

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

HELD AT 5.35 P.M. ON TUESDAY, 7 JULY 2015

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

Councillor John Pierce (Chair)	
Councillor Danny Hassell (Vice-Chair)	
Councillor Mahbub Alam	
Councillor Amina Ali	(Scrutiny Lead for Adults)
Councillor Peter Golds	(Scrutiny Lead for Law, Probity and Governance)
Councillor Denise Jones	(Scrutiny Lead for Communities, Localities & Culture)
Councillor Md. Maium Miah	(Scrutiny Lead for Resources)
Councillor Helal Uddin	(Scrutiny Lead for Development & Renewal)
Councillor Shahed Ali	(Substituting for Councillor Oliur Rahman)

Co-opted Members Present:

Nozrul Mustafa	(Parent Governor Representative)
Victoria Ekubia	(Roman Catholic Church Representative)
Dr Phillip Rice	(Church of England Representative)
Rev James Olanipekun	(Parent Governor Representative)

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Oliur Rahman	(Representing the Call In Councillors)
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Others Present:

Mayor John Biggs	(Mayor)
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Officers Present:

Robin Beattie	(Service Head, Strategy & Resources, Communities Localities & Culture)
Mark Cairns	(Senior Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer)
Monica Forty	(Interim Service Head - Learning & Achievement)
David Galpin	(Service Head, Legal Services, Law Probity & Governance)
Corinne Hargreaves	(Senior Manager, HR Strategy)

Louise Russell	(Service Head Corporate Strategy and Equality, Law Probity & Governance)
Pat Watson	(Head of Building Development, Resources, Children's & Adults)
David Knight	(Senior Democratic Services Officer)

1. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Councillor Pearce invited nominations for the position of Vice-chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) for the duration of the municipal year. Accordingly, Councillor Danny Hassell was nominated and seconded and it was:

RESOLVED

That Councillor Danny Hassell be appointed Vice-Chair of OSC for the duration of the municipal year.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Amy Whitelock Gibbs with regard to the report on Tackling the School Places Gap Challenge Session.

3. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

Whilst there were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest Councillor Denise Jones advised the Committee that she had a non-pecuniary interest with regard to item 5.1 Rich Mix as she was a Member of the Rich Mix Board in her capacity as the founder of the Eastside Bookshop and local resident. Accordingly, she indicated that she would take no part in the discussions on this item.

The Service Head Legal Services advised that Cllr Jones had a clear conflict of interest between her role as a member of the Committee and her role as a board member of Rich Mix, given the two organisations are in litigation against each other. Cllr Jones stated that none of the information provided to her for the call-in would be disclosed to Rich Mix.

4. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

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

RESOLVED

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12th May, 2015 were approved as a correct record of the proceedings.

5. REQUESTS TO SUBMIT PETITIONS

Nil items.

6. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

6.1 Rich Mix Litigation - Call In

This report was considered and resolved in private session.

7. SCRUTINY SPOTLIGHT

Nil items.

8. UNRESTRICTED REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

8.1 Overview & Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference, Membership, Quorum, Dates of meetings, Protocols and Guidance

The Clerk introduced the report circulated at agenda item 7.1, which informed the Committee of the internal arrangements and procedures that govern the delivery of OSC meetings.

Members then discussed whether they wished to vary the starting time of ordinary OSC meetings. Following this, it was agreed that for the remainder of the 2015/16 municipal year that meetings would begin at 7.15 pm and that this arrangement should be kept under review.

Accordingly the Committee:

RESOLVED

1. That OSC Terms of Reference, Membership, Quorum, and Dates of future meetings, as set out at Appendices 1, 2 and 3 of the report be noted;
2. That the scheduled OSC meetings for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2015/16; begin at 7.15 pm and that this arrangement be kept under review;
3. That the protocols as set out at Appendix 3 of the report be adopted; and
4. That the guidance to facilitate the conduct of OSC business, in line with statutory and constitutional requirements, as set out at Appendix 3 of the report be noted.

8.2 Appointment of Scrutiny Lead Members, Co-options to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Health Scrutiny Panel Terms of Reference and Appointments

The Chair introduced the report, which informed Members of the Scrutiny Lead Portfolios, the requirement to appoint co-opted members to OSC in accordance with legislation and the establishment of the Health Scrutiny Panel by Full Council.

As a result on discussions on this report the Committee

Agreed the following Scrutiny Leads for the 2015/16 Municipal Year:

1. Councillor Danny Hassell – Scrutiny Lead for Children’s;
2. Councillor Amina Ali - Scrutiny Lead for Adults Services;
3. Councillor Peter Golds - Scrutiny Lead for Law Probity and Governance
4. Councillor Denise Jones - Scrutiny Lead for Communities, Localities &
5. Culture;
6. Councillor Md. Maium Miah - Scrutiny Lead for Resources; and
7. Councillor Helal Uddin - Scrutiny Lead for Development & Renewal.

