasonable adjustments to disabled persons who meet the eligible definition, *anyone* can request reasonable adjustments from the council.

4: What is considered reasonable?

LBTH will consider reasonable adjustment requests from our customers on a case-by-case basis where it concerns an adjustment that is not currently in place. It should be kept in mind that the intent of a reasonable adjustment would be to place an individual with a disability to the same level of opportunity and access as possible as others.

The Equality Act's Code of Practice provides the following considerations that can be made to decide whether an adjustment is reasonable:

- EFFECTIVENESS – The requested adjustment should be able to effectively deliver the above discussed intent of providing equal accessibility
- PRACTICABILITY – The requested adjustment should be reasonably practicable in its implementation and delivery
- COSTS, ASSISTANCE & RESOURCES – The requested adjustment should be reasonably weighed against any adjustments already in place that may be suitable, and any new adjustment would need to be proportionate considering LBTH's size, function and ability to deliver services to all
- DISRUPTION – The requested adjustment should not cause an unreasonable demand or disruption on the ability of staff or services to deliver their roles and services

It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of what would be considered reasonable as the reasonableness of a request will depend on its specific

circumstances. However, LBTH will ensure any reasonable adjustments made would be compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and in line with our Equality Policy (2023-2027).

5: How can a reasonable adjustment be requested?

An individual can raise a request with any customer facing council staff or services. If an individual has an allocated named worker such as a social worker, they can raise the request via their known worker or through that service. They can also contact our contact centre to request a reasonable adjustment for a service they are currently receiving or intend to receive.

The contact details for the council are below:

[Contact us \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](https://towerhamlets.gov.uk)

6: If someone is unhappy with how their reasonable adjustment request has been handled

LBTH will work to ensure any reasonable adjustment request are appropriately considered in promoting our aim in ensuring our services are accessible for all our customers.

However, where someone may feel their request has not been correctly handled or implemented by a council service or employee, they can provide feedback and also have the right to complain.

[Comments, compliments and complaints \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](https://towerhamlets.gov.uk)

7: Further reasonable adjustments information and resources

The below resources can provide helpful information and guidance around reasonable adjustments:

- [Equality Act 2010: Duty to Make Adjustments](#)
- [Equality Act 2010: Guidance](#)
- [The Equality and Human Rights Commission – Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled People](#)
- [The Citizens Advice Bureau – Duty to Make Reasonable Adjustments](#)

- Scope – Reasonable Adjustments
- Mind – Reasonable Adjustments

(1) Recording reasonable adjustment requests: Services should use their primary casework systems to leave a headline note/notification of any agreed reasonable adjustment. For example, any services using icasework can go to Edit Contact and then under “Phone” can detail any phone related adjustment that would be displayed on the main contact screen. Similarly, any social care services staff on Mosaic can use the case warning system to display an agreed adjustment on the front screen of a contact.

Q1: Does your service use a CRM/system that allows the recording of an agreement adjustment in a visible way?

Q2: If YES to the Q1, is your service currently using this to record adjustments - if not, why not?

Q3: If NO to Q1, is your service customer facing in a manner where reasonable adjustments could feasibly be requested or have been requested in the past? If so, how would these be recorded?

(2) Assessing reasonable adjustments – Services should be able to provide a range of reasonable adjustments that are already in place or implemented within the council that are available to them. For example, all services that produce and send letters to residents can provide adjustments such as different formats available on the system. Similarly services that are customer facing and use MS Teams should be able to meet with residents on teams if requested.

Q4: Where a customer requests a reasonable adjustment outside of an already implemented or available adjustment in your service, is your staff confident in assessing the requested adjustment in line with Part 4 of the reasonable adjustment policy?

Q5: If NO to the above, what gaps in knowledge or training around reasonable adjustments do you feel are needed to be addressed in your service?

(3) Making reasonable adjustment decisions and delivering them– Services should feel confident and empowered to be able to support disabled customers in deciding and delivering reasonable adjustments. This means implementing them in a reasonable timeframe as to not disadvantage the individual requesting them.

Q6: Does your service feel confident in making decisions with reference to requested reasonable adjustments?

Q7: If NO to the above, what gaps in knowledge or training around reasonable adjustments do you feel are needed to be addressed in your service?

Q8: Does your service feel confident in being able to deliver reasonable adjustments effectively?


Q9: If NO to the above, what gaps in knowledge or training around reasonable adjustments do you feel are needed to be addressed in your service?



Reasonable Adjustments Corporate Action Plan - July 2024 v1.0

ACTION	DETAIL OF ACTION	NEXT STEPS	ACTION LEAD BY	DEADLINE	STATUS	COMMENTS
REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT POLICY (DRAFT)	Draft a customer facing reasonable adjustment policy that clearly outlines the councils responsibility under the Equality Act for disabled customers	First draft of policy completed. Requires review outside of customer services including by a Equalities Officer and lead member as well as O and S comm	Head of IG	30/09/24	Ongoing	
REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT SERVICE SURVEY	Document required to distribute to customer facing services within the council to gather feedback to understand service level understanding of RA responsibilities and implemented in order to present this feedback corporately to managed and to LOCD for learning training gap assessment.	Service survey document completed. Should be distributed to services via director level to ensure service reviews and complete these with directorate oversight	Head of IG to ensure distribution and return of surveys	31/08/24	Ongoing	
SYSTEM MECHANISMS ON HOW TO RECORD REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS	To be lead on by survey results in action no 2	Service survey results to highlight any potential gaps in recording mechanisms within surveys as many services use different CRMs and systems with different functionalities meaning there is no one corporate solution to record RAs. Once survey results gathered, can be used to asses and implment any remaining solutions	Head of IG to ensure assessmen of survey data with corporate management and LOCD	31/08/24	Ongoing	
UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING HOW SERVICES ARE ASSESSING RA REQUESTS	To be lead on by survey results in action no 2	Service survey results to highlight any potential gaps in service understanding of how to assess RA requests in line with the Equality Act duty. Once survey results gathered, can be used to asses and implment any remaining solutions	Head of IG to ensure assessmen of survey data with corporate management and LOCD	31/08/24	Ongoing	
UNDERSTANDING HOW SERVICES ARE MAKING RA DECISIONS AND IMPLEMENTING THEM	To be lead on by survey results in action no 2	Service survey results to highlight any potential gaps in service understanding of how to make RA decisions and implementations in line with the Equality Act duty. Once survey results gathered, can be used to asses and implment any remaining solutions	Head of IG to ensure assessmen of survey data with corporate management and LOCD	31/08/24	Ongoing	
PRESENT THIS ACTION PLAN AND RELATED LGSCO CASE DECISION TO LEAD MEMBER	Action plan, draft policy and survey to be presented to Lead Member - (Cabinet Member for Customer Service, Equalities and Social Inclusion)		Head of IG and Director of Customer Services	31/07/24	Completed	
PRESENT THIS ACTION PLAN AND RELATED LGSCO CASE DECISION TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Action plan, draft policy and survey to be presented to Overview and Scrunity Committee - next available comm meeting after the completion of action plan and relevant documents is 10th Septmber 2024		Head of IG and Director of Customer Services	10/09/24	Outstanding	

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<p>Non- Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Overview & Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>10 September 2024</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Afazul Hoque, Head of Strategy & Communities</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-25</p>	

Executive Summary

This report sets out the 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:

- Finance & Resources;
- Community Safety; and
- Environment & Climate Change

The work programme has been informed by a scrutiny members workshop, discussion at committee meetings and in consultation with senior officers and partner agencies. The work programme is informed by intelligence from a range of sources including council performance reports, annual complaints data, DLTs feedback, and horizon scanning of key national, regional and local issues that scrutiny may want to engage with. The work programme is intended to be flexible to allow scrutiny to address any emerging issues as and when they arise throughout the year.

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

1. Provide any final comments and agree the Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-25 as set out in Appendices 1-7

1 **REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 1.1 The work programmes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC), its three sub-committees, and scrutiny leads set out evidence-based 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 or adding value to the council's key strategic priorities.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The scrutiny function in Tower Hamlets is led 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 Community Safety, Finance & Resources, and Environment & Climate Change.

- 3.2 The terms of reference for OSC and the sub-committees were agreed at the first meeting of each committee.

- 3.3 The work programming process that was conducted for each scrutiny committee and scrutiny lead ensures that it targets work in areas which will add real value, improve outcomes for residents, and support the council to achieve its strategic aims.

Developing the work programme

- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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.

- 3.6 A workshop was also 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.
- 3.7 Scrutiny Leads have also met 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.
- 3.8 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 was followed by a members discussion to put forward topics they would like to see considered and included in the work programme.

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Workshop

- 3.8. 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.
- 3.9 Scrutiny members also considered what makes an effective work plan and held discussions to explore how scrutiny can add value to service delivery and what scrutiny members understood to be the key priorities for the council. Members also discussed the Scrutiny Improvement Plan and considered the actions needed to enhance the scrutiny function.
- 3.10 Using a prioritisation tool set out in the [scrutiny toolkit](#), scrutiny members discussed and voted on their priorities for each committee and produced a list of key areas to cover. In developing the work programme, Members were keen to ensure scrutiny covered fewer issues in more depth. They also want to be clear about the outcomes they want to achieve and make more effective recommendations.

Agreeing the work programme

- 3.11 Following the workshop, discussions were held with the Scrutiny Leads to prioritise, scope and agree the format of scrutiny activities for the year. Scrutiny leads agreed and specified the priorities in their area, developed an understanding of OSC priority outcomes, and defined how scrutiny can add value. This was presented back to the OSC on 9 July 2024 for discussion.

Further work and engagement with key stakeholders will be undertaken in August and a final version of the work programme will be agreed at the September OSC meeting.

Types of scrutiny

3.12 The 2024/25 scrutiny work programme will comprise of different types of scrutiny focus:

- **Scrutiny Spotlight Sessions:** a Cabinet member and/or a senior leader from a stakeholder organisation (e.g. the Borough commander) provides an overview of their work, including key risks within their portfolio, and is then questioned by members of the committee. OSC will consider a wide range of issues as part of their scrutiny spotlights this year including Transport Strategy, Waste and Recycling, and Leisure Insourcing. The Committee will also have the opportunity to feed into the development of key strategies including the refreshed Violence against Women and Girls Strategy, Combatting Drugs Strategy, and Community Engagement Strategy.
- **Scrutiny Reviews:** led by a scrutiny lead member to examine a topic over multiple evidence gathering sessions, followed by a report with recommendations for service improvement. These are directly supported by a strategy and policy officer from Corporate Strategy & Communities team, with input from the relevant directorates. This year, the Community Safety Lead will undertake a Scrutiny Review of Hate Crime, and the Environment & Climate Change Lead will undertake a review of progress of Net Zero commitments.
- **Scrutiny Challenge Sessions:** led by a scrutiny lead member, these take place during one 'deep dive' evidence-gathering session and are followed by a report with recommendations for service improvement. These are directly supported by a strategy and policy officer from Corporate Strategy & Communities team, with input from the relevant directorates. This year, the Children's and Education Sub-Committee will undertake a Scrutiny Challenge Session on early additional needs, the Heath Scrutiny Sub-Committee will undertake a challenge session on maternity care and support for new mothers, the Finance and Resources Lead will undertake a challenge session on collection rates, and the Community Safety Lead will undertake a challenge session on anti-social behaviour on estates.
- **Budget & Policy Framework Scrutiny:** OSC has a mandatory consultation role on all items that are the responsibility of Full Council to agree rather than the Executive, including the budget. This year OSC will be looking at the Budget and the Youth Justice Annual Plan.

