

Meeting of the

# OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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Tuesday, 1 October 2013 at 7.00 p.m.

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## AGENDA

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## VENUE

Room C1, 1st Floor, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5  
Clove Crescent, London, E14 2BG

Members:	Deputies (if any):
<b>Chair: Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman</b>	
<b>Vice-Chair: Councillor Rachael Saunders, (Scrutiny Lead, Adults Health &amp; Wellbeing)</b>	
<b>Councillor Stephanie Eaton, (Scrutiny Lead, Resources)</b>	Councillor Tim Archer, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor David Snowdon)
<b>Councillor Fozol Miah</b>	Councillor Khaled Uddin Ahmed, (Designated Deputy representing Councillors Motin Uz-Zaman, Rachael Saunders, Helal Uddin, Abdal Ullah and Amy Whitelock)
<b>Councillor Amy Whitelock, (Scrutiny Lead, Children, Schools &amp; Families)</b>	Councillor Harun Miah, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor Fozol Miah)
<b>Councillor Helal Uddin, (Scrutiny Lead, Communities, Localities &amp; Culture)</b>	Councillor Peter Golds, (Designated Deputy representing Councillor David Snowdon)
<b>Councillor Abdal Ullah, (Scrutiny Lead, Development &amp; Renewal)</b>	Councillor Helal Abbas, (Designated Deputy representing Councillors Motin Uz-Zaman, Rachael Saunders, Helal Uddin, Abdal Ullah and Amy Whitelock)
<b>Councillor David Snowdon, (Scrutiny Lead, Chief Executive's)</b>	Councillor Judith Gardiner, (Designated Deputy representing Councillors Motin Uz-Zaman, Rachael Saunders, Helal Uddin, Abdal Ullah and Amy Whitelock)
<b>1 Vacancy</b>	

[Note: The quorum for this body is 3 voting Members].

**Co-opted Members:**

Memory Kampiyawo	- (Parent Governor Representative)
Nozrul Mustafa	- (Parent Governor Representative)
Rev James Olanipekun	- (Parent Governor Representative)
Mr Mushfique Uddin	- (Muslim Community Representative)
Dr Phillip Rice	- (Church of England Diocese Representative)
1 Vacancy	- (Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster Representative)

**Committee Services Contact:**

Angus Taylor, Democratic Services,

Tel: 020 7364 4333 E-mail: [angus.taylor@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:angus.taylor@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

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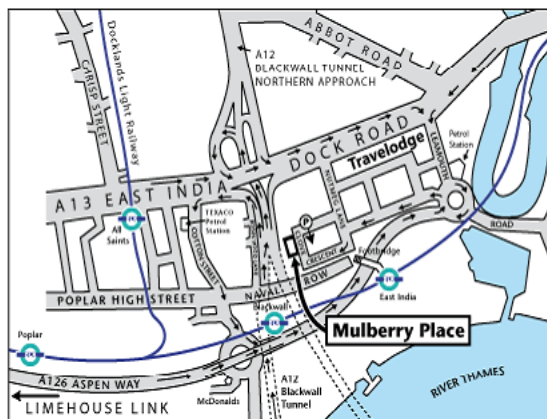
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**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**  
**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, 1 October 2013**

**7.00 p.m.**

**SECTION ONE**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive any apologies for absence.

	<b>PAGE NUMBER</b>	<b>WARDS</b>
<b>2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST</b>	<b>1 - 4</b>	

To note any declarations of interest made by Members, including those restricting Members from voting on the questions detailed in Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992. See attached note from the Monitoring Officer.

<b>3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES</b>	<b>5 - 20</b>	
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To confirm as a correct record of the proceedings the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

**4. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS**

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

**5. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT - EDUCATION, SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING DIRECTORATE**

To receive an oral presentation from Councillor Oliur Rahman, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Councillor Abdul Asad, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, with a focus on early education provision for two year olds.

**6. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT - MAYOR**

To receive an oral presentation from Mayor Lutfur Rahman.

	<b>PAGE NUMBER</b>	<b>WARDS</b>
<p><b>7. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'</b></p> <p>Whether any decisions of the Mayor in Cabinet (31<sup>st</sup> July 2013) in respect of unrestricted reports on the agenda were 'Called In' will be notified at the meeting.</p> <p>Whether any recent unrestricted decisions of the Mayor outside Cabinet, taken under executive powers, were "Called In" will be notified at the meeting.</p>		
<p><b>8. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION</b></p>		
<p><b>8 .1 Electoral Matters Update (To Follow)</b></p> <p>To consider and comment on the information provided in the report.</p>		<b>All Wards</b>
<p><b>8 .2 Children's Centre Scrutiny Review Update</b></p> <p>To consider a progress report on implementation of the Children's Centres Scrutiny Review recommendations and whether further scrutiny is required or further progress monitoring.</p>	<b>21 - 60</b>	<b>All Wards</b>
<p><b>9. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS</b></p> <p>To receive an oral update from each of the Scrutiny Lead Members.</p>		
<p><b>10. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF UNRESTRICTED CABINET PAPERS</b></p> <p>To determine a process for agreement of pre-decision scrutiny questions/comments to be presented to Cabinet on 8<sup>th</sup> October, as on this occasion the agenda for the Cabinet meeting will not be published and available for pre-scrutiny until shortly before the OSC meeting.</p>		

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

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

**11.1 References from full Council 18 September 2013**

**All Wards**

To consider the request of the full Council, held on 18 September, for inclusion of items in the OSC Work Programme as below: -

- Watts Grove Depot Project & financial mechanisms for Dame Colet House & Poplar Baths projects
- Executive Mayor's Car

**12. 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**

**13. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

Nil items.

**14. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS 'CALLED IN'**

There were no decisions of the Mayor in Cabinet (31<sup>st</sup> July 2013) in respect of exempt/ confidential reports on the agenda, and therefore none eligible for 'Call In'.

Whether any recent exempt/ confidential decisions of the Mayor outside Cabinet, taken under executive powers, were "Called In" will be notified at the meeting.

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

To determine a process for agreement of pre-decision scrutiny questions/comments to be presented to Cabinet on 8<sup>th</sup> October, as on this occasion the agenda for the Cabinet meeting will not be published and available for pre-scrutiny until shortly before the OSC meeting.

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

To consider any other exempt/ confidential business that the Chair considers to be urgent.

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# Agenda Item 2

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS - NOTE FROM THE MONITORING OFFICER**

This note is for guidance only. For further details please consult the Members' Code of Conduct at Part 5.1 of the Council's Constitution.

Please note that the question of whether a Member has an interest in any matter, and whether or not that interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, is for that Member to decide. Advice is available from officers as listed below but they cannot make the decision for the Member. If in doubt as to the nature of an interest it is advisable to seek advice **prior** to attending a meeting.

### **Interests and Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs)**

You have an interest in any business of the authority where that business relates to or is likely to affect any of the persons, bodies or matters listed in section 4.1 (a) of the Code of Conduct; and might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial position of yourself, a member of your family or a person with whom you have a close association, to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward affected.

You must notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of any such interest, for inclusion in the Register of Members' Interests which is available for public inspection and on the Council's Website.

Once you have recorded an interest in the Register, you are not then required to declare that interest at each meeting where the business is discussed, unless the interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI).

A DPI is defined in Regulations as a pecuniary interest of any of the descriptions listed at **Appendix A** overleaf. Please note that a Member's DPIs include his/her own relevant interests and also those of his/her spouse or civil partner; or a person with whom the Member is living as husband and wife; or a person with whom the Member is living as if they were civil partners; if the Member is aware that that other person has the interest.

### **Effect of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest on participation at meetings**

Where you have a DPI in any business of the Council you must, unless you have obtained a dispensation from the authority's Monitoring Officer following consideration by the Dispensations Sub-Committee of the Standards Advisory Committee:-

- not seek to improperly influence a decision about that business; and
- not exercise executive functions in relation to that business.

If you are present at a meeting where that business is discussed, you must:-

- Disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of the interest at the start of the meeting or when the interest becomes apparent, if later; and
- Leave the room (including any public viewing area) for the duration of consideration and decision on the item and not seek to influence the debate or decision

When declaring a DPI, Members should specify the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which the interest relates. This procedure is designed to assist the public's understanding of the meeting and to enable a full record to be made in the minutes of the meeting.

Where you have a DPI in any business of the authority which is not included in the Member's register of interests and you attend a meeting of the authority at which the business is considered, in addition to disclosing the interest to that meeting, you must also within 28 days notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest for inclusion in the Register.

**Further advice**

For further advice please contact:-

Isabella Freeman, Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services), 020 7364 4801; or  
John Williams, Service Head, Democratic Services, 020 7364 4204

## 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	<p>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.</p> <p>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.</p>
Contracts	<p>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—</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
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	<p>Any tenancy where (to the Member's knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the Member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(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.</p>

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**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2013**

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

**Members Present:**

Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman (Chair)  
Councillor Stephanie Eaton  
Councillor Rachael Saunders (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor David Snowdon  
Councillor Helal Uddin  
Councillor Abdal Ullah

Councillor Judith Gardiner

**Co-opted Members Present:**

Memory Kampiyawo – (Parent Governor Representative)  
Nozrul Mustafa – (Parent Governor Representative)  
Rev James Olanipekun – (Parent Governor Representative)  
Dr Phillip Rice – (Church of England Diocese Representative)

**Other Councillors Present:**

Councillor Kabir Ahmed –  
Councillor Ohid Ahmed – (Deputy Mayor)  
Councillor Alibor Choudhury – (Cabinet Member for Resources)

**Guests Present:**

Dave Stringer – (Borough Commander Metropolitan Police)

**Officers Present:**

Andy Bamber – (Service Head Safer Communities, Crime Reduction Services, Communities, Localities and Culture)  
Emily Fieran-Reed – (Head of Community Safety Partnership, Domestic Violence & Hate Crime, Community Safety, Communities Localities and Culture)

David Galpin	– (Head of Legal Services (Community), Legal Services, Chief Executive's)
John Hoang	– (Communication Team Leader, Communications, Chief Executive's)
Frances Jones	– (Service Manager One Tower Hamlets, Corporate Strategy and Equality Service, Chief Executive's)
Shamima Khatun	– (Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer, Corporate Strategy and Equality Service, Chief Executive's)
Louise Russell	– (Service Head Corporate Strategy and Equality, Chief Executive's)
Paul Thorogood	– (Interim Service Head Finance and HR Development, Resources)
David Tolley	– (Head of Consumer and Business Regulations Service, Safer Communities, Communities Localities & Culture)
Angus Taylor	– (Principal Committee Officer, Democratic Services, Chief Executive's)

### **COUNCILLOR MOTIN UZ ZAMAN (CHAIR) IN THE CHAIR**

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

- Councillor Amy Whitelock, Scrutiny Lead for Children & Adults, for whom Councillor Judith Gardiner was deputising.
- Mayor Lutfur Rahman.
- Stephen Halsey, Head of Paid Service and Corporate Director Communities Localities and Culture, for whom Andy Bamber, Service Head Safer Communities, Communities Localities and Culture, was deputising.
- Apologies for lateness were received on behalf of Councillor Gardiner.

**Noted**

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST**

Councillor Gardiner declared a personal and professional interest in agenda item 8.1 Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-16 as the content/ recommendations in the report were pertinent to the future of the Probation Service in Tower Hamlets and Councillor Gardiner was a serving Probation Officer.