In addition the Committee

RESOLVED to:

1. Continue to operate Lead Portfolios in the forthcoming term and appoint Lead Scrutiny Members for the Scrutiny Lead portfolios as set out at Section 3 of this report;
2. Note the co-option to the membership of the OSC of representatives in respect of education matters, as set out at paragraphs 4.1 to 4.7 of this report;
3. Note the establishment of the Health Scrutiny Panel by full Council, to discharge the Council’s functions under the National Health Service Act 2006 and the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 as set out in paragraph 5.1 of this report; with terms of reference and quorum as set out in paragraph 5.2 of this report;
4. Appoint members to the Health Scrutiny Panel for the Municipal Year 2015/16 as set out at paragraph 5.3 of this report; and

5. Agree the co-option of representatives from the Tower Hamlets HealthWatch to the membership of the Health Scrutiny Panel for the Municipal Year 2015/16, as set out at paragraph 5.4 of this report.

8.3 Poplar Town Hall

The Committee were advised that the report on Poplar Town Hall would now be deferred.

8.4 Tackling the School Places Gap Challenge Session

The Committee received and noted a report that provided a follow up from the scrutiny challenge session on tackling the school places gap – pupil place planning and the impact of academies and free schools which went to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2013. The report reviewed the progress against the original recommendations. As a result of discussions on this report the Committee observed that:

- There is a need to review expansion options for schools and to consider for inclusion in the capital programme without loss of facilities (e.g. the development of capacity on the Isle of Dogs). However, the number of suitable sites with capacity for expansion are now very limited and therefore options for expansion of secondary schools are also very limited. Accordingly, LBTH:
 - Continues to review expansion options for schools and consider for inclusion in the programme;
 - Design briefs for school expansions to continue to include working to BB 98 and 99 standards (i.e. standards applicable before DfE introduced lower standards) wherever possible; and
 - Implementation of school expansions considers the priority location of schools to meet needs, the management capacity of the school to implement expansion successfully and the site capacity to deliver a cost-effective and good quality school environment.
- Regarding the continued procuring and developing of sites in the borough for schools, the delivery of which can be supported by S106 or the Community Infrastructure Levy. All options will need to be explored for retaining site allocations for those community schools maintained by the local authority, as far as possible. Accordingly, LBTH will
 - Work with developers to ensure that the LA secures the ability to develop the allocated sites;
 - Ensure Infrastructure Delivery Plan reviews include updated school requirements;
 - Develop funding strategies for sites to establish delivery programmes; and

- Establish operation of new school sites to meet programmes for opening, taking into account where possible the options for expansion of community schools.
- The interactive website facility is being further developed to provide more detailed information about schools and extended services in the local area. However, it has become necessary to explore additional resourcing streams in order maintain this progress and provide further online services, including the facility for parents to apply online at times other than at the normal points of school entry. The 2015 Equalities Impact Assessment it was noted was available on the LBTH website www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/schooladmissions and a briefing would be prepared for Councillors on this page.
- The efforts were continuing to bring free schools and academies within the family of those community schools supported by LBTH;
- That Members would be provided with more information and in a timelier fashion with regard to pupil places and admissions criteria to support them in dealing with constituents queries, especially on National Allocation Day.

8.5 Tower Hamlets Council's Approach to Support Staff with Specific Learning Difficulties

The Committee received a report that followed up from the scrutiny review on LBTH's approach to supporting staff with specific learning difficulties which went to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April 2014. It was noted that this report reviewed the progress against the original recommendations.

It was noted that 7 recommendations had been made in a number of areas including modifications to current procedures, improving internal communications, upskilling managers through training and raising awareness of hidden disabilities across the organisation.

As a result of discussions on the report the Committee observed that:

- Funding for reasonable adjustments currently comes from the relevant service's budget. In addition, there is also funding available from Access to Work to help with making reasonable adjustments and this can be accessed by managers. The Guidance on Access to Work it was noted also makes clear that there is financial help available and how to access it.
- With regard to the scope and scale of training is being undertaken how to support those staff with hidden disabilities that impacts upon their daily lives.

- An internal communications action plan is being developed to increase the proportion of staff who declare whether or not they have a disability.
- The current assessment process for accessing support for staff with learning difficulties has been streamlined through the development of a defined/structured flowchart which clearly outlines the process and roles of HR, Agilisys and Occupational Health and that this information be available on the intranet for staff and managers.
- There is an accessible catalogue of software available for staff with learning difficulties which is compatible with the council's new ICT system/platform and adaptable for different working environments be developed.

9. VERBAL UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY LEADS

The Chair indicated that he would wish to see a work shop in September on the development of the Committees Forward Work programme. In addition, it was noted that at the next 3 scheduled meetings of the Committee there would be a focus on the need for openness and transparency to strengthen people's trust in the Council; hold the Executive to account and to encourage greater public participation in decision-making process.

10. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF UNRESTRICTED CABINET PAPERS

Nil items.

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

Nil items.

12. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

Resolved:

That in accordance with 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 contained information defined as exempt or confidential in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government, Act 1972.

13. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Nil items.

14. EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS 'CALLED IN'

14.1 Rich Mix Litigation Mayoral Decision Log Number 101

This report was considered and resolved in private session.

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

Nil items.

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

Nil items.

The meeting ended at 9.40 p.m.

Chair, Councillor John Pierce
Overview & Scrutiny Committee