Members Development

3.13 In 2023-24 scrutiny leads received 1-2-1 coaching support for chairs from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CFGs). Wider scrutiny members were offered specialist scrutiny training by CFGs on understanding strategic role of scrutiny, questioning skills and finance scrutiny.

3.14 Scrutiny members will have access to the wider members training offered by democratic services and will be encouraged to take these opportunities up.

Local Government Association also offer a number of learning and development opportunities which will be available to scrutiny members. This includes mentoring from Cllrs, and this will be explored. Scrutiny Members took part in a skills audit in July 2024 to identify where further learning and development is required to ensure they are effective in their role and further training will be organised accordingly throughout the year. In addition to external training, services will be engaged to see where they can provide briefing sessions for members to help inform their subject knowledge on a specific topic. Specific training will be delivered to upskill Members knowledge of the budget

- 3.15 The policy team will also horizon scan and identify relevant publications and training opportunities for members and will share these with members as and when appropriate.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 In developing the scrutiny work programme, the committee affirmed its commitment to addressing equality concerns including the significance of promoting fairness, inclusivity, and tackling disparities among diverse groups within the borough.
- 4.2 The Committee were provided with the Borough Equality Assessment (BEA) and the latest census data, which guided them on key equality issues to consider as topics for scrutiny. The data-driven approach allowed members to consider the unique challenges and requirements of various communities in the borough. The committee considered matters related to gender, ethnicity, age, disability, and socio-economic status. This enabled them to identify areas where particular communities might be at a disadvantage or experiencing underrepresentation.
- 4.3 For example, feedback from local data and commissioned equality hub provision, including the disabled people's network and women's network, helped to inform the committee's considerations of gender related concerns in access to health services and outcomes for different communities. Evidence highlighted the stark need for maternity care to be reviewed, specifically for BAME women. Moreover, the committee's focus on public health data and engagement with senior council officers revealed disparities in outcomes for older people and this issue is incorporated into the committee's work programme to explore support for those aged 55 and above.
- 4.4 Integrating equality considerations into the scrutiny work programme will enable the committee to embrace the diverse needs and aspirations of residents and contribute to building a more cohesive and robust community in Tower Hamlets.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

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

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

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

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 This report sets out the proposed Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for the Municipal Year 2024-25. It also includes draft work programmes for the Health & Adults, Housing & Regeneration and Children's & Education Scrutiny Sub-committees.

6.2 It is envisaged that the work programme will be delivered through existing resources and therefore there are no additional financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report. However, in the event that additional resources may be required to deliver particular aspects of the work programme, these will need to be considered in accordance with the Council's financial framework.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 Section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 requires authorities to set up an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a strategic and co-ordinating role over the Council's scrutiny function and in that regard, the Committee sets its own work programme.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Overview & Scrutiny Committee work programme 2024/25
- Appendix 2: Health & Adults Scrutiny Sub-committee work programme 2024/25
- Appendix 3: Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-committee work programme 2024/25
- Appendix 4: Children's & Education Scrutiny Sub-committee work programme 2024/25
- Appendix 5: Scrutiny Lead Finance & Resources work programme 2024/25
- Appendix 6: Scrutiny Lead Community Safety work programme 2024/25
- Appendix 7: Scrutiny Lead Environment & Climate Change 2024/25

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

- List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.
- These must be sent to Democratic Services with the report
- State NONE if none.

Officer contact details for documents:

Or state N/A

Appendix 1: Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024/25: Chair: Cllr Jahed Choudhury

Meeting	Scrutiny Activity	Title	Description	Speakers
Tuesday 21 May 2024	Appointments and TOR	Vice Chair appointment and TOR	OSC to confirm Committee vice chair and agree terms of reference for OSC	Cllr Jahed Choudhury OSC Chair
	Spotlight	Mayor's Spotlight	To hold the Mayor to account and understand achievements, priorities and challenges.	Lutfur Rahman Mayor Steve Halsey Chief Executive
	Spotlight	Revised Statutory Guidance on Overview & Scrutiny	To review the revised statutory guidance and consider how LBTH is meeting this	Cllr Jahed Choudhury OSC Chair
	Spotlight	Enhancing LBTH Scrutiny	To consider the proposals by the Chief Executive to strengthen Tower Hamlets Scrutiny	Steve Halsey Chief Executive
Tuesday 9 July 2024	Strategic Performance Monitoring	Strategic Performance & Delivery Reporting Annual Report 2023-24	Review the council's performance against the strategic goals and provide critical friend challenge to service delivery.	Lutfur Rahman Mayor Steve Halsey Chief Executive
	Strategic Performance Monitoring	Budget Monitoring 2023/24 Provisional Outturn	Review the council's budget outturn 2023/24 against the strategic goals and provide critical friend challenge.	Cllr Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living Julie Lorraine, Corporate Director, Resources

	Spotlight	Corporate Restructure	To review and apply critical friend challenge to the proposed restructure	Steve Halsey , Chief Executive
	OSC Business	Revised Scrutiny lead portfolio areas	Note the revised scrutiny lead portfolio areas	Afazul Hoque , Head of Corporate Strategy & Communities
	OSC Business	Work Planning Update & Scrutiny Improvement Plan	Receive an update from scrutiny leads on work planning and agree Scrutiny Improvement Plan	OSC Chair & Scrutiny Leads
	Tracking Recommendations	Women's Safety Action Plan Response Progress (Update)	Track the implementation of recommendations from the scrutiny challenge session on Women's Safety.	Cllr Abu Choudhury , Cabinet Member for Safer Communities Simon Baxter , Corporate Director, Communities
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny (PDSQ)	Review cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations	Cllr Jahed Choudhury , OSC Chair
Tuesday 23 July 2024	Spotlight	Target Operating Model	Review and feed into the development of the Council's new Target Operating Model.	Ayesha Hakim Rahman , Head of Strategy & Transformation
	Spotlight	Recycling Improvement	Review recycling performance	Cllr Shafi Ahmed Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency Simon Baxter

				Corporate Director, Communities
	Pre-Decision Scrutiny	Strategic Asset Management Plan 2024-29	Review the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2024-29 before it is agreed at Cabinet	Cllr Saied Ahmed Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living Paul Patterson Corporate Director of Housing & Regeneration
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny (PDSQ)	Review cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations	Cllr Jahed Choudhury, OSC Chair
Tuesday 10 September 2024	Strategic Performance Monitoring	P3 Budget Monitoring	Monitor the council's financial performance to ensure it supports council priorities and provides residents with value for money.	Cllr Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living Julie Lorraine, Corporate Director, Resources
	Spotlight	Business Rates Risks	Review Business Rates Risks and mitigation in place	Cllr Saied Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living

				Julie Lorraine, Corporate Director, Resources
	Spotlight	Transport Strategy	Consider and feed into the development of the new Transport Strategy	Cllr Shafi Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency Simon Baxter, Corporate Director, Communities
	Spotlight	Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Final Decision and Action Plan Response	Review and comment on the Service response (Action Plan) to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Final Decision	Cllr Abdul Wahid, Customer Services, Equalities and Social Inclusion Usman Zia, Head of Information and Governance
	OSC Business	Final O&S Work Programme 2024-25	Agree OSC Work Programme 2024-25	Cllr Jahed Choudhury, OSC Chair
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny (PDSQ)	Review cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations	Cllr Jahed Choudhury, OSC Chair

Tuesday 15 October 2024	Budget and Policy Framework	Youth Justice Plan	Undertake critical friend role and offer feedback on Youth Justice Plan update	Cllr Maium Talukdar , Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth, and Lifelong Learning Steve Reddy , Corporate Director Childrens Service
	Spotlight	Update on Tackling Temporary Rent Arrears	Review the progress on tackling temporary accommodation rent arrears.	Cllr Saied Ahmed , Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living
	Spotlight	LGA Action Plan delivery update	Review and apply critical friend challenge and assess if the plan delivers against the LGA peer report recommendations	Steve Halsey , Chief Executive
	Spotlight	Best Value Inspections Report Findings	Consider Best Value Inspection findings and assess the impact on council services	Lutfur Rahman , Mayor Steve Halsey , Chief Executive
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny (PDSQ)	Review cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations	Cllr Jahed Choudhury, OSC Chair
Tuesday 24 November 2024	Spotlight	Chief Executive	Provide critical friend challenge on Chief Execs delivery and priorities	Steve Halsey , Chief Executive
	Spotlight	Waste and Recycling Investment (part 1)	Review the progress of £5 Million Waste and Recycling investment	Cllr Shafi Ahmed , Cabinet Member for

				Environment and Climate Emergency Simon Baxter , Corporate Director, Communities
	Spotlight	Flood Risk Management	To take a critical friend approach review the Council's strategy and approach on Flood Risk Management	Cllr Shafi Ahmed , Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Emergency Simon Baxter , Corporate Director, Communities
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny (PDSQ)	Review cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations	Cllr Jahed Choudhury , OSC Chair
Tuesday 17 December 2024	Strategic Performance Monitoring	Strategic Performance & Delivery Reporting Q2 2024-25	Review the council's performance against the strategic goals and provide critical friend challenge to service delivery.	Lutfur Rahman , Mayor Steve Halsey , Chief Executive
	Strategic Performance Monitoring	P6 Budgeting Monitoring	Monitor the council's financial performance to ensure it supports council priorities and provides residents with value for money.	Cllr Saied Ahmed , Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living Julie Lorraine , Corporate Director, Resources
	Spotlight	Leisure Insourcing Update	Review the 6 months progress of the leisure insourcing	Cllr Kamrul Hussain ,

				Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation Simon Baxter , Corporate Director, Communities
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny (PDSQ)	Review cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations	Cllr Jahed Choudhury , OSC Chair
Tuesday 14 January 2025	Budget and Policy Framework	Budget Scrutiny	Provide a critical friend challenge to the budget-setting process in line with the Council's priorities	Cllr Saied Ahmed , Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living Julie Lorraine , Corporate Director, Resources
Tuesday 28 January 2025	Spotlight	Progress and Update on Net Zero Target	Review and apply critical friend challenge on delivery to date on Net Zero Target	Cllr Shafi Ahmed , Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Simon Baxter , Corporate Director, Communities
	Spotlight	Community Languages	Review and apply critical friend challenge on delivery and progress of community languages programme across the borough.	Cllr Maium Talukdar , Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for

				Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning Steve Reddy , Corporate Director Children's Services
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny (PDSQ)	Review cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations	Cllr Jahed Choudhury , OSC Chair
Tuesday 18 February 2025	Spotlight	Borough Commander	Reflections and achievements 2024-25 and Priorities for 2025-26	James Conway Borough Commander
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny (PDSQ)	Review cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations	Cllr Jahed Choudhury , OSC Chair
Tuesday 25 March 2025	Strategic Performance Monitoring	Strategic Performance & Delivery Reporting Q3 2024-25	Review the council's performance against the strategic goals and provide critical friend challenge to service delivery.	Lutfur Rahman , Mayor Steve Halsey , Chief Executive
	Strategic Performance Monitoring	P9 Budgeting Monitoring	Monitor the council's financial performance to ensure it supports council priorities and provides residents with value for money.	Cllr Saied Ahmed , Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living Julie Lorraine , Corporate Director, Resources
	Spotlight	Waste and Recycling Investment (part 2)	Review the progress of £5 Million Waste and Recycling investment. Focus on impact and next steps.	Cllr Shafi Ahmed , Cabinet Member for