**Action by:**

Angus Taylor (Principal Committee Officer, Democratic Services, CE's)

### 3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

#### Matter Arising

The Chair:

- Informed OSC members that at the last OSC meeting Councillor Rachael Saunders, Vice-Chair OSC (in the Chair), had indicated that he would be inviting the Mayor to attend the next OSC meeting [10<sup>th</sup> September], for one of a series of 'spotlight sessions' during the year. This spotlight was intended to focus on the challenges and opportunities the Mayor foresaw for delivery of improved quality of life for local people in the year ahead, and consequently with the passage of time the spotlight theme would be less meaningful. Councillor Rachael Saunders, Vice-Chair (representing the Chair) had extended the invitation at Cabinet on 31<sup>st</sup> July and the Chair had formalised this in a subsequent letter. Unfortunately the Mayor had declined the invitation, because of prior commitments and this was the third such declined invitation. The Mayor had indicated he was available on several future dates, but these were not scheduled OSC meeting dates and the Chair considered that the Mayor should attend one of the latter. Therefore, with OSC agreement, he intended to invite the Mayor to the next OSC meeting [1<sup>st</sup> October} for the spotlight session, but also to request details of the Mayor's diary commitments on future scheduled OSC meeting dates, should he not be able to attend the meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> October. This was in order to identify a meeting he could attend, and thereby prevent non-attendance and disrespecting of the OSC through this.

The Chair **Moved** and it was:-

#### Resolved

That the unrestricted minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2013, be agreed as a correct record of the proceedings, and the Chair be authorised to sign them accordingly.

#### Action by:

Angus Taylor (Principal Committee Officer, Democratic Services, CE's)

### 4. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

### 5. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT - COMMUNITY SAFETY

#### 8.1 Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-16

#### Variation of Order of Business

At this juncture the Chair informed OSC members that he considered it appropriate that the Order of Business be varied so that agenda item 8.1 "Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-16" be considered in conjunction with agenda item 5 "Scrutiny Spotlight - Community Safety" because the content of the items was thematically linked. Accordingly the Chair **Moved** and it was:-

### **Resolved**

1. That the order of business be varied to allow for Agenda Items 5 and 8.1 below be considered in conjunction:
  - Agenda item 5. Scrutiny Spotlight - Community Safety
  - Agenda item 8.1 Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-16
2. Subsequently return to the order of business detailed in the agenda.

### ***Special Circumstances and Reasons for Urgency***

The Chair informed members of the Committee that the special circumstances and reasons for urgency associated with the proposals were detailed on the front page of the report and that the Constitution required that he agree these before OSC consideration of the report could take place. The Chair subsequently agreed the special circumstances and reasons for urgency as set out on the front page of the report and also set out below:

The Community Safety Plan is a statutory document that the Council is obliged to deliver at the earliest available opportunity. A request was made by the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny to clarify the public consultation section of the plan; this was done by amending the appendices requiring additional legal input. Deferment would adversely impact on the Council's ability to engage with the Partnership to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

### **Declaration of Interest**

Councillor Gardiner declared a personal and professional interest in agenda item 8.1 Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-16 as the content/recommendations in the report were pertinent to the future of the Probation Service in Tower Hamlets and Councillor Gardiner was a serving Probation Officer.

Mr Dave Stringer, Borough Commander Metropolitan Police, gave a detailed presentation on performance relating to crime/ community safety and associated challenges/opportunities in Tower Hamlets as follows:

- Providing a comparative analysis (with neighbouring boroughs) of levels of reported crime summarised in a **Tabled** colour version of the chart set out at Appendix 5 to the report (pg 114 agenda pack). Also highlighting the detection level for reported crime (26% of overall crime solved over the past 12 months, one of the highest rates in London).
- Highlighting challenges and opportunities relating to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB):-



- ASB levels were second-highest of London boroughs and it formed a very large proportion of matters that concerned the community.
- High levels around nuisance, alcohol / drugs and prostitution (latter numbers small and limited to certain areas but never the less a problem). A vice unit has recently been established and vice crime was now starting to fall.
- Acknowledged linkage of domestic abuse and prostitution/ other criminality & social issues were being addressed through a strategy to tackle violence against women & girls. The good practice of the Partnership in addressing domestic abuse was now being replicated to tackle prostitution, and other councils were now learning from LBTH.
- There were excellent drug and alcohol treatment facilities in LBTH, but an ancillary consequence was that substance misusers came to the borough for treatment and tended to stay along with some of the associated ASB; and this contributed greatly to the increased levels of alcohol related crime in LBTH and Hackney unlike other LBs. The Partnership was now undertaking consultation on a cap on the number of premises licenced to sell alcohol, which should help mitigate alcohol related ASB.
- There had also been a huge increase in social life and establishments in the Shoreditch area, particularly amongst young people, with associated alcohol and drug related ASB. This was being tackled strategically with Hackney and Islington councils. Partnership investment in a rapid response team had been extremely beneficial, allowing intensive levels of focused intervention/ enforcement. Youth outreach work was also helpful.
- Opportunities included: innovative youth outreach work eg Schools Watch initiative. Encouraging the Council to consider a more robust licensing regime with a saturation policy dimension (which would also assist with ASB issues in the Shoreditch area). Also supporting the work being undertaken on domestic abuse and prostitution. There had been a 10% decrease in the latter in the previous year, but more could be done given the level had also fallen in other LBs which indicated a general downward trend.
- Highlighting challenges and opportunities relating to property related crime:-
  - A challenging area in the Borough. Historically comparatively low, but over past 4 years had risen, particularly robbery. This impacted greatly on individuals, especially if knives were used, and also contributed to inter-group tensions and retaliatory violence. Much of this crime was driven by residents with a drug misuse habit.
  - If examined over the last 12 months levels of property crime were still rising, however they had dropped over the last 6 months particularly in Mile End. This was due greatly to targeted intervention through operation Carbon, the largest single day drug operation undertaken by the Metropolitan Police (MP), with approximately 80 arrests. The Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Programme (team recently co-located in Bethnal Green), a Partnership initiative working with drug misusers in prison and in the community aiming to reduce reoffending, had also contributed.

- The supply of drugs via motor vehicles made the police work more complex, but more extensive use of powers under S.59 of the Act would help mitigate this.
- Outlining improved performance/ direction of travel on victim satisfaction and overall public confidence in the police, as shown in a recent survey which had been academically benchmarked and which the Metropolitan Police (MP) considered to be technically robust. These improvements welcomed by the OSC.

Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Deputy Mayor, introduced, and highlighted key points, in the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-16, which set out:-

- The statutory duty to produce a Community Safety Partnership Plan (CSPP) and required content thereof.
- The Strategic Framework within Tower Hamlets and congruence of the proposed CSPP with this.
- Highlights of partnership performance during 2012/13, methodology and the findings of the Partnership's Strategic Assessment 2012, which included performance trends over 2009-12.
- Outcome of public consultation identifying public's crime priorities for the CSPP.

Andy Bamber, Service Head Safer Communities, and Emily Fieran-Reed Head of Community Safety Partnership, Domestic Violence and Hate Crime, were also in attendance for this item.

Councillor Ahmed and Mr Bamber emphasised that the MP were primarily responsible for tackling crime, such as burglary and robbery, with performance targets for crime set by Scotland Yard; and the role of the Council was to prioritise ways to support them in their work. The Council's investment in community safety programmes was subsequently highlighted as follows:-

- £1 million invested in programme to treat substance misuse in addition to the IOM programme aimed at breaking the drug/ crime reoffending cycle. The DIP and DAAT also supported the mitigation of issues here and together had £8 million funding.
- Resourcing the 'Dealer a Day', programme, which had exceeded targets the previous year and was on target to achieve objectives this year.
- Previous investment/ support of Partnership Task Force 1 and had now investment/ support of PTF2 (currently being recruited to).
- The Council had one of the most comprehensive CCTV operations in the country:- 24/7 with operators who were proactive. This had been successful in supporting the MP in tackling crime, with the Control Room resulting in 60-70 arrests due to the unit directing police to crime scene.
- LBTH provided funding for an additional 34 police officers whose activities were primarily focused on ASB and drugs.
- Tackling Domestic Violence was being supported through the Sanctuary Programme and also a new strategic approach to violence against women and girls particularly through the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. The measure of good practice and success was the number of victims coming forward for help.

- Partnership working was successful eg via Community Safety Partnership Board, and this was reflected in the successful response to the recent EDL demonstration in Tower Hamlets. Day to day success targeting the lower end of ASB problems was greatly due to new THEOs, with over 1,000 fines issued by them. However success to date needed building upon.

A comprehensive discussion followed, which focused on the following points:

- Clarification/ assurance sought and given as to action that could be taken/ improved to ensure English Defence League demonstrations did not become a regular occurrence in LBTH. *Contributory elements to the successful MP operation were outlined and these would be key going forward: -*
  - *CCTV/ number plate recognition technology*
  - *Existing relationship/ mechanisms which had built community capacity to deal with such issues eg No Place for Hate Forum*
  - *Rapid Response Team a wonderful resource*
  - *Good communications*
  - *Demonstration of MP commitment with numbers present, balanced with trust in the judgement of the Police Commissioner to adhere to legal requirements of the Law on allowing democratic protest provided this did not infringe right to protect the community from hate crime.*
- Discussion on increasing victim confidence to report crime without fear and appropriate methods to seek the views of residents (consideration media walkabouts not helpful to this). *The Administration considered the recent walkabout had been helpful to ascertain resident views on community safety. Previous administrations had media initiatives for crime and the current Administration was doing the same, and the Borough Commander was working with the executive Mayor elected by local residents as would be expected. The Borough Commander indicated that cameras had not prevented residents relating their experience of ASB to him. OSC noted the commitment of the Borough Commander to door to door enquiries to ascertain resident views eg the 'Adopt a Block' initiative in Bow, and his emphasis on the importance of good communication on police activities with the Community. Also noted the increase in Neighbourhood Watch schemes and the examination of a 'Crime-stoppers' scheme.*
- The Chair emphasised the importance of politicians of all parties ensuring in the lead up to local elections in 2014 that external partners such as the Borough Commander and Faith Leaders were not exposed to political crossfire.
- Clarification/ assurance sought and given as to the proactive methods of engagement planned in the CSPP to prevent crime and ASB. *These were outlined in Section 4.9 of the CSPP and had been outlined by Councillor Ahmed in his presentation, and included Youth Crime prevention initiatives a fresh strategy to deal with domestic abuse of women and girls and initiatives to deal with alcohol and drugs related ASB.*
- Clarification/ assurance sought and given on the recent restructure of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs), its impact on officer numbers and

delivery on assurances of greater police visibility. *OSC noted the MP commitment to increasing the visibility of the newly formed teams and also assurance that there were more officers working in them.*

- Clarification/ assurance sought and on the continuity of funding for police/ community safety activity and measurable outcomes of this. One 3 year funding stream was at year 1 another funding stream ended in 2013/14. OSC requested appraisal on developments. ***Information on funding/ numbers of police officers in the borough (both by the MP and the Council) to be provided.***
- Clarification/ assurance sought as to the nature/ function of 'Airspace', referred to in the CSPP. *This was a management tool to deal with ASB. It provided a mechanism to facilitate SNT access to ASB calls and for others to access SNTs. A written answer could be provided to Councillor Eaton.*
- Clarification sought as to the rationale for linkage of arson and ASB in the CSPP.
- Clarification/ assurance sought and given as to the role/ stance of the MP in relation to Registered Social Landlord (RSL) use of social media to monitor/ report on the activities of young people and their dispersal and the dispersal action itself. *The police had stronger powers for designated Dispersal Zones, however it was inappropriate and unlawful for young people to be moved on if they had not committed crime or ASB. The Borough Commander considered that RSLs, local Ward panels and the MP needed to liaise and coordinate in such circumstances. It was appropriate for the MP to engage with young people and if without result to approach their parents with resort to ASB contracts or tenancy action a last resort.*
- Clarification sought and given as to whether the reported reduction in Motor Vehicle crime and rise in theft against people was linked and whether there was displacement? *Vehicles were generally more secure although obvious display of easily resaleable Sat Nav units (accounting for most remaining motor vehicle crime). Large concerts in the borough had led to significant increases in theft of mobile phones (accounting for most of the increase in theft against people) however a new approach had reduced this.*
- Clarification sought and given as to whether there were career opportunities for Tower Hamlets Enforcement Officers (THEOs) in the Metropolitan Police (MP). *THEOs were trained to an accredited standard and this would place them in a good position if applying for an MP position. However there was no automatic progression scheme from one organisation to the other, the individual would have to apply for a position and undergo the MP recruitment process.*
- Clarification/ assurance sought and given on recent public perception that CCTV was being used to generate parking enforcement income rather than being used solely for community safety. *There were 2 Council run CCTV units located separately and they did not share information/ film footage. The community safety CCTV did not engage in any parking enforcement activity.*

