

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.45 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 6 MARCH 2012

**ROOM C1, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE
CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Councillor Ann Jackson (Chair)
Councillor Rachael Saunders (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Tim Archer
Councillor Stephanie Eaton
Councillor Sirajul Islam
Councillor Zenith Rahman
Councillor Amy Whitelock

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Bill Turner
Councillor David Edgar
Councillor Denise Jones
Councillor Ohid Ahmed – Deputy Mayor

Co-opted Members Present:

Memory Kampiyawo – (Parent Governor Representative)
Rev James Olanipekun – (Parent Governor Representative)
Mr Mushfique Uddin – (Muslim Community Representative)

Guests Present:

DC Paul Rickett, – Borough Commander
Peter Hewitt – Transport for London (TfL)

Officers Present:

Michael Keating – (Service Head, One Tower Hamlets)
Sarah Barr – (Senior Strategy Policy and Performance Officer,
One Tower Hamlets, Chief Executive's)
Kevin Kewin – (Service Manager, Strategy Policy &
Performance, One Tower Hamlets, Chief
Executive's)
Shazia Hussain – (Service Head Localisation, Communities
Localities & Culture)
Margaret Cooper – (Section Head Transport & Highways, Public
Realm, Communities Localities & Culture)
Jill Bell – Head of Legal Services (Environment), Legal
Services

- Peter Hayday – (Interim Service Head, Financial Services, Risk and Accountability)
Antonella Burgio – (Democratic Services)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Helal Uddin, and Co-opted Members Mr Jake Kemp, and Canon Michael Ainsworth

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of personal or prejudicial interests were made.

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 30th January 2012 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings.

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7th February 2012 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2012 be deferred to the next meeting pending clarification of After School Patrol proposals.

4. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

Nil items.

VARY ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair **Moved** that the order of business be varied. Accordingly the minutes were considered as the last item of business.

5. SECTION ONE REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

5.1 Cabinet Decision Called-in: New Partnership Structures (CAB 075/112)

The Chair welcomed Councillors Bill Turner, David Edgar and Denise Jones who had called-in the decision together with Councillors, Anwar Khan, Joshua

Peck, Rajib Ahmed, and Shiria Khatun in accordance with the provisions of Part 4 of the Council's Constitution and also welcomed Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor together with Shazia Hussain Service Head Localisation who were in attendance to respond to the call-in.

Councillor Turner with Councillors Edgar and Jones presented the reasons for the call-in outlining their concerns. Following this they responded to questions from the Committee.

The concerns highlighted together with answers to the Committee's questions are summarised in the following categories:

It was noted that there was support for the proposed changes to the Partnership Executive, Partnership Board and Community Plan Delivery Groups (CPDG). However there were concerns in the following areas:

- Democratic Accountability

Members welcomed the principle of empowering residents but were concerned that there should be a role for ward Councillors; this was not clear. It was felt the proposed structure did not align with the Localism Act, as it did not include Local Councillors formally within the partnership as a link to the local community.

There were a number of concerns around the recruitment and role of the Community Champions. There was insufficient information in the report on their recruitment, their role and responsibilities and how they will be supported. It was not clear what their role would be in relation to Ward Councillors.

The Mayor's Assemblies did not seem a sufficient accountability mechanism between the Mayor and residents. Committee Members were concerned that they would not give adequate time for discussion between the Mayor and residents. Further consultation on the format of these should be considered, to ensure they effectively engage residents and listen to their views.

It was not clear which of the Community Plan Delivery Groups would be responsible for cultural services and issues; this should not be neglected as it is of major importance to residents and ensures better involvement and lasting benefits.

- Costs

It was not clear how the new structure will be supported and funded, and argued that the identified funding of £90,000 was insufficient to bring about change.

- Timescales

The timetable for the launch of the new local arrangements was considered too tight for successful implementation, with much of the detail still to be written.

- Lack of Consultation

Non-Executive Members and LAP Steering Group members had not been consulted about the proposals prior to their publication in the Cabinet agenda and were disappointed since they had been an important part of the previous arrangements and were able to offer viewpoints which could inform the successful development of a new structure.

Winding-up of the old arrangements, had been poorly handled. The LAP steering groups had simply been left to lapse without any formal closure. Any new arrangements would have to ensure that resident involvement was meaningful and instilled confidence in the effectiveness of the new structure.

Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor and Shazia Hussain, Service Head Localisation responded to the concerns raised by the call-in Councillors and answered questions from the Committee. The responses together with answers to the Committee's questions are summarised in the following categories:

- Democratic Accountability

The proposed New Partnership Structures intended to give more say to local people. The recommendations were based on structures through which residents would be empowered.

It was intended that local Councillors be involved in Community Forums without affecting empowerment of local people. They would also have a role in driving forward the new structures

CPDGs would be overseen by senior Partnership Group Members

Community Champions roles would be advertised widely in local areas, with Champions selected by officers following a fair recruitment process. They would be trained and supported to build capacity in their Ward, empowering other residents to set the local agenda.