				Environment and Climate Emergency Simon Baxter , Corporate Director, Communities
	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny (PDSQ)	Review cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations	Cllr Jahed Choudhury OSC Chair
Tuesday 19 April 2025	Spotlight	Mayors Spotlight	Hold the Mayor to account and understand achievements, priorities and challenges.	Lutfur Rahman , Mayor Steve Halsey , Chief Executive
	Tracking Recommendation	Service Action Plan Response to Supporting Market and Traders	Track the implementation of recommendations from the scrutiny challenge session on supporting Markets and Traders in the borough.	Cllr Shafi Ahmed , Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency Cllr Musthak Ahmed , Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Growth Simon Baxter , Corporate Director, Communities
	Tracking Recommendations	Review action plan delivery for scrutiny recommendations on Food Insecurity	To track the implementation of recommendations from the scrutiny challenge session	Cllr Saied Ahmed Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living

	Pre-Cabinet	Pre-Decision Scrutiny (PDSQ)	Review cabinet decisions and make strategic recommendations	Cllr Jahed Choudhury OSC Chair
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Appendix 2: Health & Adults Sub-Committee Work Programme 2024/25: Chair: Cllr Muhammad Bellal Uddin

Meeting	Scrutiny Activity	Title	Description	Speakers
Tuesday 4 June 2024	Appointments Terms of Reference	Vice chair appointment, TOR	Confirm Committee vice chair, agreed TOR for HASSC and confirm JHSOC Membership representative	Cllr Muhammad Bellal Uddin HASSC Chair
	Spotlight	Cabinet Member and Corporate Director reflections, achievements 23-24 and priorities 2024-25	Cabinet Member for Health Wellbeing and Social Care and Corporate Director for Health Adults and Communities to provide reflections, achievements 23-24 and outline priorities for 2024-25	Cllr Gulam Kibria Choudhury , Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care Somen Banerjee , Acting Corporate Director, Health Wellbeing and Social Care Katie O'Driscoll , Director for Adult Social Care
	Spotlight	Tower Hamlet Together board partners reflections 23-24 and priorities 2024-25	Provide reflections and achievements for 23-24 and outline priorities for 2024-25	Charlotte Pomery , Northeast London Integrated Care Board (NEL ICB) Chief Participation and Place Officer

				<p>Neil Ashman (Acute Care), Chief Exec, BARTS NHS Trust, Royal London and Mile End Hospitals and Place Lead</p> <p>Roberto Tamsanguan, Clinical Director, Primary Care Zainab Arian, CEO GP Care Group</p> <p>Jo-Ann Sheldon, Head of Primary Care (Commissioning)</p> <p>Richard Fradgley, Executive Director of Integrated Care and Deputy Chief Exec, East London Foundation Trust (ELFT)</p> <p>Warwick Tomsett, Joint Director of Integrated Commissioning (LBTH)</p>
	Tracking Recommendation	Service Action Plan response to Workforce Shortages across Health and Care Sector	Track the implementation of recommendations from the scrutiny challenge session on Workforce Shortages across Health and Care Sector	<p>Gareth Noble, Deputy Director of Workforce Programmes, NHS Northeast London, Part of NEL Health & Care Partnership</p>

	Scrutiny Review Report	Scrutiny Review Report on Empowering Disabled residents: Accessible Sports and Fitness Initiatives	Agree the Scrutiny Review Report on Empowering Disabled residents: Accessible Sports and Fitness Initiatives	Cllr Muhammad Bellal Uddin HASSC Chair
Tuesday 03 September 2024	Spotlight	Sexual Health Services	Review and apply critical friend approach to the effectiveness of sexual health services in the borough and identify any areas of improvement	Cllr Gulam Kibria Choudhury , Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care Somen Banerjee , Director of Public Health Liam Crosby , Associate Director of Public Health, Healthy Adults
	Spotlight	Smoking cessation	Apply critical friend approach and review the effectiveness and performance of Smoke free by 2030 policy	Cllr Gulam Kibria Choudhury , Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care Georgia Chimbani , Corporate Director, Health and Adults Social Care

				<p>Somen Banerjee, Director of Public Health</p> <p>Liam Crosby, Associate Director of Public Health, Healthy Adults</p>
<p>Tuesday 05 November 2024</p>	<p>Spotlight</p>	<p>Adult Social Care Charging Policy and Community Care</p>	<p>Apply critical friend approach and review the implementation (approach) and mobilisation of the new policy</p>	<p>Cllr Gulam Kibria Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care</p> <p>Georgia Chimbani, Corporate Director, Health and Adults Social Care</p> <p>Margaret Young, Director of Adult Social Care</p>
	<p>Spotlight</p>	<p>CQC Inspection Preparation</p>	<p>To apply critical friend approach and ascertain readiness for the CQC inspection preparation.</p>	<p>Cllr Gulam Kibria Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care</p> <p>Georgia Chimbani Corporate Director, Health and Adults Social Care</p>

				Margaret Young, Director of Adult Social Care
	Spotlight	Winter Planning Update	To review preparation for Winter Planning and support for vulnerable Residents	Cllr Gulam Kibria Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care Georgia Chimbani, Corporate Director, Health and Adults Social Care Margaret Young, Director of Adult Social Care
Monday 03 February 2025	Spotlight	Urgent Treatment Care (SameDay)/ AE.	Apply critical friend approach and review the performance and effectiveness of urgent treatment care service	Neil Ashman, CEO Barts NHS RLH and MEH
	Spotlight	Hospital Discharging Service	Apply critical friend approach and review the performance and effectiveness of Hospital Discharging Service	Cllr Gulam Kibria Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care Georgia Chimbani, Corporate Director, Health and Adults Social Care

Tuesday 08 April 2025	Tracking Recommendation	Service Action Plan Response on Improving Disability Access to Sports and Exercise	Track the implementation of recommendations from the scrutiny challenge session on Improving Disability Access to Sports and Exercise	Cllr Kamrul Hussain , Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation Simon Baxter , Corporate Director for Communities
	Spotlight	Learning Disability	Apply critical friend approach to the proposed learning disability	Cllr Gulam Kibria Choudhury , Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care Georgia Chimbani , Corporate Director, Health and Adults Social Care Richard Fradgley , Executive Director of Integrated Care and Deputy Chief Exec, East London Foundation Trust (ELFT)
	Spotlight	Mental Health Strategy	Apply critical friend approach on the proposed mental health strategy	Cllr Gulam Kibria Choudhury , Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care Georgia Chimbani , Corporate Director,

				Health and Adults Social Care Richard Fradgley , Executive Director of Integrated Care and Deputy Chief Exec, East London Foundation Trust (ELFT)
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Challenge Session	Maternity Care & Support for new mothers	Date TBC
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Appendix 3: Housing & Regeneration Sub-Committee Work Programme 2024/25: Chair: Cllr Bodrul Choudhury

Meeting	Scrutiny Activity	Title	Description	Speakers
Monday 24th June 2024	Appointments and TOR	Vice Chair appointment and TOR	Appoint Committee vice chair and agree terms of reference	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury HRSSC Chair
	Spotlight	Housing Target	Review how the council is progressing against its ambition to build 1000 new homes per year.	Cllr Kabir Ahmed Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding Paul Patterson Director of Housing & Regeneration
	Spotlight	Major Works Progress	Review the Progress of Tower Hamlets Homes Major Works Programme	Cllr Kabir Ahmed Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive

				Development and Housebuilding Paul Patterson Director of Housing & Regeneration
Monday 16th September 2024	HRSSC Work Programme	Draft HRSSC Work Programme	To review the HRSSC Work Programme for 2023-24	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury HRSSC Chair
	Strategic Performance	Social Landlords Performance Report	Review social landlords' performance for Quarter 4	Karen Swift Director of Housing Andrea Baker Chair THHF
	Spotlight	Housing & Regeneration priorities	To discuss housing and regeneration priorities for 2024/25	Cllr Kabir Ahmed Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding Paul Patterson Director of Housing & Regeneration
	Spotlight	RSL Spotlight	To receive an update from THCH in response to resident's feedback spotlight held at May 2024 meeting	Andrea Baker Chair THHF
Monday 2nd December 2024	Spotlight	Housing Management	To review progress of insourcing housing management of former Tower Hamlets Homes.	Cllr Kabir Ahmed Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding Paul Patterson Director of Housing & Regeneration

	Spotlight	Tenants Satisfaction Measures	To review the Tenants Satisfaction Measures results	Cllr Kabir Ahmed Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding Paul Patterson Director of Housing & Regeneration
Monday 24th February 2025	Strategic Performance	Social Landlords Performance Report	Review social landlords' performance for Quarters 1&2	Karen Swift Director of Housing Andrea Baker Chair THHF
	Spotlight	Resident Engagement	To hold a resident engagement session. Subject matter TBC.	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury HRSSC Chair
	Spotlight	Safety Compliance and Regulation	To review compliance and regulation regarding fire safety and treating damp and mould	Cllr Kabir Ahmed Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding Paul Patterson Director of Housing & Regeneration
Tuesday 1st April 2025	Strategic Performance	Social Landlords Performance Report	Review social landlords' performance for Quarter 3	Karen Swift Director of Housing Andrea Baker Chair THHF
	Tracking Recommendation	Housing Provider Performance in the Borough	To track the implementation of recommendations from the scrutiny	Cllr Kabir Ahmed

			challenge session on Housing Provider Performance in the borough	Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding Paul Patterson Director of Housing & Regeneration
	Spotlight	Approval of Scrutiny Challenge Session Report (subject matter TBC)	To review and approve the report and recommendations of the scrutiny challenge session	Cllr Bodrul Choudhury HRSSC Chair

Challenge Session	This will likely focus on the 'Regeneration' area of the Sub-Committee's remit. Topic tbc – subject to Committee discussion and agreement	Date TBC
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Appendix 4: Children & Education Sub-Committee Work Programme 2024/25: Chair: Cllr Abdul Mannan

Meeting	Scrutiny Activity	Title	Description	Speakers
Thursday 11th July 2024	Appointments and TOR	Vice Chair appointment and TOR	Appoint Committee vice chair and agree terms of reference	Cllr Abdul Mannan , CESSC Chair
	Spotlight	Youth Services	To review progress made in rolling out Youth Services and feed into the development of a new Young Tower Hamlets Strategy.	Cllr Maium Talukdar , Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning Steve Reddy , Corporate Director Children's Services Shafiur Rahman , Interim Director of Youth Services

				Fetuma Hassan, Young Mayor of Tower Hamlets
	Spotlight	Cabinet Member and Corporate Director Reflections and Priorities	To share reflections on work in the portfolio area in 2023-24 and priorities for the Children's Services for 2024-25.	Cllr Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning Steve Reddy, Corporate Director Children's Services
	Work Programme	Draft CESSC Work Programme 2024-25	To review the draft CESSC Work Programme for 2024-25.	Cllr Abdul Mannan, CESSC Chair
Thursday 17th October 2024	Spotlight	Early Help Offer	Review progress in developing an early help offer for families with partners, including a family hub approach.	Cllr Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning Steve Reddy, Corporate Director Children's Services
	Spotlight	Inspection Preparation – Children's Social Care	To review the preparation for the upcoming inspection of Children's Social Care (ILACS).	Cllr Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning Steve Reddy, Corporate Director Children's Services