- Clarification/ assurance sought on the performance of the Dealer a Day initiative: what action being taken to strengthen initiative and what analysis had been undertaken of its impact on removal of dealers from streets? *Mayor Rahman was proud of an initiative he had introduced when Leader of the Council, and which was on track to meet targets. A performance breakdown (table of arrests convictions and offences) was requested.*
- Clarification/ assurance sought and given as to the inclusion of a 'Restorative Justice' (RJ) element in the CSPP, which was acknowledged to be an effective way of reducing adult re-offending. *RJ was used heavily in youth offending cases, and Officers considered that the Council and Partnership organisations, such as RSLs and the MP, were effectively equipped to use RJ where it was appropriate to do so, and this would continue.*
- Clarification/ assurance sought and given as to the risk and contingency planning undertaken to mitigate the impact of the Government proposal to privatise/ fragment the Probation Service, including maintaining the current approach to community cohesion. *The Partnership had successfully worked to reduce offending eg through the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Programme. Officers were also now represented on the Ministry of Justice Advisory Group on the local implications of break up of the Probation Service, which would relay the preferred outcomes of local councils. The Partnership was endeavouring to use this influence to ensure contractors met local needs.*
- Clarification sought as to outcome of planning application appeal relating to a Skyline facility on the Isle of Dogs. Also whether the future of this service was secure. *There was no intention to reduce the DIP or DAT service, as Public Health funding had been secured for it. Additionally re-engineering of contracts should result in more control over service delivery in this area. As the Skyline application was not part of the CSSP a written answer would be provided.*
- Consideration that the CSPP could be strengthened with additional clarity as to mechanisms by which local residents in any Ward could access SNTs, influence their priorities to reflect local aspirations and ensure these were delivered, as they had previously; as currently there appeared to be a new disconnect. *The Borough Commander responded that local voice in SNTs was important and the Adopt a Block initiative would help reinforce this at the grass roots level. Local Ward panels lacked an element of engagement with young people and a new initiative of a student panel setting the priority for a local police officer was being piloted.* The Chair considered that the Adopt a Block initiative welcomed but emphasised the importance of transparency and monitoring, also that councillors were able to provide the MP eyes and ears.
- Clarification/ assurance sought on RSL/ SNT linkage/ engagement and the importance of this given the number of events/ initiatives run by them. There was a current perception of disconnect and the Borough Commander was asked to make enquiries of MP sergeants as to invitations/ attendance.

- Clarification/ assurance sought on inclusion in CSPP of mechanisms/ activity / outreach to ensure non-threatening access to advice and services against domestic violence. *A significant level of dedicated staffing was commissioned through officers in Victim Support and a one stop shop approach to obtaining advice and services was facilitated. Uniformed officers took abusers away and the victim was then dealt with by specialist MP officers/ victim support staff. The OSC welcomed the work in this area and the positive progress made at reducing the time it took victims to report abuse.*
- Some discussion took place on appropriate strategies for youth education and engagement against crime. *A programme of education in primary schools was being undertaken and it was hoped to extend this to secondary schools.*
- Clarification/ assurance sought as to ASB relating to late night music – was this increasing? was it felt appropriate to engage with perpetrators? *This was a significant issue accounting for 60 to 70 per cent of ASB calls. A positive response was normally elicited by uniformed officers and the additional THEOs were undertaking this and issuing noise abatement notices where necessary.*

The Chair thanked Dave Stringer, Borough Commander, and Councillor Ohid Ahmed for changing their arrangements at short notice to attend the spotlight session and for assisting the OSC with its consideration of the CSPP. He then **Moved** and it was:-

### **Resolved**

1. That the information given in the scrutiny spotlight presentations of the Borough Commander and the Deputy Mayor, be noted;
2. That the contents of the report, and proposed Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-16 and priorities therein, be noted; and
3. That the advice/comments of the OSC in respect of the proposed Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-16, which forms part of the Council's Policy Framework, be presented to the Mayor in Cabinet on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2013 to inform his decision making on this item of business.

### **Action by:**

Andy Bamber (Service Head Safer Communities - CLC)

Emily Fieran-Reed (Head of Community Safety Partnership Domestic Violence & Hate Crime CLC)

Colin Hewitt (Community Safety Partnership Officer)

Dave Stringer (Borough Commander Metropolitan Police)

## **6. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT - MAYOR**

The Scrutiny Spotlight did not proceed as Mayor Lutfur Rahman had been unable to attend.

## **7. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'**

The clerk informed OSC members that:

- No unrestricted decisions of the Mayor in Cabinet on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2013 had been "Called In".
- No recent unrestricted decisions of the Mayor outside Cabinet, taken under executive powers, had been "Called In".

## **8. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **8.1 Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-16**

Please note that the order of business was varied by resolution of the OSC earlier in the proceedings in order to allow this item of business to be considered in conjunction with the first item of substantive business: agenda item 5 "Scrutiny Spotlight – Community Safety". For ease of reference OSC deliberations in respect of the CSSP 2013-16, and subsequent decisions taken, are recorded in the minutes at agenda item 5 and not set out below in the order detailed in the agenda.

### **8.2 Licensing Policy Review**

David Tolley, Head of Consumer and Business Regulations, introduced, and highlighted key points, in the report which set out:-

- The statutory requirement for the Council to review and adopt its Statement of Licensing Policy' at this point, and the purpose of the Statement.
- Stakeholder consultation undertaken to date and inclusion of potential revisions reflecting this. Consultation with OSC under the Budget and Policy Framework contained in the Council's Constitution, was an element of this.
- The background and outcome of consultation on the proposed 'No Casino' resolution, which would amend the Council's Gambling Policy, a Budget and Policy Framework matter requiring consultation with OSC.

Andy Bamber, Service Head Safer Communities, was also in attendance for this item.

The following points were highlighted by David Tolley:

- Statutory changes to the Licensing Policy summarized at Appendix 4.
- Other key proposals for consultation:-
  - Late night levy and the associated allocation of income generated between the Metropolitan Police and the Council (ratio of 70% to 30%)
  - Early morning restriction orders which would enable the Council to limit the sale of alcohol from midnight in some areas.

A discussion followed which focused on clarification being sought and given on the following points:-

- Proposals welcomed by Councillor Snowdon, a member of the Licensing Committee, including use of Ultra Violet pens to check duty paid stamps.
- Acknowledging the difficulty of imposing conditions on establishments selling single items of alcohol under the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003, clarification/ assurance sought and given on proposals / plans to impose conditions under Public Health (PH) provisions, now the Council was a PH authority. *Officers had examined this, and although the Council could make comments in its PH role such circumstances were not covered by the 4 Objectives of the Licensing Act 2003. The Council would endeavour to address the issue through pricing via a voluntary Community Alcohol Partnership Scheme and try to roll this out in key areas eg vicinity of hostels. The Licensing Committee could also address by adding conditions when granting applications for a license to sell alcohol.*
- Clarification/ assurance sought and given that the proposed Licensing Policy had not been skewed by the resident led organisations consulted, as listed at Appendix1 (32 being boroughwide, 15 being from Brick Lane, with only 5 from other areas). Comment that concern had been expressed previously over Metropolitan Police weighting of resources to the Brick Lane area, with residents elsewhere not receiving the attention they were due. *Wide consultation had been undertaken including all license holders, publicity in East End Life and responses facilitated through online submission.*
- Given the level of campaigning/ lobbying by the local community for a policy on sex entertainment venues (SEVs) little appeared to have been done to address this. There appeared to be a holding policy where restrictions were imposed on such venues but this implied a right for them to exist/ conduct business. Why had the Council not progressed a SEV Policy and why had it not invoked the additional powers under of closure and review provided under statute, as referred to at page 188 of the report? Officers had developed proposals for a SEV Policy and this would be considered by the Mayor in Cabinet on 11<sup>th</sup> September.
- Some concern expressed regarding the 'meeter and greeter' scheme proposed by businesses during consultation (referenced at pg 120 agenda pack), that introduction could conflict with the commitment made by the Council to reduce harassment by on street promoters (touts) and the bye law introduced to tackle this. *Assurance given of continued enforcement action on the bye law and such a scheme fell outside the scope of the Licensing Policy Statement. However engagement with local business to improve the current position would be beneficial.*

The Chair **Moved** and it was:-

### **Resolved**

1. That the contents of the report, and proposed Statement of Licensing Policy attached and 'No Casino' Resolution contained therein, be noted; and



2. That the advice/comments of the OSC in respect of the proposed:-
  - Statement of Licensing Policy
  - 'No Casino' resolution that would amend the Gambling Policy 2013, both of which form part of the Council's Policy Framework, be presented to the Mayor in Cabinet on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2013 to inform his decision making on this item of business.

**Action by:**

Andy Bamber (Service Head Safer Communities, CLC)

David Tolley (Head of Consumer and Business Regulations, Community Safety, CLC)

**8.3 Strategic Performance and Corporate Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Q1 2013/14 (Month 3)**

Councillor Alibor Choudhury, Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced, and highlighted key points, in the monitoring report which detailed the financial position of the Council at the end of Quarter 1 2013/14 compared to budget, and service performance against targets. Paul Thorogood, Interim Service Head Finance and Human Resources, and Louise Russell, Service Head Corporate Strategy and Equality, were also in attendance for this item.

A discussion followed which focused on the following point:-

- Council disposals were clearly a key way to generate income in the current environment of budgetary constraint and the OSC felt greater transparency was required in this area to facilitate scrutiny of the Council's approach to this. Accordingly OSC requested that a breakdown of all Council disposals (sale of assets), capital receipts accruing, and allocations thereof be provided to OSC members and included in future reports. **Paul Thorogood to provide in writing.**

The Chair **Moved** and it was:-

**Resolved**

1. That Quarter 1 performance for 2013/14 be noted; and
2. That the Council's financial position as detailed in section 3 and Appendices 1-4 of the report, be noted.

**Action by:**

Chris Holme, Acting Corporate Director Resources

Louise Russell, Service Head Corporate Strategy and Equalities

**9. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS**

*Scrutiny Lead Member Health – Cllr Saunders*

Reported that Barts and the London NHS Trust had attended the Health Scrutiny Panel and advised that they had voluntarily gone into a process of 'Financial Turn Around'. (FTA) The Trust remained in control of its finances, unlike other trusts where the Government had appointed independent administrators. The Trust had appointed financial consultants to assist it with the FTA process. However the Trust Board priorities were no longer change and development but identifying savings. This circumstance had been created by Government requirements for in year one off savings from the existing Budget and ongoing issues with a Private Finance Initiative. More work was required to identify and scrutinise the savings and there were concerns regarding false economies of freezing posts and filling these with temporary staff during the FTA process.

