

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

**MINUTES OF THE BEST VALUE PROGRAMME REVIEW BOARD QUARTERLY
MEETING**

HELD AT 7.25 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2015

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,
LONDON E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Mayor John Biggs (Chair)	Mayor
Sir Ken Knight (Vice-Chair)	(Commissioner)
Max Caller (Member)	(Commissioner)
Chris Allison (Member)	(Commissioner)
Alan Wood (Member)	(Commissioner)
Will Tuckley (Member)	(Chief Executive)
Alex Powell	(Deputy Director, Audit, Intervention & Improvement, Department of Communities and Local Government)

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Rachael Saunders	(Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services)
Councillor David Edgar	(Cabinet Member for Resources)
Councillor Peter Golds	(Leader of the Conservative Group)
Councillor Clare Harrisson	
Councillor John Pierce	

Officers Present:

Melanie Clay	– (Director, Law Probity and Governance)
Zena Cooke	– (Corporate Director, Resources)
Aman Dalvi	– (Corporate Director, Development & Renewal)
Karen Sugars	– (Interim Service Head, Commissioning and Health)
Louise Russell	– (Service Head Corporate Strategy and Equality, Law Probity & Governance)
Louise Stamp	– (Electoral Services Manager, Chief Executive's)
Ann Sutcliffe	– (Service Head Corporate Property and Capital Delivery, Development and Renewal)
Debbie Jones	– (Interim Corporate Director, Children's Services)
Paul Burgess	– (Project Officer, Corporate Strategy and Equalities)
Owen Whalley	– (Service Head Planning and Building Control, Development & Renewal)
David Williams	– (Deputy Service Head, Planning and Building)

Control, Development & Renewal)

Antonella Burgio

– (Democratic Services)

WELCOME

Mayor John Biggs welcomed all to the meeting. He also welcomed Alex Powell, representing DCLG at the meeting and Will Tuckley the Council's recently appointed Chief Executive.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No BVPRB member apologies were received.

The Chair then noted apologies from the following invited parties; Councillor Whitelock-Gibbs, Councillor Shiria Khatun, Steve Halsey, Corporate Director for CLC, and Luke Addams, Interim Corporate Director for Adult Social Care.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting were agreed and approved as a correct record.

4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Terms of Reference

Commissioner Sir Ken Knight introduced the report which asked BVPRB Members to approve the revised terms of reference. He noted that this body pertained to the Council and was pleased to pass the role of Chair to Mayor John Biggs and to note that elected Members were in attendance.

RESOLVED

That the revised terms of reference as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

4.2 Overview of Progress To-Date in Respect of Key Outcomes

The Chair introduced the report which was to review progress of key outcomes contained in the action plan arising from the Secretary of State's

directions. He noted the revised Appendix 3 document circulated in the supplementary agenda and agreed to vary the order of the themes to be reviewed.

The following themes were reviewed:

1. Procurement – Councillor Edgar Cabinet Member for Resources

The Board considered this theme and noted the following:

- A number of improvements to procurement were being implemented.
- Work has been done to identify the nature of spend and test compliance. Further work is in hand to consider how the council can maximise budget savings from procurement.
- The action plan was on target to achieve its key milestones.

Commissioner Max Caller noted that some areas of the organisation required familiarisation with principles of procurement. Mayor John Biggs advised that a Member workshop would be held prior to Christmas to ensure that Members were aware of their role in procurement.

The progress reported to BVRB was noted.

2. Grants – Councillor Saunders Cabinet Member for Education and Deputy Mayor with responsibility for Third Sector and Grants.

The Board considered this theme and noted the following:

- The Mainstream Grants Programme has been agreed and grant agreements are being finalised with recipient organisations. The Third Sector Strategy under development will inform future grant making which will support corporate priorities and assessments of local need.
- A consultation with stakeholders on this strategy was in progress.
- The strategy aimed to recognise the value of the relationship and contributions of local organisations.
- Through the strategy, arrangements for future decision making and cross-party scrutiny will be developed

Commissioner Sir Ken Knight was encouraged that the strategy will address the use of future resources and that grant decisions will be delivered through a transparent process. Commissioners were pleased to work with Councillor Saunders in developing the strategy.