				Susannah Beasley-Murray , Director of Children's Social Care
	Spotlight	Inspection Preparation – Area SEND Inspection	Review progress delivering the SEND Improvement programme and readiness for Area SEND Inspection, including performance against key measures such as the timeliness of EHCPs.	Cllr Maium Talukdar , Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning Steve Reddy , Corporate Director Children's Services Lisa Fraser , Director of Education
Thursday 5th December 2024	Spotlight	Youth Justice Improvement Work	Review Youth Justice improvement work since the previous judgement and YSJIP Peer review and readiness for expected Youth Justice inspection.	Cllr Maium Talukdar , Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning Steve Reddy , Corporate Director Children's Services Susannah Beasley-Murray , Director of Children's Social Care
	Spotlight	Corporate Parenting	Review delivery of Corporate Parenting Strategy	Cllr Maium Talukdar , Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning

				<p>Steve Reddy, Corporate Director Children’s Services Susannah Beasley-Murray, Director of Children’s Social Care</p>
	Scrutiny Update	Children and Young People’s Mental Health	Review council and partnership support provided to children and young people at risk of poor mental health.	<p>Cllr Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning Steve Reddy, Corporate Director Children’s Services Layla Richards, Interim Director of Commissioning & Youth</p>
Thursday 13 February 2025	Spotlight	Free School Meals	To review the implementation of free school meals and assess the quality and value provided to students.	<p>Cllr Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning Steve Reddy, Corporate Director Children’s Services Layla Richards, Interim Director of Commissioning & Youth</p>

	Spotlight	KS5 Attainment and Institute of Academic Excellence	Review and feed into development of new Education Strategy and KS5 Improvement Plan.	Cllr Maium Talukdar , Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning Steve Reddy , Corporate Director Children's Services Lisa Fraser , Director of Education
	Spotlight	School Curriculum	Examine the inclusion of RSE and PHSE in school curriculum and directives issued by Tower Hamlets	Cllr Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning Steve Reddy , Corporate Director Children's Services Lisa Fraser , Director of Education
Thursday 8th May 2025	Tracking Recommendation	Child Healthy Weight	To track the implementation of recommendations from the scrutiny challenge session on Child Healthy Weight	Cllr Gulam Kibria Choudhury , Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care Katy Scammel , Associate Director of Public Health
	Spotlight	Children's Safeguarding Work	Review the work of the Childrens' Safeguarding Partnership	Cllr Maium Talukdar , Deputy Mayor and

				Cabinet Member for Education, Youth, and Lifelong Learning Steve Reddy , Corporate Director, Children's Services
	Challenge Session	Challenge Session Report 24-25	Review and comment on the Challenge Session Report 24-25 (Subject TBC)	Cllr Abdul Mannan , Chair of CESSC

Challenge Session	SEN Provision & early intervention.	Date TBC
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Finance & Resources Scrutiny Lead, Cllr Ahmodur Rahman Khan - Work Programme 2024-25

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Scrutiny Activity	Title	Description
Scrutiny Challenge Session	Collection Rates	
Tracking Recommendations	Review action plan delivery for scrutiny recommendations on Food Insecurity	As set out in OSC Work Programme 2024-25
Budget & Policy Framework	Budget Scrutiny and Strategic Performance P3 – P9 Budget Monitoring	As set out in OSC Work Programme 2024-25
Grants Determination Committee		Review reports going to the Grants Determination Committee and feed in questions from OSC.

Community Safety Lead, Cllr Suluk Ahmed – Work Programme 2024-25

Scrutiny Activity	Title	Description
Spotlight	Borough Commander Spotlight	As set out in OSC Work Programme 2024-25
Scrutiny Challenge Session	Anti-social behaviour on housing estates	To review anti-social behaviour on housing estates and actions to address this
Scrutiny Challenge Session	Islamophobic Hate Crime	To review levels of Islamophobic hate crime and actions to address this
Tracking Recommendations	Women's Safety Action Plan Response Progress (Update)	As set out in OSC Work Programme 2024-25

Environment & Climate Change Lead, Cllr Nathalie Sylvia Bienfait – Work Programme 2024-25

Scrutiny Activity	Title	Description
Spotlight	Transport Strategy	As set out in OSC Work Programme 2023-25
Spotlight	Recycling Improvement	As set out in OSC Work Programme 2024-25
Spotlight	Waste & Recycling Investment	As set out in OSC Work Programme 2024-25
Scrutiny Review	Net Zero Target	To review the Council's progress in achieving its Net Zero Target
Tracking Recommendation	Service Action Plan Response to Supporting Market and Traders	As set out in OSC Work Programme 2024-25

<p>Non-Executive Report of the:</p> <p>Overview & Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>10 September 2024</p>	 <p>TOWER HAMLETS</p>
<p>Report of: Afazul Hoque, Head of Service, Corporate Strategy and Communities</p>	<p>Classification: Open</p>
<p>Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023-24</p>	

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

Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of the work that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC), its sub-committees and scrutiny leads delivered in 2023-24 municipal year.

Recommendations:

Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the attached Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023-24, comment and agree on the report for submission to Full Council.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

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

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 To take no action. This is not recommended as the council's constitution requires OSC to report annually to the council on its work.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The council's constitution requires OSC to report annually to the Council, evidencing the committees' activities during the past year and include the work of its sub-committees. The attached slide deck report provides a summary of the range of activities and work that scrutiny carried out last municipal year.
- 3.2 OSC and its sub-committees focused its scrutiny on areas of strategic priorities to ensure residents concerns were reflected. OSC kept oversight of the council's budget and submitted recommendations for the council's budget, MTFs and strategic performance throughout the year. OSC carried out key scrutiny reviews focussing on current boroughwide issues including how the council can better support street markets and traders.
- 3.3 OSC also held spotlights examining topics of residents' concerns such as insourcing of leisure services, Mayor's Community Grants programme, Violence Against Women and Girls, parking management, community engagement and the Mayor and Cabinet Member spotlights.
- 3.4 The Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee (CESSC) scrutinised key areas focusing on educational policies, including the implementation of universal free school meals and the support for children with special educational needs. The committee's focus on these areas is critical for ensuring that educational provisions are equitable and effective. CESSC carried out five site visits to local secondary schools to better understand key issues and inform their questioning at meetings. CESSC held a scrutiny challenge session and considered child healthy weigh tin the borough.
- 3.5 The Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee (HASSC) played a vital role in scrutinising healthcare access, particularly for disabled residents and those with long-term health conditions. Their work included examining hospital waiting times, accessibility of community diagnostic services, and the inclusivity of sports and fitness initiatives. HASSC met with a range of stakeholders to inform their review of provision for disabled residents, engaging with residents from the council's commissioned services such disability people's network and older peoples reference group to understand their needs and views.
- 3.6 The Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-Committee (HRSSC) evaluated the performance of housing providers, the impact of new legislation, and the progress towards key housing goals such as building new homes and addressing fire safety. This scrutiny ensured that housing services were meeting the needs of residents and complying with new regulatory standards.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. In delivering the scrutiny work programme, the committee affirmed its commitment to addressing equality concerns including the significance of promoting fairness, inclusivity, and tackling disparities among diverse groups within the borough.
- 4.2. The Committee's work programme was informed by the Borough Equality Assessment (BEA) and the latest census data, which guided them on key equality issues to consider as topics for scrutiny. The data-driven approach allowed members to consider the unique challenges and requirements of various communities in the borough. The committee considered matters related to gender, ethnicity, age, disability, and socio-economic status. This enabled them to identify areas where particular communities might be at a disadvantage or experiencing underrepresentation.
- 4.3. Feedback from commissioned equality hub provision, including the disabled people's network, also helped to inform the committee's considerations such as the ongoing challenges related to access to health services and physical exercise for disabled individuals within the borough and included in the work programme. Members also recognised gender-related concerns such as women's safety provisions and the committee reviewed the new violence against women and girls' strategy. Members engagement with their constituents also highlighted some of the inequalities that BAME women faced with access to local maternity services. Moreover, the committee's focus on public health data and engagement with senior council officers revealed disparities in breast and bowel cancer screening uptake among BAME groups. This issue was incorporated into the committee's work programme to explore potential underlying health inequalities contributing to this trend.
- 4.4. A dedicated spotlight on the cost-of-living challenge was featured on the committee's work programme. Members questioned the effect of the council and partner support on disadvantaged communities, including policies like free school meals. As a critical friend, the committee addressed strategic concerns linked to housing access, overcrowding, and homelessness and include matters such as housing targets. The committee's scope also included education inequalities and university access for disadvantaged young people in the borough. The committee addressed the importance of fostering a reflective workforce and tackling underrepresentation or disadvantage within specific communities.
- 4.5. Integrating equality considerations into the scrutiny work programme enabled the committee to embrace the diverse needs and aspirations of residents and contribute to building a more cohesive and robust community in Tower Hamlets.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

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

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 This report complies with the Council’s constitutional requirements.

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

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023-24

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

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

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

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

Officer contact details for documents:

Or state N/A

Tower Hamlets Overview & Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2023/24

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Chair's Foreword

I am pleased to present the Annual Report for 2023/24. This report reflects the diligent efforts of the Committee and its Sub-Committees over the past year, as we continue to ensure transparency, accountability, and the delivery of essential services for the residents of Tower Hamlets.

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

This year has been one of both challenges and opportunities for the Council and our residents. As our community continued to grapple with the rising cost of living, we scrutinised the Council's response to these pressures and sought to ensure that support is reaching those most in need. Our commitment to addressing these financial challenges is mirrored in our broader scrutiny activities, where we robustly reviewed budget proposals and worked to ensure that all Council services are efficient, equitable, and responsive to the changing needs of our residents.

In addition to focusing on financial pressures, we have prioritised new key strategies to tackle some of the most pressing issues facing our borough. This includes our work on combatting drugs, the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

strategy and Community Engagement strategy.

We have worked closely with key stakeholders to drive impactful change and hold decision-makers accountable. We engaged with the Mayor, Chief Executive, Borough Commander, and other vital partners to ensure decisions, new strategies and resident's concerns were addressed robustly and effectively implemented on the ground.

We also performed key reviews on childhood healthy weight, disabled residents' access to sports, social landlord performance and support for markets and traders.

I would like to sincerely thank all members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Sub-Committees, and the wider Council for their dedication and

hard work throughout the year. I am also grateful to the residents and community groups who have participated in our scrutiny processes, offering valuable insights and perspectives that have enriched our discussions and outcomes.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to continuing our work in holding the Council to account and driving forward improvements. We will persist in addressing the challenges faced by our borough, ensuring that the services provided by the Council meet the highest standards and deliver positive outcomes for all.

Scrutiny Members' Workshop 2023-24



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Overview & Scrutiny Committee

The OSC work programme played a pivotal role this year in ensuring robust governance and accountability across key areas of the Council's work, aligning with the strategic priorities of the borough. The Committee has also been working hard this year to ensure that the Council and its leaders are held accountable and that decisions are made in the best interests of our community.

Strategic Accountability: The committee conducted focused engagements with senior leadership, including the Mayor, Chief Executive, and Borough Commander, to rigorously assess their performance and decision-making processes, reinforcing the importance of accountability in leadership. Discussions with the Borough Commander included a focus on Women's safety and women from the borough were invited to discuss their lived experience with the Borough Commander and Committee members.