*Scrutiny Lead Member Communities, Localities and Culture – Cllr Helal Uddin*

Youth Provision, which had been returned in-house for a year was being examined and it was expected there would be a Challenge Session or Spotlight later in the year.

*Scrutiny Lead Member Resources – Cllr Eaton*

The support given to Council staff with autism and dyslexia was being examined.

The Chair **Moved** and it was:-

**Resolved**

That the verbal updates be noted.

**10. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF UNRESTRICTED CABINET PAPERS**

No pre-decision questions submitted to the Mayor in Cabinet [11 September 2013].

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

The Chair commented that the role/ function of Scrutiny was important and it was essential that OSC meetings were facilitated through appropriate provision of equipment, and the Executive was responsible for ensuring this. In this context the Chair noted that the microphones had not been working properly and this had disrupted the transaction of OSC business. Accordingly he requested that the Executive ensure that microphones fit for purpose were provided at the next and future OSC meetings as a matter of priority.

**Action by:**

Angus Taylor (Principal Committee Officer, Democratic Services, CE's)  
Jean Waterson (East India Dock Manager, Facilities Management)

**12. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The agenda circulated contained no exempt/ confidential business and there was therefore no requirement to exclude the press and public to allow for its consideration.

The meeting ended at 9.00 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman  
Overview & Scrutiny Committee

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# Agenda Item 8.2

<b>Committee:</b> Overview & Scrutiny	<b>Date:</b> 01/10/13	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>Agenda Item:</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Cllr Amy Whitelock, Chair of Working Group,  <b>Originating Officer(s):</b> Vicky Allen Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer		<b>Title:</b> Reviewing the impact of the Children's Centres restructure – report of the Scrutiny Working Group Progress Report  <b>Ward(s) affected:</b> All		

## 1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 A scrutiny report to review the impact of the Children's Centres restructure was taken to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in May 2012 and a six month update report on the progress of recommendations was reviewed in April 2013. At the April meeting, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested further information on several recommendations which had not been fully implemented.

## 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the report findings.

## 3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The "Reviewing the impact of the Children's Centres review scrutiny report" went to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in May 2012. It scrutinised the following perceptions for accuracy, given the lack of clear communications about the changes:
- That service provision has become patchy, geographically less accessible to users and offers a smaller range of services than before;
  - That the move to targeting the offer to more vulnerable families has led to a reduction in universal provision which has begun to impact on community cohesion in some areas;

- Whether a reduction in back office staff has resulted in frontline staff having to undertake administrative activities, and spending less time with service users as a consequence; and
  - That it is difficult for parents to become fully involved as key stakeholders in Children's Centres (eg. Parent Networks are not fully used).
- 3.2 Throughout the review it was found there was some truth to these perceptions, but the scrutiny review group welcomed the opportunity to hear from the service about how the changes were being communicated to service users and the staffing issues were being addressed. Their recommendations were aimed at addressing the outstanding issues. In following up on the review, members were particularly pleased to hear that some job descriptions had been upgraded to reflect the additional activities staff had taken on since the restructure.
- 3.3 The scrutiny review found that whilst some service users were unaware of the range of services available to them, in general they were very positive of the service provided and felt that their views were taken into consideration, as evidenced in the user satisfaction surveys undertaken by the services.
- 3.4 The report made 9 recommendations which were agreed by OSC. The body of this report outlines the progress against five recommendations where an update on further progress had been requested by OSC in at the April 2013 meeting.

#### **4. BODY OF REPORT**

- 4.1 **Recommendation 3:** The CSF Directorate to sustain and enhance the excellent service provision on offer by:
- Ensuring that there are no further cuts to funding for children's centres service
  - Considering how to increase the number of sessions which are both welcoming and suitable for parents with children of different ages
  - Publicising the services on offer in new Children's Centres which could alleviate the distance some families have to travel
- 4.2 **Recommendation 5:** The Learning and achievement Service to review job descriptions, job title and salary scale of the Office Assistants / receptionist posts, to ensure the grade is commensurate with the job activities and additional responsibilities, and recognises the front line nature of the job. Review the capacity across the service for 2012/13 and increase where necessary.
- 4.3 In response to the request from OSC for an update on service capacity in context of vacancy management savings, the service has responded that there continues to be no frontline service cuts to Children's Centres. However there are some vacancies that the service has been struggling to recruit to due to the suitability of candidates who have applied. These posts are being covered by agency staff - there currently is 14 agency staff that are covering maternity leave, sickness absence and vacant posts. The service would like to recruit beyond its current

structure for a data officer / office assistant position. However this has not happened because People Board has advised that it is not possible to recruit permanent positions funded by grant allocation.

- 4.4 **Recommendation 6:** Recognising the importance of robust data collection, the Learning and Achievement Service to undertake a business process improvement exercise with the aim of streamlining what data is captured and how collected, input and analysed.
- 4.5 OSC asked for an update on the service undertaking a business improvement exercise. This exercise had not been undertaken by the six month update report because the service was waiting the outcome of the Ofsted Inspection Framework in order to take these requirements into consideration. The service has advised that the Framework was published in March 2013.
- 4.6 Barking and Dagenham have been identified as employing good practice in capturing, input and analysis of data collected in Children's Centres. It is also a local authority with a high proportion of Children's Centres which receive 'outstanding' Ofsted outcomes. Two of the borough's Locality Leads are currently working with their equivalents in Barking and Dagenham, and will be implementing their findings during the course of the financial year.
- 4.7 **Recommendation 8:** Whilst recognising the importance of traditional methods of communication, and the cut in the advertising budget, the Learning and Achievement Service to improve and expand communications to parents by:
- Increasing the use of creative communications such as e-mail, text and social media as an efficient and cost effective way of communicating with parents.
  - Using Parent Forums to review both printed communications and that which is displayed within Children's Centres, in order to ensure they communicate clearly the entire offer to both children and parents, including adults' service and children's sessions for mixed ages.
  - Widening the reach of written publicity to include more venues such as doctor's surgeries, school noticeboards and chemists.
- 4.8 OSC asked for an update on the findings of the review being conducted with the Parents Forum on accessibility of information relating to the service. The service has reported that this is an on-going activity which has been embedded into the work of the individual Children's Centres Parent Forums by the way of a standing agenda item. Each Children's Centre hears the views of its Parent Forum with regard to communications and takes action where appropriate and representative. The annual user satisfaction survey is also used by service managers to understand satisfaction with communication methods. To ensure that the style and content of written communications are accessible, they are always checked by the Family Support Service prior to being sent.

- 4.9 There is a wide coverage of publicity relating to Children's Centres around the community, and where there is a need identified, publicity is sent to that venue. However there is no capacity within the service to regularly audit the publicity in the community. There continues to be a buy-in of the expertise of the Family Support Service and there is on-going work to find ways of aligning Forums with the Parent Council.
- 4.10 **Recommendation 9:** The Learning and Achievement Service to facilitate the engagement of a wide range of parents in governance by:
- Providing a programme of training for Community Development Workers and other staff as appropriate, to become capable and confident facilitators of Parents Forums who can recruit and support a range of parents to become involved.
  - Providing a programme of training and capacity-building for parents, including understanding of their role and responsibilities within the governance model, with a particular focus on those less likely to come forward for such positions.
  - Ensuring the Governance Model is user friendly and not unduly bureaucratic.
- 4.11 In response to the request by OSC for an update on the governance model for Children's Centres after one year of operation, the service has reported that this is secure in three of the four localities. There has been less progress in the North-West locality mainly due to long term sickness, however this work is now getting back on track.
- 4.12 Within this model, the service is looking at the make-up of Parent Forums and also an exit strategy for parents who have been actively engaged but whose children are about to leave the Children's Centre environment.
- 4.13 The service undertakes a Children's Centres partner visit programme, internally led with external support. These are similar to a mock Ofsted inspection focusing both on the quality of provision and the satisfaction and engagement of users. These reviews found the Children's Centres to be good / outstanding.

## **5. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

- 5.1 This report describes the progress with the recommendations of the review of the restructure of children's centres that was presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in May 2012.
- 5.2 The Council's funding from central government has been reduced since 2010-11 and will continue to reduce over the next five years as identified in the Council's Medium term Financial Plan (MTFP). This will therefore affect any recommendations agreed and any additional costs that arise from the recommendations must be contained within directorate revenue budgets, specifically: recommendations R3 further funding for Children's Services; R5 to fill vacant posts permanently in the service. Consequently, officers will be obliged



to seek the appropriate financial approval before further financial commitments are made.

## **6. CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL)**

- 6.1 The Council is required by section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 to have an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to have executive arrangements that ensure the committee has specified powers. Consistent with this obligation, Article 6 of the Council's Constitution provides that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants and may make reports and recommendations to the Full Council or the Executive in connection with the discharge of any functions. It is consistent with the Constitution and the statutory framework for the Executive to provide a response. It is reasonable for the Committee to be provided with updates on any agreed action plan.

## **7. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.1 Children's Centres play a key role in delivering the One Tower Hamlets principles because their core offer, as outlined by the government, is to improve outcomes for young children and their families, with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged families, in order to reduce inequalities in child development and school readiness. The value of children mixing with other from different backgrounds and communities is viewed as positive by service users.

## **8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

- 8.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the report.

## **9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no direct risk management implications arising from the report. Risks relating to the recommendations will be monitored through the council's corporate risk register and directorate risk registers. Risks are assessed for likelihood and impact, and will have responsible owners and programmes mitigating actions.

## **10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no direct implications of crime and disorder as a result of the recommendations of this review.

## **11. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT**

- 11.1 One of the objectives of the review was to test the claim that the reduction in back office staff had resulted in frontline staff having to undertake administrative activities, and spending less time with service users as a consequence.
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**Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)  
List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report**

Brief description of “background papers”	Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection.
<b>None</b>	<b>N/A</b>

**12. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Review and Action Plan

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<b>Committee/Meeting:</b> Cabinet	<b>Date:</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> December 2012	<b>Classification:</b> Unrestricted	<b>Report No:</b> CAB 53/123
<b>Report of:</b> Corporate Director: Isobel Cattermole <b>Originating officer(s)</b> Vicky Allen		<b>Title:</b> Reviewing the impact of the Children's Centres restructure – report of the Scrutiny Working Group <b>Wards Affected:</b> All wards	

<b>Lead Member</b>	Cllr Oliur Rahman, Lead Member for Children's Services
<b>Community Plan Theme</b>	A Great Place to Live
<b>Strategic Priority</b>	Improving educational aspiration and attainment

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report submits the report and action plan in response to the review recommendations of the Scrutiny Working Group on Reviewing the impact of the Children's Centres restructure.

2. **DECISIONS REQUIRED**

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:-

- 2.1 Consider this report of the scrutiny working group and agree the action plan in response to the review recommendations.

3. **REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS**

- 3.1 Significant reductions in both revenue and capital budgets has meant that the council has had to seek savings from every part of the organisation. Due to the speed of the change, the national climate of service cuts, and the difficulty many Members and parents had in accessing information about the restructure, the scrutiny review group sought to assess the impact of the Children's Centres restructure.
- 3.2 The purpose of the review was to gain a strategic overview of the restructure of Children's Centres and to test the Council's assertion that it has impacted minimally on service users, and to ensure that this is communicated in an accessible way to parents / carers, other users and stakeholders and Members.

#### 4. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 To take no action. This is not recommended as the proposed recommendations are strategic, measurable and attainable, and clearly address the council's need to better communicate its decision making with residents and Members. A timetable for delivering the recommendations has also been agreed by officers at the most senior levels of the organisation. The action plan is outlined in appendix 1.
- 4.2 To agree some, but not all recommendations. As outlined above all of the recommendations are achievable at little additional cost to the organisation. Although the scrutiny review group is confident all the recommendations will be addressed, there may be reasons for not accepting all of them.