- Costs

Neighbourhood Renewal Funding has ceased therefore it will be necessary to consider costs realistically. In view of this internal Council staff would also be engaged in delivery

In addition to the £90,000 identified to resource the proposal, the Council intended to investigate how to source funding from other budgets and ensure that this was fairly distributed. The Service Head, Localisation agreed to provide details of funding allocation and advised that local forums would also receive funding

- Consultation

Councillors would have opportunity to be involved in this decision by offering their comments to Cabinet and had had other opportunities to raise any concerns but response to consultation had been poor.

Community consultation indicated that the Community wanted to set its agenda, therefore the New Partnership had been structured to achieve this in collaboration with local Councillors and the Council

The unsatisfactory winding up arrangements of previous LAP Steering Groups was acknowledged and an undertaking was given that there will be communications with members of these bodies.

- Community Champions

Community Champions would be recruited through the same processes as used in the previous area governance arrangements. Roles would be advertised in community centres and community groups etc... and there would be measures to access 'hard to reach' groups. Advertisement and recruitment will be undertaken by officers only based on recruiting those with the best expertise and skills for the role.

The Council would encourage people to apply for these roles and ensure that there was appropriate recruitment. It was also intended to expand the Community Champions' role beyond one solely based in the community. All representatives would be local to their Local Community Forums and a Community Champions Programme would encourage participation.

To build capacity, Community Champions will be trained and supported after recruitment.

The Committee considered and discussed the views and comments made by all parties. Following this, Members resolved to refer the provision al Cabinet decision back to Cabinet asking that Cabinet give further consideration to the views and concerns presented in their referral report to be presented at Cabinet on 14 March 2012..

RESOLVED

That the call-in be referred back to Cabinet for further consideration and that the Cabinet note and comment in writing, and at cabinet on the matters set out in the referral report.

6. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Presentation from the Borough Commander - Metropolitan Police

The Chair welcomed DC Paul Rickett, Borough Commander, who had been invited to speak to the Committee in regard to policing of serious crime in the Borough. Issues around policing of domestic violence and rape were discussed.

Members were informed that domestic violence figures in the Borough were lower than the London average while common assault figures were higher than average. These indicated that the Borough was robust at monitoring at the lower end of the scale and had a good arrest policy. Performance in response to domestic violence calls averaged at nine minutes and the Borough Commander encouraged a proactive approach to domestic violence intervention.

It was noted that the Force was prepared to arrest but there were subsequent performance implications on Court action as victims often declined to support prosecutions. "Claire's Law" was supported by the Borough Police and with support for victims offered up to prosecution.

Attrition rate for domestic violence prosecutions was 40%, caused by a combination of factors such as the variable reporting rate of certain types of crime and reluctance in pursuing prosecutions. In this regard, the Police was generally influenced by the victims wishes. Where victims withdrew statements, these were investigated but in all cases victims' wishes would be put first. The prosecution rate was above average.

Regarding rape crime, reporting had increased but prosecutions had decreased. Borough data was higher than that of neighbouring boroughs as Tower Hamlets had recently opened the first regional sex offences haven and this affected the figures reported.

In 2012, 145 rapes had been reported year to date and the sanction detection rate was 15.9%. It was noted that following two notable prosecutions, rape investigations were dealt with regionally via SCD2. In these types of crime, the concerns of the victim were always prioritised.

Reported walk-in crime data were also monitored. At the time of reporting all matters were classified and treated as substantive crime. A reported crime might later be re-graded as a crime related incident where it could be demonstrated that assessment of the crime at the time reported had been incorrect or the crime disproved via other processes such as CCTV evidence.

The Committee requested figures on rape reported as substantive crime and later reclassified.

Action Borough Commander / Andy Bamber, Service Head, Community Safety.

The Committee requested a ward breakdown of prostitution policing data.

Action Borough Commander / Andy Bamber, Service Head, Community Safety.

Borough objectives and targets were established via a joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) undertaken with partners through the Safer Tower Hamlets Partnership. Assessment had been used since 1994 to indicate what was driving community safety concerns. Analysis of JSNA informed the control strategy and where investment would be made. The Borough Control Strategy was locally focussed and might differ from the overall control strategy of the Metropolitan Police.

The Committee also requested data on recruitment under Section 92 agreements and resource allocations across the Borough as at end of March 2012. The Committee also asked to be advised of what resources there would be at the end of March 2012.

Action Borough Commander / Andy Bamber, Service Head, Community Safety.

The Chair thanked the Borough Commander for his account and information provided.

RESOLVED

That the verbal report and presentation be noted.

6.2 Presentation from Transport for London

The Chair welcomed Peter Hewitt of Transport for London (TfL) who had been invited to speak to the Committee on traffic and parking matters during the Olympics and Margaret Cooper, Section Head -Transportation & Highways. Mr Hewitt gave a presentation on areas of focus in regard to transport during the Olympics in terms of congestion / traffic flow, parking and public transport.