Addressing Community Priorities: OSC dedicated substantial efforts to address key areas of residents concern, including parking management, the borough's response to the climate emergency, and measures to mitigate the impact of the cost of living crisis. These spotlights were designed to ensure that council actions are responsive

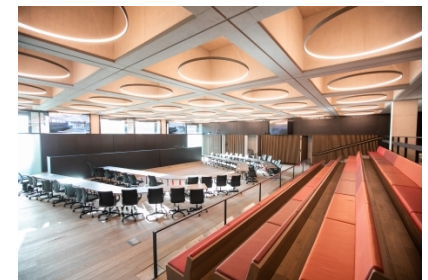
and aligned with resident priorities. In scrutinising the impact of cost of living, the Committee invited advice agencies and voluntary groups to discuss the challenges residents face and further support needed.

Review of Service Provision: Critical evaluations were undertaken on significant Council initiatives, such as the in-sourcing of leisure services and the implementation of the Mayor's Community Grants Programme. These reviews were instrumental in ensuring that service delivery enhancements are effectively meeting the needs of our diverse community. The Committee will continue to monitor the performance of the leisure service and will also ensure the Grants programme has the intended impact.

Scrutiny of Budget and Policy Frameworks: Comprehensive reviews were conducted on a range of budgetary and policy documents,

including the Youth Justice Annual Plan, Local Plan, Licensing Policy, and budget proposals. The committee's scrutiny ensured that these frameworks are not only fiscally responsible but also strategically aligned with the borough's long-term objectives and are driving improvements for residents.

Ongoing Performance Monitoring: Through the quarterly review of performance and financial monitoring reports, the committee maintained vigilant oversight of the council's operational efficiency and effectiveness, ensuring that strategic goals are being met and resources are optimally utilised.



Budget Scrutiny

OSC carefully examined the council's budget for 2024-25 to ensure money is being spent wisely and vital services are protected, especially during these tough times when funding for local authorities is uncertain and many are facing significant financial challenges. The Committee's discussion emphasised the importance of financial resilience, inclusivity, and the need to protect our most vulnerable residents

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We comprehensively examined the budget, its allocations, and the strategic decisions made to navigate key challenges, capitalise on opportunities, and steer Tower Hamlets towards a financially resilient future

OSC acknowledged several positive initiatives in the budget. The Committee is encouraged by the continued investment in Educational Maintenance Allowance and University Bursaries, the introduction of free swimming for women and girls over 16 and men over 55, funding for a Women's Resource Centre, and the creation of a Council Tax Cost of Living Relief Fund. In addition to this, the budget will support investment in a Somali Resource Hub, a culturally sensitive adult care home, a culturally sensitive Drug Misuse

Treatment Centre, and an Institute of Academic Excellence.

We were also pleased with the reduced reliance on reserves and the detailed savings plans provided as part of the budget proposals.

The Committee highlighted risks, particularly around income generation, housing pressures, and the need for strong governance to ensure budget delivery. We made several recommendations to help preserve and enhance essential services that our community relies on and mitigate financial challenges they face.

Supporting Waste Services:

We're pushing for the Council to ensure that the £5 million investment in waste services is sustainable and truly benefits and

improves our neighbourhoods. We want to receive regular updates to understand the impact of the funding.

Affordable Housing: With rent prices rising, we recommended that the Council puts a cap on rent increases—so residents won't pay more than £10 extra per week.

Parking Permits: We know every penny counts, so we've asked the council to reconsider proposed increases in resident parking permits to avoid putting more financial pressure on you.

Helping the Most Vulnerable: We're advocating for additional resources to be directed towards supporting those most in need, ensuring that everyone has access to help when they need it.

Health & Adults Sub Committee

The Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee have focused key community issues and ones that impact our most vulnerable residents including primary and acute care

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This year the Sub-Committee focussed its scrutiny energy on key community and public health issues.

The Sub-Committee examined some of the challenges on hospital waiting times for elective surgery and the pressures on accident and emergency services and the impact this had on residents particularly post covid and with the industrial action. The Sub-Committee also considered the accessibility and publicity of the local community diagnostic services and what more needs to be done.

The Sub-Committee considered the public health report on low take up for certain type of cancer screening such as bowel cancers and called upon NHS cancer screening programme to understand the significance of this and what actions were being undertaken to remedy this, in particular the level of comms investment to reach

out to groups whose first language is not English.

A key focus for the Sub-Committee was the level of support for disabled people in accessing health services from primary care to acute care. The Sub-Committee heard crucial evidence from some of the residents living with autism about the challenges they face particularly becoming frustrated in getting themselves understood within health services and wanted to see changes in attitudes towards autism.

The Sub-Committee reviewed the proposed housing with care strategy and as part of the wider transformation project and evidence gathering, members carried out a site visit to on how assisted technology can help people with disabilities live independently. The Sub-Committee also reviewed out of hours GP services in Tower Hamlets particularly around access for vulnerable

residents and invited the GP Care Group to give evidence.

The Sub-Committee called upon local residents and community services that provided support with maternity to understand their experiences and challenges they faced. The Sub-Committee also followed up with the service to scrutinise how the service was responding to barriers particularly for Black African, Somali, Caribbean and Bangladeshi women around language barriers and timely access to maternity care.



Health & Adults Sub Committee

Finally, as the council opted to insource leisure, the Sub-Committee carried out a deep dive to examine disability and those living with long-term ill health conditions access to sports and exercise. Sub-Committee members also carried out a number of site visits to the local leisure centres, carried out engagement with residents from the council's commissioned services such as disability people's network and older peoples reference group to understand their needs and views. The Sub-Committee heard evidence from local community gyms such as Ability Bow and gathered further expert intelligence from Alternative Movement, Disability Sports Coach and local disability advocacy champions like REAL.

The Sub-Committee produced a number of recommendations which suggested improvements on

disability representation, better data driven evidence on disability access and usage, developing trusted disability communication, develop a disability forum, collaboration with key partners, Primary Care, NHS and voluntary and community sector and creating transitional arrangements to mainstream facilities.



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



Children's & Education Sub-Committee

The Children's & Education Committee had a productive year, holding five committee meetings, a challenge session on Child healthy weight and site visits to secondary schools.

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A key focus of the Sub-Committee has been on Schools and Education, with items focusing on:

- **Universal Free School Meals for all secondary school pupils**

Tower Hamlets is the first local authority in the UK to introduce this and members reviewed the implementation of this policy, making recommendations on how to maximise accessibility and uptake.

- **Provision for those with Special Educational Needs**

The rapid increase in children requiring additional support is a key concern, having negatively impacted on key performance measures. Members were pleased to hear about the work

going on in schools to support children with additional needs, but the issue remains a key concern for the committee moving into 2024-25.

- **The impact of PFI contracts on schools**

Schools expressed their concerns, and challenges managing budgets in the face of declining child population, and increasing costs linked to these contracts. The committee will continue to monitor this issue.

Committee members carried out site visits to five schools in the borough focusing on the above items, speaking to pupils and teachers and even sampling some School Meals.



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

Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Sub Committee

The Housing & Regeneration Sub-Committee had a met five meetings and held challenge session

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Cllr Abdul Mannan
Chair of Housing and
Regeneration Scrutiny Sub-
Committee

The Sub-Committee looked at the performance of registered housing providers on several occasions throughout the year by examining key performance data, such as repairs response times and complaint handling, and their performance against the targets that were set, and questioned the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum on how the data will drive forward improvements for residents of the borough.

The Sub-Committee also met with residents of registered housing provided to hear their concerns about housing services in the borough.

The Sub-Committee reviewed the impact of new legislation such as Renters Reform Bill and the Social Housing Regulation Act on the borough.

Following up on the Fire Safety scrutiny review in 2021, the Sub-Committee examined the progress made on the Fire Safety Action Plan and reviewed the impact in this borough of new legislation, such as the Building Safety Act 2022 and the Higher-Risk Building Regulations 2023, and the council's schemes to incorporate this new legislation on building schemes already underway and how the council's building control authorities will enforce their new powers.

The Sub-Committee also reviewed the council's Homelessness Strategy and examined what is being done to provide homeless people with accommodation.

The Sub-Committee also scrutinised the Mayor on several

key policies such as

- Progress toward meeting the climate net zero targets
- Progress on building 1000 new homes per year
- Bringing Tower Hamlets Homes back inhouse.

Environment & Community Safety



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As the Scrutiny Lead for Environment & Community Safety, led on the OSC annual Borough Commander Spotlight to review delivery, achievements and policing priorities for 2024/25.

Following on from my focus on women's safety in the previous year, the session spotlighted local female residents to share their lived-experiences and potential solutions to community safety concerns with the Committee and Borough Commander.

The Committee also engaged the Borough Commander on the lack of resourcing within neighbourhood policing, abstraction of dedicated ward officers, and progress made in recruiting a diverse workforce in the MPS.

Additionally, scrutiny focused on policy development in key areas of

the environment and community safety portfolio, feeding into the new Combatting Drugs Partnership Strategy and Parking Enforcement Plan.

Scrutiny also reviewed the refresh of the Violence Against Women and Girl's Strategy and I held the Community Safety Team to account on ensuring the recommendations made from my previous challenge session on Women's Safety was integrated into the strategy.

Scrutiny also reviewed the councils progress to becoming a carbon neutral council by 2025, examining the approach to offsetting carbon, use of the net zero fund, and the impact caused by newly insourced services such as Tower Hamlets Home and the Leisure Centres.



Scrutiny in Action: Empowering Disabled Residents: Accessible Sports and Fitness Initiatives

Empowering Disabled Residents: Accessible Sports and Fitness Initiatives



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The Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee used the resident feedback from the HASSC work programme to consider undertaking a deep dive on equality issues for people with disability and long-term ill health conditions.

The Sub-Committee was aware that the Council's objective was to insource leisure and that this would be an opportunity for the Sub-Committee to review of some the accessibility practices provide by the local leisure services for people with disabilities.

The Sub-Committee carried out a resident stakeholder engagement event inviting residents from the Disability People's Network (Apasen) and the Older People Reference (Age UK) to provide their views. Members of HASSC also undertook site visits to the local leisure centres (managed by former provider GLL) and some local

community gyms that specialised in support for disability and people living with long-term ill health conditions such as Ability Bow.

The Sub-Committee also sought the views of local advocacy champions such as REAL and engaged with sports provision providers for people with disabilities such as Vallance Community Sports Association. Members also invited expert witnesses such as Disability Sports Coaching and Alternative Movement that specialise in exercise programmes for people with disabilities. The Sub-Committee also scrutinise and sought assurance from the council's insourcing leisure project team and through the discussion the committee made the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Disability representation - The council should actively prioritise initiatives that will enhance visibility and

representation of people with disabilities and or those living with long-term ill health conditions within the leisure sports and fitness centre workforce

Recommendation 2: Better data driven evidence on disability access and usage
The council should develop a comprehensive approach to the collection and analysis of disability access and usage led data that supports good governance and drives continuous improvements

Empowering Disabled Residents: Accessible Sports and Fitness Initiatives



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Recommendation 3:
Developing trusted disability communication channels and campaigns
The council should engage community disability groups to co-design and develop robust campaigns that promotes physical activity and sports for people with disabilities and long-term health conditions

Recommendation 4: Create a sports and exercise disability forum that embeds a person-centred philosophy and empowers residents with disabilities and or those living with long-term health conditions to review provision and make recommendations for improvement. The council should work with disability groups and establish a sports and exercise disability forum that empowers residents with disabilities or those living with long-term ill health

conditions to undertake activities such as accessibility audits on facilities, customer service, equipment, programmes to deliver on improvements.