#### 5. **BACKGROUND**

- 5.1 The Working Group was established in February 2012 to review the impact of the Children's Centres restructure.
- 5.2 The objectives of the review was to test the following perceptions for accuracy following the lack of clear communications about the changes:
- That service provision has become patchy, geographically less accessible to users and offers a smaller range of services than before;
  - That the move to targeting the offer to more vulnerable families has led to a reduction in universal provision which has begun to impact on community cohesion in some areas;
  - Whether a reduction in back office staff has resulted in frontline staff having to undertake administrative activities, and spending less time with service users as a consequence; and
  - That it is difficult for parents to become fully involved as key stakeholders in children's centres (eg. Parent Networks are not fully used).

#### 6. **BODY OF REPORT**

The report afforded an opportunity for Members to access information about the restructure itself, the services on offer and patterns of use before and after the changes, and the views held by parents and staff about the service. The review makes nine recommendations to improve this area of council work:

- R1. Improve proactive communications to Members, by
- Democratic Services working with Corporate Communications to develop the Members' intranet pages as a dissemination tool for key ward-based and council-wide information, exploring the

- possibilities within the current IT system, and tying any full scale re-development in the upcoming refresh of the intranet by ICT.
  - Service areas working with the Internal Communications team to provide briefings and seminars at the start and end of future restructures.
  - Children, Schools, and Families to provide Members with information on the complaints mechanisms available to parents, and ensure this information is clearly available to parents via the internet.
  - The Early Years service to provide briefings and seminars on the extension of provision for disadvantaged 2 years olds.
- R2. Directorate DMTs to work with Communication Leads to improve proactive communications to residents, by
- Ensuring user engagement is fitted into all restructure or review consultation periods where appropriate, recognising that this cannot be before consulting with the staff directly affected.
  - Providing holding information to parents and other key stakeholders at the start of the review process in order to mitigate concern and rumours.
- R3. The Children, Schools and Families Directorate to sustain and enhance the excellent service provision on offer, by
- Ensuring there are no further cuts to funding for the children's centres service.
  - Considering how to increase the number of sessions which are both welcoming and suitable for parents with children of different ages
  - Publicising the services on offer in new Children's Centres which could alleviate the distance some families have to travel
- R4. The Learning and Achievement Service to publicise the range of available sessions and the Council's policy for allocating spaces when there is high demand more clearly to parents.
- R5. The Learning and Achievement Service to review job descriptions, job title and salary scale of the Office Assistants / Receptionists posts, to ensure the grade is commensurate with the job activities and additional responsibilities, and recognises the front line nature of the job. Review the capacity across the service for 2012/13 and increase where necessary.
- R6. Recognising the importance of robust data collection, the Learning and Achievement Service to undertake a business process improvement exercise with the aim of streamlining what data is captured and how it is collected, input and analysed.
- R7. The Learning and Achievement Service to prioritise additional training to Children's Centres staff to build capacity and resilience during times of strain such as sickness absence and annual leave.

- R8. Whilst recognising the importance of traditional methods of communications, and the cut in the advertising budget, the Learning and Achievement Service to improve and expand communications to parents by
- increasing the use of creative communications such as e-mail, text and social media as an efficient and cost effective way of communicating with parents
  - using Parent Forums to review both printed communications and that which is displayed within Children's Centres, in order to ensure they communicate clearly the entire offer to both children and parents, including adults' services and children's sessions for mixed ages
  - widening the reach of written publicity to include more venues such as doctors surgeries, school noticeboards and chemists.
- R9. The Learning and Achievement Service to facilitate the engagement of a wide range of parents in governance, by
- providing a programme of training for Community Development Workers and other staff as appropriate, to become capable and confident facilitators of Parents Forums who can recruit and support a range of parents to become involved
  - providing a programme of training and capacity-building for parents, including understanding of their role and responsibilities within the governance model, with a particular focus on those less likely to come forward for such positions
  - ensuring the Governance Model is user friendly and not unduly bureaucratic.

## **7. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

- 7.1 This report describes the analysis and recommendations of the Working Group's review of the impact of the restructure of children's centres.
- 7.2 The Council's funding from central government has reduced since 2010-11 and will continue to reduce over the next four years. This will therefore affect any recommendations agreed and any additional costs that arise from the recommendations must be contained within directorate revenue budgets, specifically, recommendation R5 to review job grades for posts and R9 to introduce training programs. Consequently, officers will be obliged to seek the appropriate financial approval before further financial commitments are made.

## **8. CONCURRENT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (LEGAL SERVICES)**

- 8.1 The Council is required by section 9F of the Local Government Act 2000 to have an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to have

executive arrangements that ensure the committee has specified powers. Consistent with this obligation, Article 6 of the Council's Constitution provides that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee may consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants and may make reports and recommendations to the Full Council or the Executive in connection with the discharge of any functions. It is consistent with the Constitution and the statutory framework for the Executive to provide a response.

- 8.2 The Council is obliged under the Childcare Act 2006 to make arrangements, so far as is reasonably practicable, for sufficient provision of children's centres to meet local need. The Act defines the limits and extent of the Council's duty.
- 8.3 Pursuant to section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council is required to appoint such officers as it thinks necessary for the proper discharge of its functions. The Council is required to comply with employment legislation, the Equality Act 2010, national agreements and its own policies and procedures in appointing and managing its staff. In relation to the recommendations contained in the report, the Council's procedure on handling organizational change will be particularly relevant. Any consideration of grades will have to be supported by relevant evidence.
- 8.4 To the extent that staff have transferred to the Council, the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employees) Regulations 2006 will apply. Any proposed harmonisation of, or changes to, terms and conditions would have to be carried out in accordance with the Regulations, including by justifying any changes in accordance with the specified economic, technical or organizational criteria.
- 8.5 Any disclosure of information under the action plan must be carried out having regard to the Council's information governance framework and the requirements of relevant legislation, particularly the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- 8.6 Before agreeing the action plan or implementing it, the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don't. Information is set out in section 9 of the report relevant to these considerations.

## **9. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS**

- 9.1 Children's Centres play a key role in delivering the One Tower Hamlets principles because their core offer, as outlined by the government, is to improve outcomes for young children and their families, with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged families, in order to reduce inequalities in child development and school readiness. The

value of children mixing with others from different backgrounds and communities is viewed as positive by service users.

**10. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT**

10.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the report or recommendations.

**11. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

11.1. There are no direct risk management implications arising from the report or recommendations. Risks relating to the recommendations will be monitored through the council's corporate risk register and directorate risk registers. Risks are assessed for likelihood and impact, and will have responsible owners and programmes of mitigating actions.

**12. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are no direct implications of crime and disorder as a result of the recommendations of this review.

**13. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT**

**13.1** One of the objectives of the review was to test the claim that the reduction in back office staff had resulted in frontline staff having to undertake administrative activities, and spending less time with service users as a consequence

**14. APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1** Scrutiny review action plan

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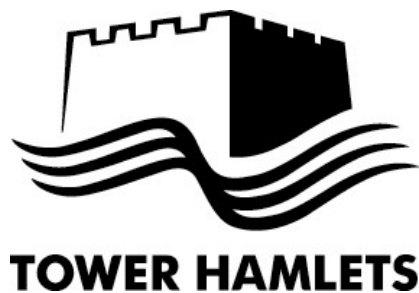
**Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information)  
(England) Regulations 2012  
List of "Background Papers" used in the preparation of this report**

<b>Brief description of "background papers"</b>	<b>Name and telephone number of holder and address where open to inspection.</b>
<b>None</b>	<b>N/A</b>



**Reviewing the impact of the Children's Centres restructure**

**Scrutiny Working Group Report**



**London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
April 2012**

## **Acknowledgements**

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The Working Group would like to thank all the officers and partners that supported this Review, particularly Vicky Allen for her ongoing support and diligence. Most importantly we would like to thank all of the Children's Centres users and staff who offered their input to the Review. These views and perspectives have been fundamental in shaping the final recommendations of this Report.

### **Working Group Chair:**

Councillor Amy Whitelock

### **Working Group Members:**

Councillor Carlo Gibbs

Councillor Zara Davis

Councillor Lesley Pavitt

Jake Kemp (Co-optee)

### **London Borough of Tower Hamlets:**

Anne Canning

Service Head Learning & Achievement

Monica Forty

Head of Achievement, Birth – 11, Learning and Achievement Service

Mohammed Jolil

Children's Centre Locality Lead

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Jo Freeman

Children's Centre Locality Lead

Amanda Hicks

Children's Centre Locality Lead

Sheikh Ahmed

Around Poplar Children's Centre Lead

Jill McGinley

Head of Parent & Family Support

### **Strategy, Policy & Performance:**

Vicky Allen

Chief Executive's Directorate

Harriet Potemkin

Children's Schools & Families

### **External:**

None, it was not possible to find an expert witness within the timescales of this review.

## Chair's Foreword

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Children's centres are one of our most important frontline services, bringing children and families together from across our communities and providing vital support for the most vulnerable. The extent to which children's centres are cherished and relied upon by parents and children was clear from the level of concern and confusion which arose surrounding the Mayor's decision to restructure the service in 2011.

I was therefore grateful to my colleagues on Overview and Scrutiny for agreeing to prioritise a scrutiny review into the process and impact of the children's centres restructure. Due to the speed of the change, the national climate of service cuts, and the difficulty many Members and parents had in accessing information about the restructure, it was important to shine a light on this area of service provision.

The review afforded the first opportunity for Members to access detailed information about the restructure itself, the services on offer and patterns of use before and after the changes, and the views held by parents and staff about the service. I am grateful to my colleagues on the review working group for their diligence and to staff and parents for their invaluable input. We were particularly impressed by the frontline staff we met who displayed such commitment and passion for their work.

Overall, our findings present a mixed picture. On the one hand, despite assurances at the time of no impact on the frontline, we observed a reduction in the number of classes on offer since the restructure of around a third. In addition, removing two levels of management has meant frontline staff are now performing additional back office responsibilities, which can take them away from their frontline duties.

However, it appears this impact has not yet been felt by parents, with the latest Parent Voice survey showing 94% of parents are happy with the activities on offer for families. We found this is down to staff in children's centres going the extra mile to continue providing an excellent service, so parents and children do not see the impact of the restructure. The flipside is that now staff are very stretched and there is less flex and capacity in the system.

The review working group recognises the pressures on the service and the drivers for the restructure, particularly in light of significant cuts to central Government funding for children's centres and the council's general budget. However, we are concerned about the impact that the service, and particularly staff, has already sustained.

In view of the demand and popularity of children's centres among parents and the existing pressures on staff, we strongly recommend the service is protected from further cuts, so it does not reach breaking point. We have also made recommendations to improve the process of communicating restructures internally and externally, address staff capacity issues and

strengthen parental engagement. We hope these will enable the service to sustain the high quality provision currently provided to our families.