The progress reported to BVRB was noted.

3. Property – Councillor Edgar Cabinet Member for Resources

The Board considered this theme and noted the following:

- Substantial work had been done on financial regulations and procurement procedures to ensure that a common approach was taken throughout the organisation.

- Areas of work that remained were asset strategy and community buildings charging policy. These would be reported to Cabinet in December.

Mayor John Biggs advised that he wished to see a consistent approach and processes which were properly managed.

The progress reported to BVRB was noted.

4. Communications - Mayor

The Board considered this theme and noted the following:

- The action plan was being delivered and key milestones had been achieved.
- A review of communications by the LGA was underway and interviews would be undertaken with a range of stakeholders in early November. An interim report would be made at the end of the week on site and a final report issued by the end of November.
- Councillors have a key role in the implementation of the Council's communications strategy. The issue of better communication about ward activities to ward councillors was raised.
- The Board was advised that improvements had already been made to the Members' Bulletin and arrangements for ward member liaison and also advised that the issue would be addressed via a dedicated strand in the Communications strategy under development.

Commissioner Sir Ken Knight noted the Code of Practice on local authority publicity and that the Mayor had committed to compliance with this and that as a first step East End Life would move to fortnightly from January 2016.

The progress reported to BVRB was noted.

5. Organisational Culture – Mayor

The Board considered this theme and noted the following:

- The comments of Commissioners in the amended Appendix 3 circulated as an addendum.
- Work was being undertaken with SOLACE on relationships between Members and officers and mutual understanding of roles.
- A number of sessions facilitated by SOLACE will take place with political groups and members of CMT
- Organisational culture concerned how officers discharged the business of the Council and this was a fundamental element cascading from the senior management of the organisation.
- The directions concerning the appointment to the statutory officer posts were now fulfilled and it was noted that organisation needed to progress to establish objectives and performance measures.

Commissioner Max Caller was pleased with progress made. He wished to evidence that the organisation was progressing towards ensuring cultural change was embedded at all levels. The Chair agreed that further evidence would be provided to the Board as the delivery of the Best Value plan progressed.

RESOLVED

That

1. the draft progress update attached at Appendix 1 and revisions to targets agreed with the Mayor and the Commissioners and the discussion of this progress at the meeting be noted and
2. BVRB comments on the additional narrative in this report be noted.

4.3 Elections 2014/2015 Legacy

The Chair invited Chief Executive Will Tuckley to introduce the report which reviewed of the delivery of the May and June 2015 elections and issues arising from the earlier Election Court judgement; and to record lessons, measures that were particularly successful and areas where further improvement is still required, in order to provide a legacy for future elections.

The Board considered the report and noted the following:

- The recommendations pertained to; the Returning Officer, and to partners (political parties, Metropolitan Police and Central Government)
- The useful information and knowledge imparted by the report.
- As CEO and Returning Officer Will Tuckley:
 - Will be able to embed the functions of the organisation in to the delivery of future elections.
 - Has significant experience in elections and would bring his expertise to future elections.
 - Will explore suggestions made in the report and other ideas to further deliver continuous improvement
- An action plan for future elections would be drawn up and presented to the Board at a future meeting.
- The action plan should indicate the appropriate organisational level at which the Returning Officer should hold/be appointed at to ensure that were council resources needed to be mobilises, there was authority to do so.

The Chair thanked John Williams, Service Head Democratic Services and Louse Stamp, Head of Electoral Services for their work in producing the report. He advised that he wished the authority to establish a process in which there would be confidence with elections within available resources..

RESOLVED

1. That the assessment of the May/June 2015 elections and lessons learnt be noted.
2. That actions arising from the discussion be incorporated into the action plan.

The meeting ended at 8.10 p.m.

Chair, Mayor John Biggs
Best Value Programme Review Board Quarterly Meeting