Recommendation 5: Collaboration with primary care, NHS and healthcare partners and voluntary and community sector The council's leisure service should establish joint working protocols with primary care, NHS, health partners and voluntary and community sector to support widening access and become a partner referral provider for people with disabilities and or long-term health conditions.

Recommendation 6: Creating transitional arrangements from specialised fitness gyms to mainstream leisure centre facilities
The council should establish joint work

protocols with community gyms (specialist in disability and long-term ill health condition) to support residents with disabilities and or those living with long-term ill health conditions to make the transition into mainstream leisure centre facilities.

[Health and Adults Scrutiny Sub-Committee Report \(towerhamlets.gov.uk\)](https://towerhamlets.gov.uk/health-and-adults-scrutiny-sub-committee-report)



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Scrutiny in Action: Child Healthy Weight

Child Healthy Weight

Introductory Comments

The challenge session, focused on Child Healthy weight, particularly on reducing the prevalence of excess weight in the borough.

The Sub-Committee learnt about the correlation between excess weight and poverty and the wide range of work taking place in the borough on the issue.

In particular Tower Hamlets is leading the way through the universal implementation of free schools' meals which is demonstrated to have a positive impact on excess weight and in piloting new approaches to communicating the results of the National Child Measurement Programme to ensure that parents understand when their child is overweight, the support that is available to them and do not feel stigmatised,

Recommendations focused on: disordered eating

1 – Food

Fine tuning the implementation of FSMs.

Ensuring Healthy food is being accessed at our Youth Services

Engaging children in growing and cooking food

2 – Physical Activity

Ensuring access to Green Spaces, Sports Facilities and exercise classes

3 – Psychology and Culture

Involve food ambassadors

Contain fast food outlets

Consider children with special education needs and those who may be underweight or have

Scrutiny in Action: Registered Social Landlords Performance

This scrutiny challenge session in March 2024 allowed the Sub-Committee to hear from the Regulator of Social Housing, Housing Ombudsman, leading social housing and tenant engagement organisations and RPs themselves.

The focus was to review RP performance and the scope set out the following key questions:

- How is the RP performance aligned with the organisation's strategic priorities; What issues Registered Providers face when providing RP performance data particularly at local level; How is the data used to drive improvement for residents;
- What impact the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures are having;
- How can Scrutiny best add value.

This scrutiny challenge session provided the HRSSC an opportunity to scrutinise RPs in the borough.

The Committee noted that the new powers given by the Social Housing (Regulation) Act are a welcome improvement over the previous ones but it remains to be seen if they will be implemented in a robust

manner.

The Committee have made the following five recommendations as they feel more need to be done to improve the standard of housing in the borough:

Recommendation 1: The Sub-Committee and key stakeholders to ensure Registered Providers (RPs) are invited to attend more committee meetings by conducting regular spotlight session at every Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee meeting and inviting RPs to attend when their RP is being discussed.

Recommendation 2: Build in training provision and develop Committee Members with analysing performance data.

Recommendation 3: Invite Residents to give evidence at Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee adding value and making committee meetings more robust.

Recommendation 4: The Sub-Committee will review the management of council's own housing stock and ensure it is being well managed.

Recommendation 5: The Sub-Committee will work with stakeholders and ensure the

council maximises its powers to improve the standards and the services housing providers give to residents.



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Scrutiny in Action: Markets

Markets



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The challenge session focused on improving support for street markets and Market Traders.

Scrutiny members visited street markets, inside and outside of the borough to engage traders and collect evidence on how the council could support them better.

To gather evidence, scrutiny engaged expert witnesses from the London Street Trading Benchmarking Group and the National Association of British Market Authorities.

Throughout the challenge session, traders made it clear how the council could ensure the future sustainability of Markets, and this was reflected in the final recommendations.

The session found that traders wanted to see enhanced facilities and infrastructure. This particularly included the provision of toilets, storage spaces and free WiFi.

Additionally, ASB and crime was raised as a key community safety concern for both traders and visitors. The report highlighted the need to address this through enhanced intelligence exchange between THEOs and traders, and more seamless crime reporting mechanisms for visitors.

Additionally, the separation of commercial waste, market waste, and residential waste was highlighted as a key concern. The report highlighted that enforcement measures on businesses dumping on markets needs to be reviewed and addressed.

Furthermore, the trader population is ageing both nationally and locally. To ensure the sustainability of markets, the report recommends working with schools and young adults to attract young people to the entrepreneurial opportunities available in Market Trading

Lastly, Markets intersect between two portfolio areas. Scrutiny recommends the implementation of an effective and ongoing communication mechanism between both Lead Members to facilitate consistent exchange of information and collaboration on market-related issues

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THE FORWARD PLAN

Published for OSC: 2 September 2024

Contact Matthew Mannion
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Telephone: 020 7364 4651

Forward Plan September 2024

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

This updated interim forward plan is provided to each meeting of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC). This OSC version of the plan is not the statutory plan, but is designed to ensure the upcoming OSC meeting has an up-to-date understanding of upcoming executive decisions. This plan reflects the executive work plan at the time of the publication of the OSC meeting agenda and therefore may include amendments from that published in the statutory plan 28 days in advance of the Cabinet meeting.

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

Tower Hamlets Council **Forthcoming Decisions Plan**

What is this document?

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

As a minimum this will include notice of:

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

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

Key Decisions

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

Publication of Forthcoming Decisions

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

Urgency

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

Make your views known

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

Information about the Decision Makers

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

Notice of Intention to Conduct Business in Private

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

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

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

Contact Details for this Plan

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Forward Plan September 2024

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Approval of council's Resident Engagement Strategy	16/10/24	20
Approval of the council's new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029	16/10/24	17
Approval of the council's revised Homelessness Accommodation Placement Policy	10/07/24	6
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Budget monitoring report 2024-25 – Quarter 1	11/09/24	10
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*Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan – Position Statement and Organisational Impact	11/09/24	25
Council Housing Acquisitions Programme (CHAP) and Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF R3)	11/09/24	14
Food Insecurity Action Plan – Response to recommendations	16/10/24	23
Free Swimming Programme	11/09/24	13
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Land at Gill Street – Options	16/10/24	24
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*Reduction and Recycling Plan Progress Report – Qtr 1, 2024-25	16/10/24	27
*Review of the Licensing Act Cumulative Impact Assessments	16/10/24	28
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*Stepney Greencoat CE School – Expansion to Include Permanent Nursery Provision	16/10/24	29
*Strategic Delivery and Performance Report Year 3 Quarter 1	16/10/24	29
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*Tower Hamlets Council's Target Operating Model	16/10/24	26
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Whitechapel Market Stalls – Production and Installation Contract	11/09/24	11

* New Issues published since the last Forward Plan

Title of Report	Approval of the council's revised Homelessness Accommodation Placement Policy	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? Yes
Summary of Decision	<p>The Mayor and Cabinet are asked to approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council's revised Homelessness Accommodation Placement Policy <p>In addition, permission is sought from the Mayor and Cabinet, should any further amendments be required as a result of legislation or case law, to delegate approval of subsequent amendments to the document to the council's Corporate Director of Housing and Regeneration.</p> <p>The council's revised Homelessness Accommodation Placement Policy clearly sets out the council's approach as to how officers will use available housing stock to discharge the council's statutory homelessness duties and responsibilities. The policy will ensure that the council follows current legislation and provides a reference point for Housing Options staff to make their decisions.</p> <p>NOTE – this decision was called in and is currently awaiting consideration by OSC. The outcome of the OSC consideration will determine if this matter is re-considered by Cabinet.</p>		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 10/07/24		
Community Plan Theme	Homes for the future		
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding		
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	Health, Adult and Community (HAC) Childrens Services The policy and supporting documents will be discussed with the relevant internal stakeholders in advance of MAB		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	Yes		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Karen Swift (Divisional Director, Housing and Regeneration) Karen.Swift@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other	Equality Impact Assessment Homelessness Accommodation Placement Policy		

Forward Plan September 2024

information will be available?			
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Time Banded Collections (Waste Services)	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? Yes
Summary of Decision	Introduce time-banded collections of waste and recycling on selected high streets, town centres, and main commercial areas in the borough. This will require businesses and residents to present their waste for collection within specified time periods.		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 11/09/24		
Community Plan Theme	A clean and green future		
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency		
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	NA NA		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	NO		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Ashraf Ali (Director of Public Realm) ashraf.ali@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	Draft Household Waste Regulations 2024 Draft Commercial Waste Regulations 2024 List of Streets to Time Band		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Spitalfields & Banglatown masterplan SPD	Ward Spitalfields & Banglatown	Key Decision? No
Summary of Decision	Cabinet will be asked to approve the Spitalfields further informal engagement in November 2023 which consisted of two in-person workshops and a webinar.		

Forward Plan September 2024

	<p>Preparation of a draft document was carried out over December 2023 and January 2024. Formal public consultation took place from early-May to mid-June 2024. A wide range of community groups, residents, landowners, and other stakeholders have so far engaged with and will continue to be consulted on the SPD.</p> <p>Adopting the Spitalfields</p>
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Decision maker	Cabinet
Date of decision	11/09/24
Community Plan Theme	All Priorities
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	<p>Mayor's office – regular meetings have been held with officers from the Mayor's office at all stages of the project.</p> <p>Internally – there has been input from several internal services, including Growth and Economic Development.</p> <p>Externally – Greater London Authority, Transport for London, landowners, community organisations.</p> <p>The SPD was developed through consultation with the location community. Four in-person consultation events were carried out as well as additional online workshops and drop-ins. Meetings were also held with key stakeholders, including landowners and community groups.</p> <p>Formal statutory consultation was carried out in late-May and early-June 2024, which included publishing a full draft SPD document and soliciting feedback from stakeholders.</p>
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	N/A
Contact details for comments or additional information	<p>Charmaine Campbell, Pam Cummins, Abdul Razak, Yasmin Ali, Alicia Jones, Marissa Ryan-Hernandez</p> <p>Senior Management Support Officer</p> <p>Charmaine.Campbell@towerhamlets.gov.uk, Executive Support Team Leader, Resources, Governance & Chief Execs pam.cummins@towerhamlets.gov.uk, Senior Management Support Officer abdul.razak@towerhamlets.gov.uk, (Development Project Manager, Place) yasmin.ali@towerhamlets.gov.uk, Executive Support Team Leader alicia.jones@towerhamlets.gov.uk, (Plan Making Team Leader)</p>
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	App1. Spitalfields and Banglatown SPD
Is there an intention to	No, Unrestricted

Forward Plan September 2024

consider this report in private session and if so why?			
Title of Report	Serious Violence and Exploitation Strategy	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? No
Summary of Decision	<p>The Serious Violence Duty came into effect in Jan 2023, requiring police, councils and local services to work together to share information and target interventions to prevent and reduce serious violence. The authorities responsible were responsible for forming a relevant partnership, agreeing a local definition of serious violence, producing a serious violence needs assessment for the borough and using this to inform a strategic delivery plan for the partnership to tackle serious violence. The serious violence and exploitation strategy group is a sub-group of the Community Safety Partnership.</p> <p>This item presents the Draft Serious Violence and Exploitation Strategic Plan: formulated using the findings from the Serious Violence needs assessment, recommendations, engagement with professionals and wider consultation with our local residents (including children, young people and young adults).</p> <p>The Serious Violence Plan on a Page, produced in Jan 2024, has been used to consult the public and professionals on the proposed approach to tackling violence and exploitation: contributing to the development of the full strategic delivery plan.</p>		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 11/09/24
Community Plan Theme	Empower Communities and Fight Crime
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Safer Communities
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	NA NA
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	NA
Contact details for comments or additional information	Ann Corbett (Director, Community Safety) ann.corbett@towerhamlets.gov.uk
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	A New Met for London Plan, 2023-2025 Serious Violence Duty - Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 Serious Violence Needs Assessment 2023
Is there an intention to	No, Unrestricted