**Councillor Amy Whitelock**  
**Chair of Working Group and Scrutiny Lead, Children's Schools & Families**

## Report Recommendations

- R1. Improve proactive communications to Members, by
- Democratic Services working with Corporate Communications to develop the Members' intranet pages as a dissemination tool for key ward-based and council-wide information, exploring the possibilities within the current IT system, and tying any full scale re-development in the upcoming refresh of the intranet by ICT.
  - Service areas working with the Internal Communications team to provide briefings and seminars at the start and end of future restructures.
  - Children, Schools, and Families to provide Members with information on the complaints mechanisms available to parents, and ensure this information is clearly available to parents via the internet.
  - The Early Years service to provide briefings and seminars on the extension of provision for disadvantaged 2 years olds.
- R2. Directorate DMTs to work with Communication Leads to improve proactive communications to residents, by
- Ensuring user engagement is fitted into all restructure or review consultation periods where appropriate, recognising that this cannot be before consulting with the staff directly affected.
  - Providing holding information to parents and other key stakeholders at the start of the review process in order to mitigate concern and rumours.
- R3. The Children, Schools and Families Directorate to sustain and enhance the excellent service provision on offer, by
- Ensuring there are no further cuts to funding for the children's centres service.
  - Considering how to increase the number of sessions which are both welcoming and suitable for parents with children of different ages
  - Publicising the services on offer in new Children's Centres which could alleviate the distance some families have to travel
- R4. The Learning and Achievement Service to publicise the range of available sessions and the Council's policy for allocating spaces when there is high demand more clearly to parents.
- R5. The Learning and Achievement Service to review job descriptions, job title and salary scale of the Office Assistants / Receptionists posts, to ensure the grade is commensurate with the job activities and additional responsibilities, and recognises the front line nature of the job. Review the capacity across the service for 2012/13 and increase where necessary.

- R6. Recognising the importance of robust data collection, the Learning and Achievement Service to undertake a business process improvement exercise with the aim of streamlining what data is captured and how it is collected, input and analysed.
- R7. The Learning and Achievement Service to prioritise additional training to Children's Centres staff to build capacity and resilience during times of strain such as sickness absence and annual leave.
- R8. Whilst recognising the importance of traditional methods of communications, and the cut in the advertising budget, the Learning and Achievement Service to improve and expand communications to parents by
- increasing the use of creative communications such as e-mail, text and social media as an efficient and cost effective way of communicating with parents
  - using Parent Forums to review both printed communications and that which is displayed within Children's Centres, in order to ensure they communicate clearly the entire offer to both children and parents, including adults' services and children's sessions for mixed ages
  - widening the reach of written publicity to include more venues such as doctors surgeries, school noticeboards and chemists.
- R9. The Learning and Achievement Service to facilitate the engagement of a wide range of parents in governance, by
- providing a programme of training for Community Development Workers and other staff as appropriate, to become capable and confident facilitators of Parents Forums who can recruit and support a range of parents to become involved
  - providing a programme of training and capacity-building for parents, including understanding of their role and responsibilities within the governance model, with a particular focus on those less likely to come forward for such positions
  - ensuring the Governance Model is user friendly and not unduly bureaucratic.

## **Introduction**

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The national landscape has changed considerably since the introduction of children's centres. The coalition Government have reduced overall funding for family support services, and directed all funding through the Early Intervention Grant. It has also re-designed the early years curriculum to make it more focused on ensuring children start school ready and able to learn.

In order to respond to these changes and tailor services to reflect local needs, the council redesigned its children's centres to focus on providing increased support to the most vulnerable and hard to reach families while maintaining a universal offer, and has restructured the service by reducing the number of managers and administration support.

There has been significant national and local media coverage about the implications of reduced funding on children's centres. This national climate, coupled with uncertainty about the council's restructure and its impact, and lack of forthcoming information about it, led to a perception among residents that there had been cuts in service provision.

Members also received numerous questions and concerns from parents about the implications of the children's centres restructure on service provision. Many parents had felt ill-informed about the restructure and fearful about the future of provision for their children. Concerns related to potential reduction in access, patchiness of provision across the borough, reduced choice of services on offer, future sustainability of centres, and the apparent move away from universality which could undermine community cohesion.

Members did seek clarity from the council on various occasions, but found it difficult to get accessible and transparent information. Equally, communications directly to parents do not seem to have allayed concerns, and this has raised issues around parental engagement.

In recognition of this, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee prioritised the children's centres restructure for a thorough Scrutiny review. This provided the opportunity to review the process and impact of the children's centres restructure in light of the perceptions held by Members and residents on service provision and user engagement.

## **Purpose**

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The purpose of this review was to gain a strategic overview of the restructure of children's centres, to test the council's assertion that it has impacted minimally on service users, and to ensure that this is communicated in an accessible way to parents/carers, other users and stakeholders and Members.

The objectives were to test the following perceptions for accuracy, following the lack of clear communications about the changes:

- That service provision has become patchy, geographically less accessible to users and offers a smaller range of services than before;
- That the move to targeting the offer to more vulnerable families has led to a reduction in universal provision which has begun to impact on community cohesion in some areas;
- Whether a reduction in back office staff has resulted in frontline staff having to undertake administrative activities, and spending less time with service users as a consequence; and
- That it is difficult for parents to become involved as key stakeholders in children's centres (eg. Parent Forums are not fully used)

## **Methodology**

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The following methodology for the review was agreed by the Working Group:

### Introductory review meeting

- The Working Group received presentational evidence on the children's centre restructure in terms of delivery and staffing, from the Service Head Learning & Achievement, and Head of Achievement, Birth – 11, Learning and Achievement Service.
- This aided in formalising scoping of the review and enabled a thorough discussion on the process and communications around the restructure.

### Visit to Around Poplar children's centre

- The Working Group visited Around Poplar children's centre to have discussions with parents about their experience of the restructure, the service and the mechanisms of involvement, and speak to staff to hear about the restructure from their perspective
- Service users were consulted on their experience of children's centres and engagement

### Service use and provision before and after the restructure

- The Working Group reviewed service user data including attendance, equalities information and parent feedback, and analysed service provision, to look at patterns of use before and after the restructure
- The Working Group heard evidence from the Locality Leads and the Head of Achievement, Birth-11.

### Parental involvement mechanisms

- A presentation was received from the Head of Parent & Family Support on how the council engages with parents in general and specifically in children's centres Parent Forums
- The new governance framework for Parents and Carers Council and Parent Forums was discussed



## Parent Forum

- One member of the Working Group attended the Wapping children's centre Parent forum to see user engagement in action.

## Final review meeting

- Key findings were discussed, tested and agreed, and recommendations finalised.

## Key Findings

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The key findings arising from the review have been divided into five sections, including the background and process of the restructure, and the four key perceptions that the review sought to answer:

- That service provision has become patchy, geographically less accessible to users and offers a smaller range of services than before;
- That the move to targeting the offer to more vulnerable families has led to a reduction in universal provision which has begun to impact on community cohesion in some areas;
- Whether a reduction in back office staff has resulted in frontline staff having to undertake administrative activities, and spending less time with service users as a consequence; and
- It is difficult for parents to become involved as key stakeholders in children's centres (eg. Parent Forums are not fully used)

### 1. Background and process

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The Working Group heard that nationally, the number of children's centres has reduced from 3,631 in June 2010 to 3,507 in September 2011. Locally, in April 2011 (go live date June 2011), a restructure of the children's centre provision and staff was undertaken because of the reduction in funding to pay for services (the Early Intervention Grant was reduced by approximately £4m in 2011-12).

Children's centres contributed £2.7m towards the £100m savings for the council overall. The restructure decreased management and aimed to increase targeted provision while retaining the universal offer. The children's centres service was previously funded solely by the Sure Start Grant. This was a direct grant from government which ended on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012. The service is now funded, in part, from the Early Intervention Grant.

The children's centres have now moved from 23 'reach' areas, to 12 'community' areas meaning that the catchment area for each children's centre has now widened. For each of the borough's 4 administrative areas (paired LAP) there are 3 centres with full children's centre designation and a number of smaller centres providing a range of different services. The children's centre core offer is therefore delivered through a hub and spoke model. The core offer, as outlined by the government, is to improve outcomes for young children and their families, with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged families, in order to reduce inequalities in child development and school

readiness. This is supported by improved parenting aspirations, self esteem and parenting skills, child and family health and life chances.

The Working Group were advised that the drivers for the restructure of the service are identified as follows:

- Large cut to government funding of children's centres
- Large cuts to the council's budget
- The opportunity to look at the provision which has grown organically and unmanaged due to the original children's centres structures under Sure Start
- The importance of early years learning for children's future achievements.
- The opportunities of a hub and spoke model in helping keep management costs down and cutting premises costs while ensuring frontline reductions are kept to a minimum.

The Service management reported that, overall, they feel the restructure has improved the council's provision as there is now more clarity and harmonisation around job descriptions, structures, and governance. There is a mixture of locally and centrally provided provision to ensure the service is flexible to the needs of the locality. In comparison, provision prior to the restructure was inherited and had grown organically with ad-hoc structures in place.

However, Working Group members remained concerned about the ultimate impact of the restructure on service users and staff, which are explored in the following sections. Concerns were also raised about the process of the restructure, which was felt by parents and Members to be non-transparent, fuelling negative perceptions and concerns, for example when one group of very distressed parents took a petition to full Council.

The Service management explained their process of responding to the high volume of Members' and parents' enquiries, and also outlined the protocol in terms of consultation with affected staff before any public information can be released.

The Working Group still felt that there was a lack of proactive or detailed communication between Officers and Members which left some Members feeling that they are ill equipped to serve their residents effectively. It was felt that existing mechanisms of communications should be developed so that Members can be kept better informed of the council's business. Although this issue was explored as part of this scrutiny review, the Working Group felt that communications should be broadened to encompass the council as a whole.

**Recommendation 1**

Improve proactive communications to Members, by

- Democratic Services working with Corporate Communications to develop the Members' intranet pages as a dissemination tool for key ward-based and council-wide information, exploring the possibilities within the current IT system, and tying any full scale re-development in the upcoming refresh of the intranet by ICT.
- Service areas working with the Internal Communications team to provide briefings and seminars at the start and end of future restructures.
- Children, Schools, and Families to provide Members with information on the complaints mechanisms available to parents, and ensure this information is clearly available to parents via the internet.
- The Early Years service to provide briefings and seminars on the extension of provision for disadvantaged 2 years olds.

Although the restructure was undertaken quickly because of the reduction in budget and national changes to children's centres, the Working Group felt that more could have been done to consult with parents, such as providing a holding notice to service users informing them of impending changes which would have been helpful in allaying fears and mitigating against rumours.

The Working Group was informed that views of staff and parents were sought on the specific service provision after staff had been consulted on the structure of the service. The service used the annual parent's satisfaction survey as an additional tool to help to understand parent's views.

**Recommendation 2**

Directorate DMTs to work with Communication Leads to improve proactive communications to residents, by

- ensuring user engagement is fitted into all restructure or review consultation periods where appropriate, recognising that this cannot be before consulting with the staff directly affected.
- providing holding information to parents and other key stakeholders at the start of the review process in order to mitigate concern and rumours.

**2. Consistency, access and range of services**

The Working Group heard verbal evidence and reviewed analysis undertaken by the Children's Schools and Families directorate as part of an ongoing equalities impact analysis of the restructure. The Working Group were concerned to note that (at the time of the analysis) there were 3,372 fewer children attending children's centres since the restructure. This was tested with officers, who confirmed that there was no drop in birth rate over that period, so this reduction in attendance was unlikely to be due to a sudden fall in demand. This therefore indicates some reduction in access.

The Working Group also analysed the data supplied by the directorate in response to a Members Enquiry about service provision and found that there had been a reduction in the number of sessions offered since the restructure,

both in terms of the number of classes (153 fewer) and the number of hours (715 fewer). This amounted to around a third fewer services on offer, though the data for the Members Enquiry was a snapshot comparing Q3 2010/11 to Q3 2011/12, and is subject to change dependant on demand and taking into consideration user feedback. Nevertheless, the available data indicates both some reduction in the number of services on offer and that provision has been spread more evenly across localities, as reductions in classes were greater in some areas, to even out provision geographically.