Concerning the impacts of "Live Site" events at Victoria Park, TfL had focussed on the routing of spectators to and from the site to ensure that there were no impacts on the Olympic route network. A safety advisor had been involved in travel planning and rail transport would be increased during the games.

Concerning the continued operation of the transport network during the Olympics, TfL had been empowered to link up traffic control junctions to enable access to the Olympic route network to be regulated and controlled and assist dispersal in the event of an incident. In addition, parking strategies

had been developed to enable buses to park at day centres to reduce congestion and service planning for deliveries so that there were no impacts on the Olympic route network.

Concerning impact of the Olympics on local and emergency services, the Committee was informed that some roads would remain solely for local use and some lanes were designated for Olympic use. In all cases, TfL had sought to impose the fewest possible restrictions.

A dedicated phone line would be available to deal with highways issues during the games.

A parking issue was raised in Bethnal Green South in that there was no controlled parking at weekends at Stepney Green and Whitechapel Tube Stations and this might cause issues during the games in regard to parking near the tube stations. The Section Head -Transportation & Highways agreed to investigate this further.

An issue was raised regarding traffic flow in the lower part of Cambridge Heath Road / A12 route. Mr Hewitt agreed to investigate this further.

The Chair thanked Mr Hewitt for his presentation and agreed that the matters raised would be addressed through Highways and TfL.

RESOLVED

That the presentation be noted

6.3 Strategic Performance and Corporate Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Q3 2011/12 (Month 9)

Peter Hayday Service Head, Financial Services, Risk and Accountability and Kevin Kewin Service Manager, Strategy Policy & Performance, presented the report circulated at agenda item 6.3. The Committee was informed that financial performance in the quarter had been consistent and that targets were projected to be delivered. £4.3M had been received for the new homes bonus and had been vired to Development and Renewal which would make a contribution to reserves to support the decent homes programme.

In response to Members' questions the following information was given:

The £0.3M Children Schools and Families funding gap had been monitored in the past two quarters and steps were in hand to manage the risk. At present it was expected that targets would be delivered.

It was noted that a borough school had gone into special measures but it was expected that costs would remain contained within DSG.

Concerning continued Social Care funding, the Committee was informed that a proportion of £3.7M given through a S.256 agreement with the PCT remained unspent and was being held to deliver outcomes. In addition £800,000 had been given for winter pressures and Government had indicated that this would continue in 2012/13.

Graffiti removal performance was monitored through an independent audit rather than by customer satisfaction survey.

Of the 22% strategic measures below minimum expectation, there were three areas of performance risk; these were serious acquisitive crime, serious violent crime and employment rate. The Committee queried the reallocation of funds away from employment initiatives, which had been agreed during the budget setting process, in the face of poor performance on employment rate. It was agreed that this would be investigated and an answer circulated after the meeting.

Action Peter Hayday Service Head, Financial Services, Risk and Accountability

The Committee requested an age breakdown of the employment rate data

Action Kevin Kewin Service Manager, Strategy Policy & Performance

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

6.4 Review of Health Scrutiny Panel Consultation Events

Councillor Saunders, Chair of Health Scrutiny Panel presented the report circulated at agenda item 6.4. Councillor Saunders requested that the Committee endorse that the report be referred to Cabinet for the following clarifications and discussions: how the partnership model would operate, how consultation would be addressed in future and how future local engagement would be undertaken.

RESOLVED

That the report be endorsed and referred to Cabinet.

7. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS

Councillor Zenith Rahman reported that a challenge session was scheduled for 29 March 2012.

Councillor Jackson reported that she had investigated the Council referral concerning the Bancroft Library and would report her findings at a future meeting.

Councillor Whitelock reported that the Review of Children's Centres was in progress and was expected to conclude in April 2012.

Councillor Saunders reported that a mapping exercise had been undertaken to explore how scoping healthcare could be influenced.

Councillor Islam reported that the Review of Resources had been scoped and a programme of interviews would be undertaken.

Councillor Archer reported that he was pursuing detailed information on costs of East End Life publication through the Assistant Chief Executive, Legal Services.

RESOLVED

That the verbal updates be noted.

8. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF SECTION ONE (UNRESTRICTED) CABINET PAPERS

8.1 Section 1 Pre-Decision Questions be Submitted to Cabinet on 14th March

The Chair requested that any written questions be submitted by 9 March 2012.

8.2 Mayoral Decisions

The Chair noted the publication of Mayors Executive Decision: "Changes to the Memorandum and Articles of Tower Hamlets Homes" (Mayor's Decision 9th February 2012, Log No. 015) and advised that the decision had been implemented.

RESOLVED

That the verbal updates be noted.

9. ANY OTHER SECTION ONE (UNRESTRICTED) BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 9.30 p.m.

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