Forward Plan September 2024

consider this report in private session and if so why?			
Title of Report	Be Well Leisure In-sourcing Capital Programme Update	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? Yes
Summary of Decision	Following the in-sourcing of the Be Well Leisure Service on 1st May 2024, the report identifies the capital funding required to carry out priority short-term improvements to Mile End Leisure Centre 3G outdoor sports pitches and York Hall Spa both of which provide a significant income contribution to the 10-year revenue model for the service.		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 11/09/24		
Community Plan Theme	All Priorities		
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation		
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	NA NA		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	NA		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Jahur Ali (Director Leisure and Culture) Jahur.Ali@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	In sourcing presentation		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Budget monitoring report 2024-25 – Quarter 1	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? No
Summary of Decision	Budget monitoring report 2024-25 Quarter 1		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 11/09/24		
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Community Plan Theme	All Priorities		
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living		
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	N/A N/A		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	N/A		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Abdulrazak Kassim (Director Finance, Procurement and Audit) abdulrazak.kassim@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	N/A		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Whitechapel Market Stalls – Production and Installation Contract	Ward Whitechapel	Key Decision? No
Summary of Decision	Approval is being sought to continue with the production and installation of new market stalls on Whitechapel Road following a successful trial period. The total cost of the contract is £3.8M with funding provided as part of the Levelling Up Fund		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 11/09/24
Community Plan Theme	Boost culture, business, jobs and leisure
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	

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Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	No - an EqlA screening was undertaken for the WRIP programme as a whole and concluded a full EqlA was not required.		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Alex Hatt, Dave Hughes, Alicia Jones (Head of Regeneration) Alex.Hatt@towerhamlets.gov.uk, (Interim Director of Regeneration and Assets) Dave.Hughes@towerhamlets.gov.uk, Executive Support Team Leader alicia.jones@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?			
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Mayors Waste Improvement Programme Update	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? No
Summary of Decision	<p>The Mayor declared a waste emergency at full Council in November 2022. There were concerns that the waste services were failing, and that the overall performance was poor and lacked visibility. Further briefings to the Mayor and MAB detailing the initial findings and the Waste Improvement Programme was approved on 13 June 2023.</p> <p>December 2023, the Mayor approved an investment of £5m for 2024/2025.</p> <p>On 16 April 2024, the Mayors Waste Improvement Programme (MWIP) delivery plan details were shared with The Mayor and the subsequent action was to provide a quarterly update to MAB.</p> <p>The report provides details of the MWIP with focus on delivery timeline, plans for the key arterial routes and how this investment will be embedded into the on-going long-term improvement of the service.</p>		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 11/09/24
Community Plan Theme	A clean and green future
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	NA NA
Has an Equality Impact	NA

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Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	
Contact details for comments or additional information	Ashraf Ali (Director of Public Realm) ashraf.ali@towerhamlets.gov.uk
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted
Title of Report	Free Swimming Programme
	Ward All Wards
	Key Decision? No
Summary of Decision	This report updates MAB on the details of the introduction of a Free Swimming Programme targeted at women and girls over 16 and men over 55.

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 11/09/24
Community Plan Theme	Boost culture, business, jobs and leisure
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	None A consultation exercise undertaken between November 2021 and January 2022, which identified that more than half of respondents disagreed that the current facilities met their needs. Additionally 20% of online responses feature requests for urgent action to be taken to improve the swimming offer.
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	NO
Contact details for comments or additional information	Keith Townsend (Insourcing Leisure Project Director) keith.townsend@towerhamlets.gov.uk
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so	No, Unrestricted

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why?			
Title of Report	Council Housing Acquisitions Programme (CHAP) and Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF R3)	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? No
Summary of Decision	<p>To approve the inclusion of two capital schemes, with external grant funding into the Council's housing capital programme.</p> <p>External funding has been made available via the GLA for its Council Housing Acquisition Programme (CHAP), and MHCLG for its Local Authority Housing Fund Round 3 programme</p>		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 11/09/24		
Community Plan Theme	Homes for the future		
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living		
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place			
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?			
Contact details for comments or additional information	Rupert Brandon, Charmaine Campbell, Alifa Khatun, Abdul Razak Interim Head of Housing Supply rupert.brandon@towerhamlets.gov.uk, Senior Management Support Officer Charmaine.Campbell@towerhamlets.gov.uk, Senior Management Support Officer alifa.khatun@towerhamlets.gov.uk, Senior Management Support Officer abdul.razak@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?			
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Reduction and Recycling Plan Progress Report - Quarter 4, 2023	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? No

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Summary of Decision	Tower Hamlets Reduction and Recycling Plan (RRP) 2023-2025 was approved by Cabinet in September 2023. A report detailing progress of the RRP is due at Cabinet on a quarterly basis. This report provides an update for Quarter 4, 2023-24.
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Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 11/09/24		
Community Plan Theme			
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency		
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	NA NA		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	NA		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Ashraf Ali (Director of Public Realm) ashraf.ali@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	NONE		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	VAWG and Women's Safety Strategy	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? No
Summary of Decision	The Council's VAWG and Women's Safety Strategy 2024-29, produced through extensive engagement with residents, partners and stakeholders through the VAWG Needs Assessment and strategy workshops.		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 11/09/24		
Community Plan Theme	Empower Communities and Fight Crime		
Cabinet Member			

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Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	n/a n/a
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	N/A
Contact details for comments or additional information	Abdul Razak, Alicia Jones, Yasmin Ashley, Charmaine Campbell, Pam Cummins, Adam Price Senior Management Support Officer abdul.razak@towerhamlets.gov.uk , Executive Support Team Leader alicia.jones@towerhamlets.gov.uk , Executive Support Team Leader, Childrens & Culture and Health, Adults & Community yasmin.ashley@towerhamlets.gov.uk , Senior Management Support Officer Charmaine.Campbell@towerhamlets.gov.uk , Executive Support Team Leader, Resources, Governance & Chief Execs pam.cummins@towerhamlets.gov.uk , Strategy & Policy Lead (HA&C) adam.price@towerhamlets.gov.uk
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted
Title of Report	Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2023-24
	Ward All Wards
	Key Decision? No
Summary of Decision	The annual report outlines the achievements of the Safeguarding Adults Board, its subgroups and partner agencies over the period 2023 to 2024.

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 16/10/24
Community Plan Theme	All Priorities
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Social Care
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	NA The Annual SAB Report is developed by partners of the SAB. It will be presented to the Safeguarding Adults Board for sign off and will also be reviewed by the Health, Adults and Communities Directorate Leadership Team. The report will also be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board.
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been	

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carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	
Contact details for comments or additional information	Katie O'Driscoll (Director of Adult Social Care) Katie.O'Driscoll@towerhamlets.gov.uk
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted
Title of Report	Approval of the council's new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029
	Ward All Wards
	Key Decision? Yes
Summary of Decision	<p>This report seeks approval from the Mayor and Cabinet of the council's new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029.</p> <p>The council has a statutory duty under the Homelessness Act (2002) to conduct a review of the nature and extent of homelessness in its District (borough) every five years and to develop a strategy setting out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how services will be delivered in the future to tackle homelessness; and • the available resources to prevent and relieve homelessness. <p>The council's most recent Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy ended in December 2023 and this new strategy fulfils this statutory and mandatory requirement on the council in its role as a Local Housing Authority.</p>

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 16/10/24
Community Plan Theme	Homes for the future
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	<p>Internal Stakeholders from within the council – Public Health, Community Safety, Adult Social Care, Mental Health, Substance Use, Health, and Integrated Commissioning.</p> <p>External Stakeholders including residents, organisations and agencies who work both with and separately from the council who support those at risk of or who are homeless or rough sleeping in Tower Hamlets.</p> <p>The council will be conducting a consultation on the priorities for its new strategy</p>

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	<p>with residents and stakeholders who support those at risk of or who are homeless or rough sleeping. The priorities proposed in the consultation have been developed following a desktop review of homelessness in the borough which was conducted in March 2023.</p> <p>The findings of the review have enabled the council to clearly identify its priorities for tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in Tower Hamlets and in doing so, the priorities will form the basis of the council's revised Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. Reflecting good practice to deliver outcomes for residents experiencing or threatened with homelessness and identifying gaps in service provision while ensuring that it represents value for money for residents</p>		
<p>Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?</p>			
<p>Contact details for comments or additional information</p>	<p>Charmaine Campbell, Lynne Hughes, Karen Swift, Donna Barrett, Una Bedford, Alicia Jones, Nightingale Simson Senior Management Support Officer Charmaine.Campbell@towerhamlets.gov.uk, Senior Management Support Officer lynne.hughes@towerhamlets.gov.uk, (Divisional Director, Housing and Regeneration) Karen.Swift@towerhamlets.gov.uk, (Application & Administration Officer) donna.barrett@towerhamlets.gov.uk, Strategy and Policy Officer (Place) Una.Bedford@towerhamlets.gov.uk, Executive Support Team Leader alicia.jones@towerhamlets.gov.uk, Senior Management Support Officer nightingale.simson@towerhamlets.gov.uk</p>		
<p>What supporting documents or other information will be available?</p>	<p>Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 – 2029 EIA Screening for Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024- 2029 Consultation Report on priorities for the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy</p>		
<p>Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?</p>	<p>No, Unrestricted</p>		
<p>Title of Report</p>	<p>Record of Corporate Director's Actions Quarter 1 (2024 -2025)</p>	<p>Ward All Wards</p>	<p>Key Decision? No</p>
<p>Summary of Decision</p>	<p>This report sets out, for noting by Cabinet, the Corporate Director's Actions taken under Rule 10 (section 50 Record of Corporate Director's Actions (RCDA) - Waiving of Procurement Procedures) in Part C – Codes and Protocols of the Council's constitution. The section states that Corporate Director's Actions in respect of contracts over £100,000 must be reported to Cabinet for noting and this report fulfils this requirement.</p>		

<p>Decision maker Date of decision</p>	<p>Cabinet 16/10/24</p>
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Community Plan Theme	All Priorities		
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living		
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	N/A N/A		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	N/A		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Abdulrazak Kassim (Director Finance, Procurement and Audit) abdulrazak.kassim@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	N/A		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Tower Hamlets Special Educational Needs, Disabilities and Inclusion Strategy 2024 to 2029.	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? No
Summary of Decision	This partnership strategy will set out the shared outcomes that leaders will work collectively to achieve for all children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Tower Hamlets. It will describe how different services will collaborate to achieve these outcomes.		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 16/10/24
Community Plan Theme	Accelerate Education
Cabinet Member	Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor)
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people: the 'Our Time' Forum • Parents and Carers: the SEND Independent Parents Forum • NHS and School providers