The reduction in the number of sessions was found to be largely due to decommissioning of sessions contracted out to health providers and run through children's centres. The Service Manager for Early Years explained that this reduction in health provision was in line with other local authorities. Staffing issues for some health sessions such as Midwife Services have aided the perception that there has been service deterioration within children's centres, which is borne out in parent surveys which show highest dissatisfaction with health-related services. The Working Group heard how the children's centres have been building capacity in order to deliver some services separate to the reduced offer from Health providers. Another area where there has been a particular reduction is in English Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) provision for parents.

The Working Group also heard evidence from a small sample of parents at Around Poplar children's centre. Parents reported they have built up strong relationships with the children's centre and appreciate the opportunity they bring in terms of meeting other parents, carers and professionals. Some parents appreciate the informal support networks that build up around the children's centres. However, parents raised the following concerns about the service:

- Some parents found that the distance to their nearest children's centre was unsatisfactory at over 40 minutes walk away, however some parents are also prepared to move around the borough in order to attend a mixture of sessions to suit.
- Some parents reported that it was difficult to find sessions which could adequately cater for siblings of different ages.
- There was frustration due to the lack of spaces in some popular sessions, and some parents had noticed that sessions were much busier than before the restructure. Parents reported that they had sometimes been turned away from popular courses due to demand and this upset both parents and their children.
- Some parents had been using the service for several years and did notice the impact of the restructure, regretting the closure of some smaller centres nearby.

However, the Working Group found that overall parent satisfaction with children's centres remains high, as borne out in parent satisfaction surveys and the independent Parent Voice report. 89% said services had made a positive impact on their relationship with their child or children, while 94% said they were happy with the activities on offer for families. Despite reductions of around third in terms of service availability, the Working Group acknowledged

the efforts of staff to ensure in large part this does not impact on parents' and children's experience of the service. Nevertheless, as outlined later, this has led to strain in the service.

Due to the high demand for and popularity of children's centres, the importance of the service in terms of early years' achievement, the existing pressures on staff and reductions in service provision already sustained, the Working Group felt strongly that the no further cuts to funding should be borne by the children's centres service.

### **Recommendation 3**

The Children, Schools and Families Directorate to sustain and enhance the excellent service provision on offer, by

- ensuring there are no further cuts to funding for the children's centres service.
- considering how to increase the number of sessions which are both welcoming and suitable for parents with children of different ages
- publicising the services on offer in new Children's Centres which could alleviate the distance some families have to travel

### **3. Targeted and universal provision**

The Working Group heard evidence from the Service Head and Service Manager for Birth-11 who advised that there had been no move away from universal to targeted provision and explained that the targeted offer is built into the universal provision. This method is seen as a more effective and efficient way of identifying those vulnerable families who could benefit from additional support, with universal services being an important referral mechanism into additional support services. It also means provision is less stigmatised, and parents, carers and their children can meet a range of different people from their community, rather than only meeting other vulnerable families. The value of children mixing with others from different backgrounds and communities was also mentioned by parents the Working Group spoke to. The Service Head and Service Manager reiterated the council's commitment to retaining universal provision as well as enhanced targeted provision, because of the positive impact universal provision has on targeted provision as well as community cohesion.

The Working Group recognised this commitment, but noted that disproportionately more hours had been lost in the universal service compared to targeted provision since the restructure. Service management reported this was largely due to reductions in the number of whole day drop-in sessions available to all parents.

The Working Group felt that there was a general lack of communication about how the service allocates session spaces, which had led to a perception of unfairness among some parents. In exploring the issue of lack of spaces on popular courses, the Working Group heard from the Service Manager for Birth-11 that on some occasions spaces were reserved for vulnerable families who had been encouraged to attend a specific session by Family Support

Workers. The policy on allocating spaces, which includes reserving spaces for local parents as well as vulnerable parents, has been in operation since before the restructure. However, because there are fewer sessions since the restructure, this policy has become more noticeable to parents, leading to greater frustration. The Service Manager described the equitable and robust measures in place to deal with high demand, which include directing parents to other activities, prioritising them for the next session, or referring those who become distressed to a Family Support Worker.

#### **Recommendation 4**

The Learning and Achievement Service to publicise the range of available sessions and the Council's policy for allocating spaces when there is high demand more clearly to parents.

The Working Group reviewed work undertaken by Children Schools and Families as part of an ongoing equalities impact analysis to assess the diversity of children using the children's centres, before and after the restructure. In comparing the percentage of under fives using children's centres per ethnic grouping in 2010/11 to 2011/12, there has been a drop of around 35% of Bangladeshi children attending since the restructure of the service (with the smallest decreases among White and Indian children). However, further analysis showed that this demographic had previously been over-represented as a whole, as Bangladeshi under 5's make up 42.8% of the borough population and post restructure, account for 41% of the total number of under 5's attending children's centres. This is more in line with other ethnic groups, where there is less than 2% difference between the overall proportion of the demographic and the proportion using children's centres. Officers confirmed that additional equalities analysis will be undertaken to explore further whether the children's centres are being accessed fairly by different groups.

#### **4. Reduction in back office staff**

The Working Group met a representation of staff from various job roles and centres at the Around Poplar children's centre who had been invited to share their opinion of the restructure process and impact. Staff confirmed that they had been kept informed about the restructure by their managers and felt that they had been professional in their attitude around reassuring parents about the future of the service.

Some staff talked about the positive outcomes arising from the restructure including the opportunity to improve their qualifications and reskill. However, there were some negative comments about the restructure including:

- the new data entry burden placed on all staff, especially Office Assistants / Receptionists
- Office Assistants / Receptionists undertaking duties that were previously a managerial responsibility
- the reduction in the number of staff leading to some staff feeling stretched and sometimes working above their grade, for example in order to cover annual leave and sickness

- impact on staff wellbeing of the increased strain and demand on the service
- Community Development Officers now have to work across different sites and this has led to a feeling that the service has been diluted, making it harder to build relationships and support parents

The Working Group felt that the restructure of the Service had led to the role of Office Assistants / Receptionists being under-estimated, both in terms of the grade and their importance as front line staff, being the first point of contact for parents and carers. The parallel review of the restructure by the Service has also recognised that there are too few Office Assistants / Receptionist posts and their job description should be reviewed.

The majority of staff interviewed felt that the data entry work was too time consuming and difficult to complete whilst performing front line duties, although all acknowledged the importance of collecting this data for reasons such as monitoring for grants, child safeguarding, management information and the future payment by results.

The Working Group noted the positive team spirit and generally good morale among staff, providing peer support and regular social activities for each other. However, members were concerned that staff have absorbed most of the impact of the restructure, going the extra mile and working more to ensure parents do not see a reduction in the quality of the service. While this is laudable, the potential impact on staff wellbeing is significant and the overall reduction in staff has led to a loss of flex and capacity in the system, so it is less resilient to staff absence, with potentially greater disruption to service provision at these times.

**Recommendation 5**

The Learning and Achievement Service to review job descriptions, job title and salary scale of the Office Assistants / Receptionists posts, to ensure the grade is commensurate with the job activities and additional responsibilities, and recognises the front line nature of the job. Review the capacity across the service for 2012/13 and increase where necessary.

**Recommendation 6**

Recognising the importance of robust data collection, the Learning and Achievement Service to undertake a business process improvement exercise with the aim of streamlining what data is captured and how it is collected, input and analysed

**Recommendation 7**

The Learning and Achievement Service to prioritise additional training to Children's Centres staff to build capacity and resilience during times of strain such as sickness absence and annual leave.

**5. Parental involvement**

At the visit to the Around Poplar children's centre, the Working Group interviewed parents and found that in the main those who did not attend

Parent Forums did so out of choice and still felt that their views were taken into consideration and acted upon because of the openness and approachability of children's centre staff, and other mechanisms such as feedback forms. Parents confirmed that they were encouraged to provide feedback; at Around Poplar children's centre there is a suggestion box in reception. One outcome of a suggestion made by parents was that the dads only baby group was reverted back to a session for all parents and this session is now much better attended.

The Working Group also spoke to two parents who attended Parents Forums on a regular basis and reported that the parents found them to be informative and helpful, and covered a wide area of interest. However, one parent spoke of how much better his experience of the Around Poplar Parent Forum was compared to the Forum at another children's centre. The Working Group also noted differences in terms of how frequently Parent Forums meet; in some areas it is weekly, whereas in others only monthly. One of the Community Development Officers said that how well Parents Forums function depends on the size of the area the different CDOs have to cover and therefore how much time they can give to each Forum. The Working Group were concerned to address this inconsistency in terms of how parent engagement is facilitated across different children's centres.

The user survey identified that a large number of parents questioned were unaware of additional services offered by centres, especially those services available for adults. The Working Group felt that there is a need to publicise the offer and services of the children's centres more widely and clearly, and to increase the use of technology and social media to communicate with parents and carers, especially if savings made can be redirected to service provision. Data from the User Satisfaction survey showed that less than 10% of parents said they were kept informed via creative communications (such as text, e-mail, internet) however around 32% would like to receive communications that way. It was acknowledged however that there was also a need to retain more traditional methods of communication, such as leaflets and face-to-face, in order to avoid excluding any groups.

#### **Recommendation 8**

Whilst recognising the importance of traditional methods of communications, and the cut in the advertising budget, the Learning and Achievement Service to improve and expand communications to parents by

- increasing the use of creative communications such as e-mail, text and social media as an efficient and cost effective way of communicating with parents
- using Parent Forums to review both printed communications and that which is displayed within Children's Centres, in order to ensure they communicate clearly the entire offer to both children and parents, including adults' services and children's sessions for mixed ages
- widening the reach of written publicity to include more venues such as doctors surgeries, school noticeboards and chemists.



The Working Group heard from Jill McGinley, Head of Parent and Family Support, about how this service provides support to parents and schools. It was agreed that parents elected onto the Parents Forums within the new governance model should be provided with training, in order to build capacity and empower parents to become effective Forum Chairs. In addition, it was felt that there should be a programme of training for staff to assist them in their role as Forum facilitators and ensure greater consistency of parental engagement across different children's centres.

The Working Group also heard about the review of the governance framework from the Service Manager and how parents are being consulted around its terms of reference. Having observed current Parent Forums in action and from experience of other community governance structures, members felt that it was important to ensure representation from parents of all backgrounds in the new structures. Under-represented demographics and harder to reach groups should be actively encouraged to join, which may require targeted proactive outreach work by staff. The Working Group also raised issues around the accessibility of the new governance model – including the language and process.

#### **Recommendation 9**

The Learning and Achievement Service to facilitate the engagement of a wide range of parents in governance, by

- providing a programme of training for Community Development Workers and other staff as appropriate, to become capable and confident facilitators of Parents Forums who can recruit and support a range of parents to become involved
- providing a programme of training and capacity-building for parents, including understanding of their role and responsibilities within the governance model, with a particular focus on those less likely to come forward for such positions
- ensuring the Governance Model is user friendly and not unduly bureaucratic.

#### **Conclusions**

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- The Working Group welcomed the opportunity to investigate the impact of the children's centre restructure, with a view to assessing its true impact and improving communications to service users about restructure changes in the future.
- The Early Years Service also welcomed the opportunity for this timely review, because it enabled the service to ensure Members were updated on the service and provided a facility to test the outcome of the restructure. The service welcomes the recommendations which have arisen as a result of the review.
- This Review has focused on testing service perceptions for accuracy, and it is hoped that the adoption of the proposed recommendations will

improve both the provision for service users, support for staff, and future communications and engagement processes.

- In light of the continuing high demand for children's centre services, their popularity among parents, the service reductions already sustained and the resulting pressures on staff, the Working Group hopes that the recommendations will be considered and adopted by the Mayor and his Cabinet, to enable children's centres to survive and thrive in this difficult climate, for the families who cherish and rely on them.