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All interested residents (through consultation) <p>Engagement to support the plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of families and children’s views from previous engagement and consultation • Discussions with families, children and young people focused on proposed priorities. • Engagement with health and education partners <p>Consultation on the draft strategy and priorities.</p>		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	<p>Yes</p> <p>The strategy does not include specific decisions and the equalities screening does not identify negative impacts.</p> <p>Nevertheless, ensuring that the strategy provides the best possible support for children and families with a range of protected characteristics will be a priority and an equality impact assessment will be prepared to reflect this.</p>		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Lisa Fraser (Director of Education) lisa.fraser@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	Background briefing on children and young people with SEND in Tower Hamlets.		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Approval of council’s Resident Engagement Strategy	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? No
Summary of Decision	Following the in-sourcing of Tower Hamlets Homes to the council, the Resident Engagement Strategy of the landlord service has been refreshed and aligned with the council’s draft Community Engagement Strategy.		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 16/10/24
Community Plan Theme	A council that works for you and listens to you
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Inclusive Development and Housebuilding
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	<p>Internal: affected DLTs</p> <p>External: Residents’ Panel; Tenant & Leaseholder Housing Forum; wider resident body</p>

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	<p>Internal and External Consultation Internal: Briefing paper External: Briefing paper; OurEastEnd article; Let's Talk consultation</p>		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	None		
Contact details for comments or additional information	<p>Charmaine Campbell, Pam Cummins, Lesley Owen, Yasmin Ashley, Alicia Jones, Jean Philadelphia Senior Management Support Officer Charmaine.Campbell@towerhamlets.gov.uk, Executive Support Team Leader, Resources, Governance & Chief Execs pam.cummins@towerhamlets.gov.uk, (Service Improvement and Policy Team) lesley.owen@towerhamlets.gov.uk, Executive Support Team Leader, Childrens & Culture and Health, Adults & Community yasmin.ashley@towerhamlets.gov.uk, Executive Support Team Leader alicia.jones@towerhamlets.gov.uk, (Senior Executive Support Officer) Jean.Philadelphia@towerhamlets.gov.uk</p>		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	<p>Draft Resident Engagement Strategy Equalities screening checklist</p>		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Contract Forward Plan – Q2 – FY 2024-2025	Ward	Key Decision? Yes
Summary of Decision	<p>This report presents the contracts being procured during quarter two. The report also sets out the Contracts Forward Plan at appendix 2 to this report. The report asks for confirmation that all contracts can proceed to contract award after tender.</p>		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 16/10/24
Community Plan Theme	
Cabinet Member	
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	<p>Where required, consultation with service users and stakeholders will be undertaken as part of the project and budget approval process. Necessary consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's</p>

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	policies and procedures		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	No. Contract specific EqIA is expected to be completed by respective contract owners as part of the directorate approval.		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Andy Grant (Interim Programme Director of Procurement) Andy.Grant@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	Report and appendices include details of all contracts to be awarded.		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Household Rubbish and Recycling Collections Policy	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? Yes
Summary of Decision	To ask that the Council adopt a clear and concise policy relating to household rubbish and recycling collections in Tower Hamlets that defines the roles and responsibilities of the Council, its residents and other responsible parties involved in the management of domestic waste.		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 16/10/24
Community Plan Theme	A clean and green future
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	None Informal consultation was undertaken with key Managing Agent organisations within the borough on 19/03/2024. No other consultation has been carried out at this stage as we have been advised it is not required for this policy to be adopted and the requirements it asks of householders and responsible persons fall within primary national legislation.
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	
Contact details for comments or additional	Ashraf Ali (Director of Public Realm) ashraf.ali@towerhamlets.gov.uk

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information			
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	Household Rubbish and Recycling Collection Policy		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Victoria Park New Amenities (Mini-golf)	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? Yes
Summary of Decision	To seek approval for the development of a new mini-golf attraction for Victoria Park.		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 16/10/24		
Community Plan Theme	Boost culture, business, jobs and leisure		
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation		
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal • Asset Management <p>Public consultation will be carried out as part of the Planning process for both amenities.</p>		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	NA		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Jahur Ali (Director Leisure and Culture) Jahur.Ali@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?			
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	Partly Exempt (Part of the report will be exempt) The report and appendix will include financially sensitive information.		
Title of Report	Food Insecurity Action Plan – Response to recommendations	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? No

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Summary of Decision	As part of the scrutiny committee's review of LBTH's response to food insecurity a number of recommendations were made for improvements to the local authority's response. This report outlines comments from relevant services and actions taken on board as a result of these recommendations.
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Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 16/10/24		
Community Plan Theme	Boost culture, business, jobs and leisure		
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Customer Service, Equalities and Social Inclusion		
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	N/A N/A		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	No		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Ellie Kershaw (Acting Director, Growth and Economic Development) ellie.kershaw@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	Tower Hamlets Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Food Insecurity in Tower Hamlets Scrutiny Review		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Land at Gill Street – Options	Ward Limehouse	Key Decision? Yes
Summary of Decision	The report deals with the future of an area of council land at Gill Street, Limehouse. It includes an option for the council to dispose of the land for a new community building.		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 16/10/24		
Community Plan Theme	A clean and green future		
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Resources and the Cost of Living		

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Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	Legal Services, Finance Emails, document circulation		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	N/A		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Paul Patterson (Interim Corporate Director Housing And Regeneration) paul.patterson@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	None		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan – Position Statement and Organisational Impact	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? No
Summary of Decision	<p>The London Borough of Tower Hamlets has made significant strides in addressing the recommendations of the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC), demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvement and a proactive approach to change. The council is on track to reach 84% completion of actions aligned to the CPC recommendations by September 2024.</p> <p>The council welcomes a progress review from the LGA to further validate the progress made and to identify any additional areas for improvement. We are urging the LGA to conduct this review as soon as possible to provide valuable feedback and support for our ongoing efforts</p>		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 11/09/24
Community Plan Theme	All Priorities
Cabinet Member	Mayor
Who will be consulted before decision is made	

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and how will this consultation take place	
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	
Contact details for comments or additional information	Robin Beattie, Alicia Jones (Acting Director of Strategy Innovation and Transformation) robin.beattie@towerhamlets.gov.uk, Executive Support Team Leader alicia.jones@towerhamlets.gov.uk
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted
Title of Report	Tower Hamlets Council's Target Operating Model
	Ward All Wards
	Key Decision? No
Summary of Decision	The new Target Operating Model (TOM) has been developed to better align to the organisation's priorities and ensures that the community is front-and-centre of decisions that matter to them. The vision of the new TOM is to: "Create a more efficient, effective, and responsive public sector organisation that is better able to meet the needs of its communities." This update will present the council's new and updated TOM, that takes account of a comprehensive series of engagement sessions held since October 2023

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 16/10/24
Community Plan Theme	All Priorities
Cabinet Member	Mayor
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	Stakeholder engagement has run from October 2023, and continued up to the Target Operating Model's agreement. A range of engagement and evidence base gathering from staff, members, external partners, community, faith, voluntary, and public service organisations have contributed to the new Target Operating Model
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been	N/A

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carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?			
Contact details for comments or additional information	Charmaine Campbell, Muhammed Uddin, Onyekachi Ajisafe, Alicia Jones, Alifa Khatun, Abdul Razak Senior Management Support Officer Charmaine.Campbell@towerhamlets.gov.uk, (Democratic Services Officer, Civic & Members) muhammed.uddin@towerhamlets.gov.uk, (Strategy & Policy Officer, Strategy, Policy & Performance) onyekachi.ajisafe@towerhamlets.gov.uk, Executive Support Team Leader alicia.jones@towerhamlets.gov.uk, Senior Management Support Officer alifa.khatun@towerhamlets.gov.uk, Senior Management Support Officer abdul.razak@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?			
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Reduction and Recycling Plan Progress Report – Qtr 1, 2024-25	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? No
Summary of Decision	Tower Hamlets Reduction and Recycling Plan (RRP) 2023-2025 was approved by Cabinet in September 2023. A report detailing progress of the RRP is due at Cabinet on a quarterly basis. This report provides an update for Quarter 4 and year end, 2023-24.		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 16/10/24
Community Plan Theme	A clean and green future
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	NA NA
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	NA
Contact details for	Ashraf Ali

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comments or additional information	(Director of Public Realm) ashraf.ali@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	NA		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Review of the Licensing Act Cumulative Impact Assessments	Ward Bethnal Green West; Spitalfields & Banglatown; Weavers; Whitechapel	Key Decision? Yes
Summary of Decision	A review of the consultation on the cumulative impact assessment for licensed premises within Brick Lane and Bethnal Green.		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 16/10/24		
Community Plan Theme			
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Environment and the Climate Emergency		
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	A full 12 week consultation has been carried out and will be submitted as part of the report. Internal and External		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	NA		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Ashraf Ali (Director of Public Realm) ashraf.ali@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?			
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Stepney Greencoat CE School –	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? Yes

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	Expansion to Include Permanent Nursery Provision		
Summary of Decision	<p>A decision is required by Cabinet on the statutory proposal to extend the age range of Stepney Greencoat CE Primary School to 3 -11 years of age, to enable the permanent establishment of nursery provision for 3 and 4 year olds.</p> <p>The nursery provision, was initially established as a two year pilot, but a Council decision is now required for it to continue on a permanent basis from the start of the 2025-26 school year.</p>		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 16/10/24		
Community Plan Theme	Accelerate Education		
Cabinet Member	Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor)		
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	<p>School community including families, staff, governing body, diocese. Neighbouring/local community Maintained Schools and nurseries in the planning area, PVI's in the local area Early Education and Childcare Services Public</p> <p>Statutory minimum 4 weeks consultation on Let's Talk Tower Hamlets.</p>		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	NA		
Contact details for comments or additional information	Lisa Fraser (Director of Education) lisa.fraser@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	Cabinet Report Stepney Greencoat CE School – Expansion to Include Permanent Nursery Provision		
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	Strategic Delivery and Performance Report Year 3 Quarter 1	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? No

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Summary of Decision	This report will set out performance for Q1 showing progress on the Strategic Plan for all of the reportable strategic measures.
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Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 16/10/24		
Community Plan Theme	All Priorities		
Cabinet Member	Mayor		
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place			
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?			
Contact details for comments or additional information	Charmaine Campbell, Robin Beattie, Shivani Patel, Razia Khatun, Alifa Khatun Senior Management Support Officer Charmaine.Campbell@towerhamlets.gov.uk, (Acting Director of Strategy Innovation and Transformation) robin.beattie@towerhamlets.gov.uk, Senior Management Support Officer shivani.patel@towerhamlets.gov.uk, razia.khatun2@towerhamlets.gov.uk, Senior Management Support Officer alifa.khatun@towerhamlets.gov.uk		
What supporting documents or other information will be available?			
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted		
Title of Report	HSS Disabilities Scrutiny Action Plan	Ward All Wards	Key Decision? No
Summary of Decision	Following the insourcing of the "Be Well Leisure Service" on the 1st May 2024, the Action Plan identifies and prioritises initiatives that will enhance viability and representation of people with disabilities and those living with long term health conditions within the leisure sports and fitness workforce.		

Decision maker Date of decision	Cabinet 27/11/24		
Community Plan Theme	All Priorities		

Forward Plan September 2024

Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation
Who will be consulted before decision is made and how will this consultation take place	NA None
Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out and if so the result of this Assessment?	NA
Contact details for comments or additional information	Jahur Ali (Director Leisure and Culture) Jahur.Ali@towerhamlets.gov.uk
What supporting documents or other information will be available?	Insourcing presentation
Is there an intention to consider this report in private session and if so why?	No, Unrestricted

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