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**SCRUTINY REVIEW ACTION PLAN – Reviewing the impact of the Children’s Centres restructure**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response / Comments / Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Date</b>
R1. Improve proactive communications to Members, by			
• Democratic Services working with Corporate Communications to develop the Members’ intranet pages as a dissemination tool for key ward-based and council-wide information, exploring the possibilities within the current IT system, and tying any full scale re-development in the upcoming refresh of the intranet by ICT.	Ward Profiles are currently being updated and are expected to be completed by the CRU by December 2010. Members to be consulted on draft / design stages in October 2012 via a group workshop or Survey Monkey exercise.	<b>Corporate Research Unit Manager</b>	<b>October 2012</b>
	We will place the most current Members Bulletin on the front page of the Members Intranet in order to encourage readership. Members are due to receive VPN keys so that they are able to access the intranet from outside the Council building by November 2012.	<b>Service Head</b>	<b>November 2012</b>
	We will set up an intranet page for each Directorate, communicate this to both Directorates and Members. Each Directorate page will be managed by Directorate support services such as the directorate intranet rep. We will ensure that Communications Advisers remind Managers at DMTs to use the Members Intranet as a key communications tool for disseminating information to Members	<b>Service Head</b>	<b>November 2012</b>

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<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response / Comments / Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Date</b>
	We will undertake an informal survey about Members Intranet and its format and contents.	<b>Service Head, Communications</b>	<b>February 2013</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service areas working with the Internal Communications team to provide briefings and seminars at the start and end of future restructures.</li> </ul>	Restructures are discussed at DMTs, and Communications Advisers (when invited to DMTs and with consultation from Human Resources and the Service Head), will take the lead on providing communications to Members via the Members Bulletin and Members Intranet. Where Communications Advisers are not regularly invited to Directorate DMTs, Service Heads should contact their Directorate Communications Advisers direct.	<b>Service Head, Communications, Head of Media</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
	More detailed information, such as seminars, will be provided to Members, in consultation with the Service Head and relevant Lead Member, and will be led by the relevant Service.	<b>Communications Advisers</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
	Directorates encouraged via DMTs to contribute relevant items for the Members seminar schedule.	<b>Members Support Manager</b>	<b>September 2012</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children, Schools, and Families</li> </ul>	The complaints procedure for the Council (Children’s	<b>Locality Leads,</b>	<b>October</b>

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<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response / Comments / Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Date</b>
to provide Members with information on the complaints mechanisms available to parents, and ensure this information is clearly available to parents via the internet.	Centre version) will be published in the Members Bulletin and placed on the Members Intranet and on the Children’s Centre web page on the Council Internet so that it is easy to find for future reference.	<b>Learning &amp; Achievement Service</b>	<b>2012</b>
	It will be displayed in individual Children’s Centres and made available to families on request	<b>Community Leads, Learning &amp; Achievement Service</b>	<b>October 2012</b>
	An article will be published in Parent Matters to offer advice, support and guidance to families on raising issues and concerns.	<b>Locality Leads, Head of Parent &amp; Family Support</b>	<b>December 2012</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Early Years service to provide briefings and seminars on the extension of provision for disadvantaged 2 years olds.</li> </ul>	A briefing paper will be published in the Members Bulletin and placed on the Members Intranet and the Council Internet so that it is easy to find for future reference.	<b>Head of Achievement, Birth-11, Learning &amp; Achievement Service</b>	<b>February 2013</b>
R2. Directorate DMTs to work with Communication Advisers to improve proactive communications to residents, by			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>providing holding information to parents and other key stakeholders at the start of the review process in order to mitigate concern and rumours.</li> </ul>	<i>The People Board will look at the need to amend corporate guidance for managers around handling organisational change – to include our communications and engagement with key stakeholders and ways in which this can be</i>	<b>Service Head, Human Resources</b>	<b>November 2012</b>

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<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response / Comments / Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Date</b>
	<i>monitored.</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensuring user engagement is fitted into all restructure or review consultation periods where appropriate, recognising that this cannot be before consulting with the staff directly affected.</li> </ul>	<p><i>The People Board will look at the need to amend corporate guidance for managers around handling organisational change – to include our communications and engagement with key stakeholders and ways in which this can be monitored.</i></p>	<b>Service Head, Human Resources</b>	<b>November 2012</b>
<p>R3. The Children, Schools and Families Directorate to sustain and enhance the excellent service provision on offer, by</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensuring there are no further cuts to funding for the children’s centres service.</li> </ul>	<p>We will seek to protect the funding allocated to our Children’s Centres but will need to keep this under review as funding, including that from central government grants, and budget priorities change.</p>	<b>Director of Children’s, Schools &amp; Families</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>considering how to increase the number of sessions which are both welcoming and suitable for parents with children of different ages</li> </ul>	<p>A termly audit of provision by each Children’s Centre will be undertaken to ensure that across the locality a range of sessions are available to parents with children of different ages.</p>	<b>Community Leads, Learning &amp; Achievement Service</b>	<b>Completed and ongoing</b>
	Services on offer in new Children’s Centres as well as in all	<b>Community Leads,</b>	<b>Completed</b>

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<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response / Comments / Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Date</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>publicising the services on offer in new Children’s Centres which could alleviate the distance some families have to travel</li> </ul>	Children’s Centres are publicised on the Children’s Centre web page on the Council internet and regular updates on services available in leaflets.	<b>Learning &amp; Achievement Service</b>	<b>and ongoing</b>
	Services are advertised on banners outside Children’s Centres.		<b>Completed and ongoing</b>
	We will produce regular updates on services in East End Life.		<b>Ongoing</b>
R4. The Learning and Achievement Service to publicise the range of available sessions and the Council’s policy for allocating spaces when there is high demand more clearly to parents.	See R3 for actions we will undertake to publicise the services within Children’s Centres	<b>Community Leads, Learning &amp; Achievement Service</b>	<b>Completed and ongoing</b>
	We will continue to publicise the service’s policy for allocating spaces when there is high demand and ensure that the policy is clearly visible within Children’s Centres.	<b>Community Leads, Learning &amp; Achievement Service</b>	<b>Completed and ongoing</b>
R5. The Learning and Achievement Service to review job descriptions, job title and salary scale of the Office Assistants / Receptionists posts, to ensure the grade is commensurate with the job activities and additional	We will update the Job Description for Office Assistants to capture better the work they undertake.	<b>Locality Leads, Learning &amp; Achievement Service</b>	<b>Completed</b>
	Job Descriptions for Office Assistants will be reviewed and updated in terms of pay scales to ensure that it reflects the frontline nature of the job and the job activities.		<b>November 2012</b>



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responsibilities, and recognises the front line nature of the job. Review the capacity across the service for 2012/13 and increase where necessary.			
	We will draw up a business case to present to the People Board, to appoint an additional Office Assistant to each locality and then implement if approved.		<b>March 2013</b>
R6. Recognising the importance of robust data collection, the Learning and Achievement Service to undertake a business process improvement exercise with the aim of streamlining what data is captured and how it is collected, input and analysed.	A business case will be drawn up to present to the People’s Board for the recruitment of a Data Analyst to take on borough level Children’s Centre data analysis – and then recruit to the post if approved.		<b>Completed</b>
	We will review the information collected by Children’s Centres to ensure that the data collected is both necessary and relevant, and reviewed to streamlined the process.	<b>Locality Leads, Learning &amp; Achievement Service</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>
	There will be a review of the data collected by Children’s Centres to ensure that data is collected in a streamlined way.		
We will then review the data we collect again, once the Government releases their expectations around Performance by Results.	<b>Locality Leads, Learning &amp; Achievement Service</b>	<b>Expected April 2013</b>	
R7. The Learning and Achievement Service to prioritise additional	A programme of support will be designed and delivered to Locality Leads which will deal with resilience, leadership and management.	<b>Head of Achievement, Birth – 11, Learning &amp; Achievement Service</b>	<b>September 2012</b>

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training to Children’s Centres staff to build capacity and resilience during times of strain such as sickness absence and annual leave.	We will also design a course on Child Development theory, the delivery of which will be rolled out to all Community Leads, Locality Leads and Play & Learning Workers.	<b>Head of Achievement, Birth – 11, Learning &amp; Achievement Service</b>	<b>January 2013 &amp; ongoing</b>
	Every Children’s Centre will have 5 inset days and two of them will be used for team building, and developing resilience.	<b>Community Leads, Learning &amp; Achievement Service</b>	<b>Completed &amp; ongoing</b>
R8. Whilst recognising the importance of traditional methods of communications, and the cut in the advertising budget, the Learning and Achievement Service to improve and expand communications to parents by			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increasing the use of creative communications such as e-mail, text and social media as an efficient and cost effective way of communicating with parents</li> </ul>	We are currently exploring the option of buying into a text messaging service as an additional way of communicating with parents.	<b>Locality Leads, Learning &amp; Achievement Service</b>	<b>April 2013</b>
	We will consult with parents via the Parent Forums to explore the range of communication methods and respond to their preferences accordingly.	<b>Community Development Officers, Learning &amp; Achievement Service</b>	<b>Ongoing &amp; completed by April 2013</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>using Parent Forums to review both printed communications and that which is displayed within Children’s</li> </ul>	We will pair up Parent Forums and enable them to host visits to each other’s Children’s Centre as a way to focus on how access information is displayed and made available to families and to act on the findings.	<b>Community Development Officers, Learning &amp; Achievement Service</b>	<b>Ongoing &amp; completed by April 2013</b>

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Centres, in order to ensure they communicate clearly the entire offer to both children and parents, including adults’ services and children’s sessions for mixed ages			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>widening the reach of written publicity to include more venues such as doctors surgeries, school noticeboards and chemists</li> </ul>	We will review the range of publicity materials which we already send out to parents and which venues they are displayed in. Then explore the possibility of developing a leaflet outlining generic services delivered within Children’s Centres. We will identify key staff within each Children’s Centre who will have responsibility to ensure leaflets are displayed in an accessible way.	<b>Community Development Officers, Learning &amp; Achievement Service</b>	<b>December 2012</b>
<p>R9. The Learning and Achievement Service to facilitate the engagement of a wide range of parents in governance, by</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>providing a programme of training for Community Development Workers and other staff as appropriate, to become capable and confident facilitators of Parents Forums</li> </ul>	Commission support from the Parental Engagement Team to support with the development of staff and of Parent Forums	<b>Locality Leads, Learning &amp; Achievement Service</b>	<b>Completed</b>
	We will provide 4 training sessions for Community Development Officers to support them in leading Parent Forums	<b>Parental Engagement Team, CSF</b>	<b>Started &amp; due to complete</b>

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<p>who can recruit and support a range of parents to become involved</p>			<p><b>March 2013</b></p>
<p>• providing a programme of training and capacity-building for parents, including understanding of their role and responsibilities within the governance model, with a particular focus on those less likely to come forward for such positions</p>	<p>We will provide training sessions and support for parents to take a lead in running Parent Forums once staff are trained.</p>	<p><b>Community Development Officers &amp; Parental Engagement Team</b></p>	<p><b>Due to complete by March 2014</b></p>
<p>• ensuring the Governance Model is user friendly and not unduly bureaucratic.</p>	<p>The Governance Model was reviewed as a result of consultation via Parent Forums to ensure it is user-friendly and not unduly bureaucratic, and is now in place. We will review the Governance Model via Parent Forums, on an annual basis, to ensure it stays both relevant and responsive to need.</p>	<p><b>Locality Leads and Community Leads, Learning &amp; Achievement Service</b></p>	<p><b>Completed &amp; reviewed annually.</b></p>

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